ECOLOGICAL REPARATION

Repair, Remediation and Resurgence in
Social and Environmental Conflict

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Contents

26

Ordinary Hope

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The opening lines of *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt's (1958) sweeping 'reconsideration of the human condition from the vantage point of our newest experiences and our most recent fears' (5) describe the Sputnik launch in 1957.

In 1957, an earth-born object made by man was launched into the universe, where for some weeks it circled the earth according to the same laws of gravitation that swing and keep in motion the celestial bodies – the sun, the moon, and the stars. To be sure, the man-made satellite was no moon or star, no heavenly body which could follow its circling path for a time span that to us mortals, bound by earthly time, lasts from eternity to eternity. Yet, for a time it managed to stay in the skies; it dwelt and moved in the proximity of the heavenly bodies as thought it had been admitted tentatively to their sublime company.

This event, second in importance to no other, not even the splitting of the atom, would have been greeted with unmitigated joy if it had not been for the uncomfortable military and political circumstances attending it. But, curiously enough, this joy was not triumphal; it was not pride or awe at the tremendousness of human power and mastery which filled the hearts of men, who now, when they looked up from the earth toward the skies, could behold there a thing of their own making. The immediate reaction, expressed on the spur of the moment, was relief about the first 'step toward escape from men's imprisonment to the earth'. And this strange statement, far from being the accidental slip of some American reporter, unwittingly echoed the extraordinary line which, more than twenty years ago, had been carved on the funeral obelisk for one of Russia's great scientists: 'Mankind will not remain bound to the earth forever.'

Image 26.1
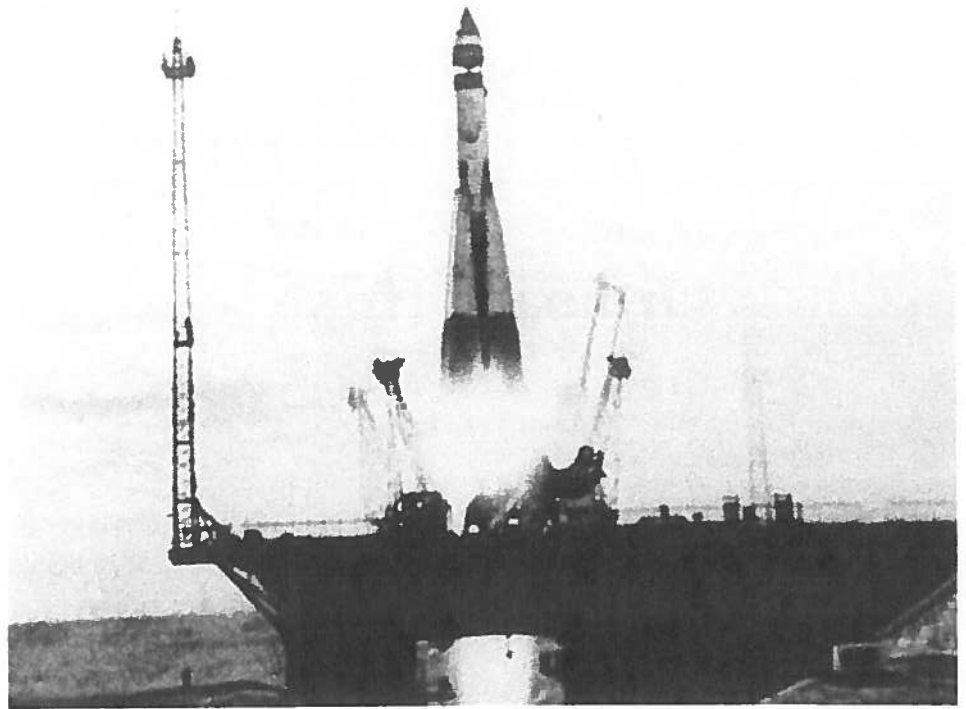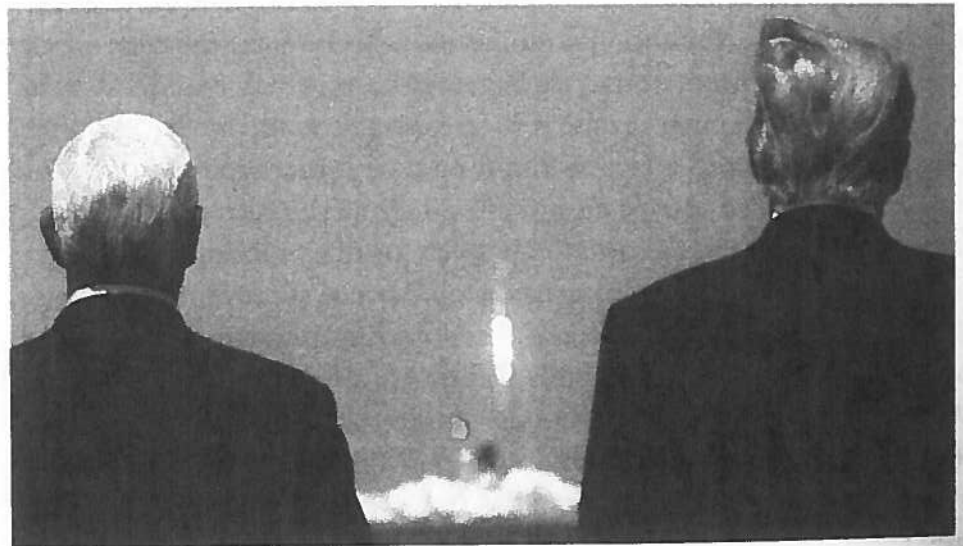

Image 26.2

These lines also name the principal sentiment against which the alternative viewpoint that follows is offered. Like Arendt, I am unsettled by the dream of escape captured in this scene and countless others played out in the subsequent enthusiasms of sci fi writers, space aficionados, and billionaires – a dream that seems only to have grown as our sense of planetary fragility

has intensified. If I imagine myself in this scene, Arendt's or Musk's, I find myself looking not up and out, but *down*: back along the tail of the rocket to consider the world falling away below. What has been broken, in the world and our relationship to it, that makes escape seem the best and only option? Has our homesickness really gone this far? And what work, here and now, does the dream of escape leave undone?

In the time since Arendt's book, the fantasy of escape has only become more intense. The dream of space itself has changed, from the collective high-modernism of Cold War competition to private plaything of billionaires. So has our collective understanding and lived experience of planetary precariousness, as the looming reality and disparate effects of climate change begin to bite and transform the world.[1] The forests are burning, plains turn to deserts, the ocean is rising, and strange storms abound. There is much to flee, and much to atone for. But for these very reasons, there is much reason and need for hope.

Like the Sputnik fantasy articulated by Arendt, the alternate view offered here recognizes and builds from the reality of a broken world. But it responds, as do other chapters in this volume, not with escape but with *care* – and the ongoing work of repair by which this and other crucial relationships are sustained, honoured, made whole, and extended through time (which is not to say held constant and eternal), even under the debased conditions of the present. For me, however, there is another puzzling term in this equation, and one which figures alongside the problems and possibilities of ecological reparation explored so poignantly by others here.

For the ethos of escape and salvation seems to me very different than the concerns with repair, remediation and resurgence which frame this volume. This difference has *always* I believe lain behind the commitment to care and repair versus other more productivist or escapist visions of transformation, and opens for me another puzzle in the long history of our entanglements with the world (and our much shorter history of academic writing about them). If one cares about broken worlds, and not in a dystopian or apocalyptic way after the fetish of despair and destruction that animates fascist movements old and new, or the pathology of 'damage' (Tuck, 2009) that threatens to lock individuals and communities in place, one is drawn – inevitably, I believe – to the question of hope.

Hope and social theory

Hope has had a long and complex history within the annals of modern social theory and its precursors, and has always been associated with the dissolution and reinvention of worlds. For Thomas More (1967 [1516]) and other early modern theorists, the yearning for utopia was closely associated with the disorders of the day, most notably those attached to the breakdown

of medieval religious and scholastic authority and the disruptions of a rising capitalist and imperial system. Later thinkers like Campanella (2009 [1602]) and Bacon (2008 [1626]) would add technocratic content to this vision, offering the first in a long series of secular updates to earlier religious ideals – most notably those of Augustine of Hippo (whose 'city of God' added an otherworldly anchor and exemplar to classical conceptions of political order); and Thomas Aquinas, who distinguished between a 'drunken' and a 'rational' hope, and noted how the latter, understood as a kind of divine gift and will towards God, could motivate and inspire worldly human activity. Subsequent enlightenment thinkers from Descartes (1985 [1649]) and Hobbes (1998 [1651]) to Hume (2007 [1738]) extended and secularized this understanding, offering an individualized and quasi-psychological account of hope as grounded in the contemplation of uncertain futures whose effects may produce, per Hume, either joy (hope) or pain (fear). In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Immanuel Kant elevated the question 'For what may I hope?' to one of three central questions of philosophy, alongside his more famous takes on epistemology ('What can I know?') and ethics ('What should I do?'). Dealing variously with aspirations towards happiness, individual moral improvement, and the improvement of humankind as a whole ('hope for a better world'), Kant argued for the practical and moral character of hope as a rational alternative to other worldly attitudes – most notably those of despair, resignation or a narrow and destructive self-interestedness.

Modern social theory of a critical bent has questioned and for the most part rejected this enlightenment legacy. Work in the Marxian tradition – and other instances of what Paul Ricoeur (1970) has termed the 'hermeneutics of suspicion' – has tended to approach hope, whether in religious or secularized form, as a form of idealism or mystification that obscures recognition of the essential structural conditions of the world, including those upholding unequal social orders. In this line (but with exceptions returned to shortly), where hope appears it is more likely to be framed as a kind of deception or false consciousness (Lukacs, 1972 [1920]), propagated and sustained through the emergence of the modern culture industries (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1947), the actions of ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1971), or other powerful instruments of culture and ideology. Under this false hope view, the obfuscating effects of hope under liberal and neo-liberal orders tend to be politically quietist, forestalling necessary forms of collective action and perpetuating unequal social orders through the always-deferred and frustrated promise of transcendence. In inspiring dreams and desires that can never be fully delivered, such effects can also be, as Lauren Berlant (2011) has more recently argued, 'cruel'.

This brief chapter departs from both these traditions to suggest a different track. It offers a speculative argument for the centrality of hope and its intimate connection to the projects of ecological care and repair

explored elsewhere in this volume. Drawing on disparate work in theology and pragmatist philosophy, heterodox traditions of critical theory, and emerging work in black, queer, and indigenous scholarship, it asserts five basic propositions:

- That hope is not predictive (and can therefore be disappointed but never falsified or disproved, whether by history or critique).
- That the measure of hope is not accuracy, but efficacy: its ability to hold and sustain more meaningful forms of action and relationality in the world.
- That hope may be expressed in orientations towards change and transformation, but also in forms of modest patience and enduring (which are not fully reducible to passivity, resignation, or 'mere' waiting).
- That hope is above all a property of ordinary work – a characteristic of our ongoing ongoingness in and with the world – from whence comes it depth and power.
- And that hope is a collective accomplishment – something we do in and with the world, in concert with others and with things.

Along the way, it will explore several key relationships that are essential I believe to the nature and presence of hope in the work of ecological repair, remediation and resurgence: the relationship between hope and worldmaking (including, crucially, the future); between hope, loss and struggle; and between hope, method and critique (including as practiced in the interpretive social sciences today). It concludes with a return to Arendt, her concept of *amor mundi*, and an argument for a more hopeful practice of care for the world.

Hope, vertical and horizontal

An important part of the stickiness and resonance of hope is grounded in its spiritual and religious roots – a point poorly recognized under the secularist tendencies of the (post-?) Enlightenment university. It is therefore no surprise that hope's most interesting intersections with critical thought come from those working at the margins of critical theory and various forms of religious or spiritual thinking, often to the chagrin of their more orthodox interlocutors. In his remarkable 2015 book, *Redemptive Hope*, religious studies scholar Akiba Lerner traces the influence of Jewish and Christian messianic traditions in the work of Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch, the twentieth-century critical theorists in whose thought hope plays its most prominent role, along with a parallel series of developments in the traditions of American pragmatism and neo-pragmatism.

For Benjamin, hope is a fundamentally recuperative act, produced from the gleanings of memory and culture (thus Benjamin's famous and unfinished

Arcades project (1999)) that point, in fragments, towards an as-yet unknown future of redemption. Despair constitutes an essential moment within this dialectic, and it is destruction that gives rise to the messianic force of hope (a point Benjamin often chose to express through paradox: for example, his often cited claims that 'there is an infinite amount of hope, but not for us'; or 'hope is given to us only for the sake of those without hope' (1969)). For Bloch (1995), continuing this thread after Benjamin's death in 1943, the 'principle of hope' in messianic traditions expressed the power of the 'not-yet': a restless and innate yearning and projection into the future that could provide a more potent basis for justice and social change than the scientific pretensions of the Marxism of his day (with its tendency to foreclose the future under the presumed structural certainties of historical development).

The theological roots which shape this way of thinking were, in Lerner's striking characterization, *vertical* in orientation, projecting hope 'upwards' in space (for example, towards heaven) and 'forwards' in time (towards remote or indeed eschatological futures that would end time altogether). This verticality constituted the power and, for Benjamin and Bloch, the revolutionary potential of the messianic tradition, and thus the force that each and others in the subsequent 'School of Hope' in philosophy and theology sought to harness. But verticality also carried dangers that were indeed central to the nineteenth-century critique of idealism and religion (and remain central to the ecological concerns of this volume): that its projections 'up' tended to devalue the importance and care for present conditions; that the passing nature of the material world made it less worthy of care, respect and an autonomous (extra-human) realm of existence; and that its promise of eventual redemption amounted to a politics of quietist waiting and infinite postponement.

Compare this with the orientation of Benjamin and Bloch's near contemporaries William James and John Dewey and subsequent theorists in the American pragmatist tradition. As Lerner and others (Westbrook, 2005; Koopman, 2009) have noted, hope plays a central role in pragmatist philosophy, but it follows a distinctly *horizontal* track: pragmatist hope expresses 'the desire to be a part of something larger than oneself, but – instead of directing these desires for great meaning upwards – directs them horizontally by inspiring us to look to other people as sources for hope and fulfilment' (111). Here too the stakes of hope are high, its achievement hard-won, and therefore not to be read in any particularly light or sunny way, as reflected in Martin Luther King Jr.'s reflections on the labour of turning 'the fatigue of despair into the buoyancy of hope' (1981). This hope is also radically uncertain – and in the expansiveness of its vision and as a purely *predictive* matter, is bound to disappoint (while doing powerful work along the way); as Rorty wrote, our hope for democracy rests ultimately 'on our loyalty to other human beings clinging together against the dark, not our

hope of getting things right' (1982: 166). Finally, pragmatist hope – Lerner's 'horizontal' tradition – is grounded not in prediction or perception, but above all in a disposition and orientation towards *action*. As Cornel West explains:

> Optimism adopts the role of the spectator who surveys the evidence in order to infer that things are going to get better. Yet we know that the evidence does not look good ... Hope enacts the stance of the participant who actively struggles against the evidence in order to change the deadly tides of wealth inequality, group xenophobia, and personal despair. Only a new wave of vision, courage, and hope can keep us sane. ... To live is to wrestle with despair yet never to allow despair to have the last word. (1997: xii).

The sections that follow build on these foundations to elaborate three essential relationships that I believe are central to the work of repair, remediation and resurgence foregrounded in this volume: between hope and worldmaking; hope, loss and suffering; and hope, method and critique.

Hope and worldmaking

My first point concerns the relation between hope and what philosopher Nelson Goodman (1978) has addressed under the suggestive language of *worldmaking*. For Goodman, worldmaking calls attention to the practices of rendering – 'all the ways of making and presenting worlds' – by which our basic frameworks and senses of the world (including alternate worlds) are called into expression, negotiated with others, changed and in some instances left divergently intact.

There are important strengths to this conception that fit it well for the concerns of hope and repair tackled here. One is its inherent plurality – Goodman's insistence that 'there are many worlds, if any' (Goodman, 1984: 127). The making and proliferation of worlds (or 'versions') is what we do each day, working within the bounds and resources of *past* such makings. (Goodman characterizes this position as neither realist nor anti-realist, but *irrealist*.) It is also worth noting, despite the language of 'making', the friendliness of Goodman's account to notions addressed elsewhere in this volume as repair. Thus, worldmaking for Goodman is made up of composition and *de*composition; weighting and ordering; deletion and supplementation; and deformation. As Goodman insists, 'worldmaking as we know it always starts from worlds on hand; the making is a remaking' (6).

But to be made in this expansive way, worlds must also be *thought* (and thinkable), and thought takes work – and the willingness or predilection to undertake it. To engage in this work embeds a claim and presupposition that we *can* make worlds, and are not merely and purely on the receiving end

of such things. This brings us back to the principles of action and efficacy advanced earlier (to wit: that 'the measure of hope is not accuracy, but efficacy: its ability to hold and sustain more meaningful forms of action and interaction in the world'). For the same reason once again, as Ernst Bloch observed, hope can be disappointed but never disproved.

I would make two additions to Goodman's account. The first concerns a *material* quality of worldmaking that goes underdeveloped in his more meaning and category centred account of the term. This is more than the by-now reflexive reminder to include 'stuff' in our analysis (though the ideational roots of hope and the tendency to regard it as a kind of attitude or 'feeling' may merit special caution in this regard). Rather it is to note that in making worlds we work with *things* as well as meanings, objects as well as categories, and the worlds that result are in fact complex amalgamations of both, with no clear priority or precedence between them.

My second addition to Goodman would be around the *temporality* of worldmaking – and by extension: the timeliness of hope. While not named by Goodman as such, worldmaking is also a deeply temporal phenomenon, and essential to the process by which futures are brought to bear and pass, even where thickly entangled with the recruitment and recuperation of the past. Here we find an essential relationship between hope and the work of *imagining* – whether understood at the level of individual or small group actors, or what recent scholarship in the social sciences (Taylor, 2003; Jasanoff and Kim, 2015) has come to term *social* (or *sociotechnical*) *imaginaries*: understandings and orientations to the world that draw into being wider collectives and orient them towards shared sets of common(ish) and thinkable futures. This assigns hope an inventive or world-disclosing property, and an essential role in the ideation and movement towards alternative futures. But hope's contribution to the future is expressed not *only* in orientations towards change (another common misconception); rather, hope may be expressed with equal force, if less fanfare, through the more modest arts of endurance, resilience and patient tending – what Donna Haraway (2016) has evocatively described as 'staying with the trouble'. Hope can operate without concrete and specific claims to the future – and in this sense, without 'a future' at all. This sense is well captured in feminist science fiction, for example, Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993), or Margaret Atwood's *Maddaddam* trilogy (2002, 2009, 2014). Keeping things going, holding on a little longer, gardening on the edge of disaster – these too are part of the temporality of worldmaking and the 'not-yet-ness' of hope.

This temporal ordering of hope – the weight of the pasts it recuperates and reinvents, and the potentialities of the future it claims or merely holds open – are also central to the revolutionary potential scholars like Bloch and Benjamin saw in hope. In this way, following Frederic Jameson (1972, cited in Munoz, 2009), we may observe how hope "provincializes" the present,

making current reality seem narrow, suspect and incomplete, rather than the iron cage limiting and dominating our possibilities it otherwise so often seems to be. In this it points both backwards and forwards, making histories (always plural) a field of fragments and possibilities rather than a sentence, and the future a contested and open-ended terrain. It could have been and might yet be otherwise: such is the worldmaking power of hope.

Hope, loss and struggle

My second point concerns the intimate relation between hope, loss and struggle, and how a deflationary notion of hope may help us to see deeper roots and connections between them. I have written elsewhere (Jackson, 2014) about how repair emerges from and constitutes a kind of 'aftermath', a point numerous other scholars, in this volume and elsewhere, have substantiated in greater depth and clarity (including around the essential role and relationship of care in these contexts). I have since come to favour the concepts of 'the wake' and 'wake work' offered by scholar of the African diaspora Christina Sharpe (2016). Writing out of the afterlives of slavery, Sharpe notes the rich and entangled meanings of the wake – the aftermath of a slave ship making the middle passage; a vigil over the dead; a rising (slow or sudden) to consciousness – and offers 'wake work' as a language for the myriad practices by which Black lives navigate, reclaim, flourish within, and sometimes simply suffer and survive these worlds. Linked in this way, the wake is a space of terror, pain and suffering. It is also (and for this reason) a space of hope, and a source of what Fred Moten (2003) has argued for as a radical and improvisatory political potential.

Related ideas may be drawn from the field of queer theory. Writing against both pragmatic accommodation and anti-idealist and anti-utopian movements in the field, Jose Esteban Munoz's *Cruising Utopia* (2009) draws on Benjamin and Bloch to argue for what he describes as the 'not-yet-ness' of queer futurity. Examining a series of artistic practices and events from before, around and slightly after the Stonewall rebellion of 1969, Munoz calls out what he terms (pace Bloch) the 'anticipatory illumination of art', understood as 'the process of identifying certain properties that can be detected in representational practices helping us to see the not-yet-conscious' (3). Such practices help to constitute what Bloch called *concrete utopias*: alternative futures that arise from the situated struggles of historically placed groups, whose meaning and identity may in fact be called into being by their shared orientation to a common future (however remote and far from present circumstances that future might be). Such acts and imaginings are premised on and portend a 'then and there' that is different and other from an inhospitable 'here and now'. A similar stance is offered in Sedgewick's (2002) argument for 'reparative' (over 'paranoid') reading – a fractal and

recuperative mode of interpretation in which "hope, often a fracturing, even a traumatic thing to experience, is among the energies by which the reparatively positioned reader tries to organize the fragments and part-objects she encounters or creates." (24)

A third source for this way of thinking can be found in a growing body of indigenous work around the relationship between hope, endurance and resurgence amidst ongoing projects of dispossession, erasure and cultural genocide under settler colonialism. Kim TallBear (2019) has argued for the central role of hope in 'caretaking relations', offered as an alternative to forms of 'American dreaming' premised on indigenous erasure, elimination and the subordination of other-than-human neighbours. Kyle Whyte (2020) points to the slow and ongoing work of relation building – the restoration of long-abused relations of consent, trust, accountability and reciprocity between indigenous and settler societies that must be tackled before any hope for just and effective climate action can occur. William Lempert (2018) has argued for 'the generativity of hope in the post-apocalyptic present' and shown the essential presence and dynamism of hope among indigenous media communities and creators around the world. Hope is no less central to the forms of 'alterlife' that Murphy (2017) argues will be essential to any possibility of decolonial chemical relations in the Great Lakes region of North America, or to the forms of violence, resilience and endurance captured by indigenous writers from Thomas King (2012) to Tommy Orange (2018) to Cherie Dimaline (2019). This work and insistence offers an essential corrective to monotonic narratives of loss, deficit and 'damage' (Tuck, 2009) that have long marred relations between settler and indigenous societies both within and beyond the academy.

Even in this impossibly brief description, it will be clear that the sensibilities here run counter to the vertical tradition outlined, and also to any particularly upbeat understandings of the nature and operation of hope. There is no model or imagination of transcendence, no simplistic or empty celebration of solution, resistance or escape: there is no Sputnik for racism. There is also no sense in which hope somehow escapes and floats above the devastating experience of pain, loss and suffering, both personal and historical; to the contrary, hope is rooted in these experiences and grows precisely out of them. Nor finally is the investment of hope grounded in a confidence of outcome. To know or believe to know the future reflects a different kind of strength and privilege. There are actors who can do this, because their claim to control or organize the future is stronger. For the rest, the accounts here suggest important addendums to the earlier propositions on hope: that hope is most powerful, and most needed, where hard-won; that radical insecurity and uncertainty, both individual and collective, may be a powerful engine of hope (though no guarantor of its emergence); and that hope comes not from the absence of pain, loss and struggle but in its enduring and formative presence.

Hope, method and critique

My final point turns the camera back to consider the relationship between hope and the forms of scholarship, method and critique practiced in the interpretive social sciences today. It asks what role hope plays in scholarly practice itself (always a form of wake work or repair); and the related but separate question of how we might think towards and practice an empirical programme of hope, understood as a question of method, topic and our own ethical placement and anchoring in the world.

This question is central to the leading anthropological work on the topic, Hirokazu Miyazaki's *The Method of Hope* (2004). Drawing on Benjamin and Bloch, Miyazaki's book follows the case of the Suvavou people in present-day Fiji and their long-frustrated effort to secure reparations and acknowledgement for the loss of their ancestral lands. It shows how community relations are extended and held through this indefinite and indefinitely postponed claim on the future, including the seemingly inextinguishable belief that 'somewhere in the government archives, there is a document that will validate their claim once and for all' (45).

This of course can be told as a story of the relationship between hope, loss and struggle, like those just explored. But it is also a story of method, and an answer to the question of how an account of method conditioned on hope might overcome the limits of representation in anthropology vis-à-vis the live and open-ended nature of the world; or as a friendly reviewer summarizes the problem: 'representation fails because it is always too late to capture a past that has already flown and too slow to apprehend a present that is therefore always a past' (Abramson, 2004: 531). This echoes, as Miyazaki argues, a fundamental discrepancy also marked by Bloch: namely, between the contemplative and backwards-looking quality of philosophy, and the projective and forwards-looking quality of hope, which constitutes a fundamentally different basis of relation with the world.

Scholarly work itself – no more nor less than other ordinary forms of work – also partakes in or refuses a world of hope. Understood as a method of discovery and understanding, hope carries key properties in this regard. In its tendency to disrupt and open up new possibilities, hope is intimately linked to the essential methodological virtue of surprise, or what Bloch wrote about as the 'astonishment' of hope. In its mixture of ambition and modesty towards the future – its orientation to efficacy and action, but refusal of authoritative or over-confident predictive claims – hope also establishes an important ethical grounding and balance, moving from accounts centred on deficit, absence and loss to abundance, resurgence and engagement (to name just three terms figuring centrally in this volume). In this, scholarship merely borrows the method and plenitude of the world itself, positioning itself *within* rather than above or outside the messiness of worldly flows

427

and churns. This virtue is I believe essential to critique, even forms of critique that are themselves sceptical or dismissive of hopeful claims. Thus for example immanent critique (of the sort specified under the negative dialectics of Adorno, say) proceeds on the basis not just of contradictions but also hopes that are *also* immanent in the social (we might now say socio-ecological) worlds around us. Feminist and other standpoint epistemologies rely for their force and sustenance on the same kind of situated solidarities and commitments. In the absence of this grounding, critique runs the risk of cynicism, despair and its own particular brand of withdrawal or takeoff, becoming unmoored from efficacy or relationality and providing few reasons or resources for entrance. This establishes a style and standard of care sometimes neglected within contemporary research and teaching communities. From this standpoint, like the Suvavou people studied by Miyazaki, it may be the patient nurturing and mutual transmission of hope, rather than the always disappointed search for revolutionary transformation or a historical agent, that forms the central task and challenge of critical scholarship today.

Conclusion

But what does this have to do with the projects of repair, remediation and resurgence that form the shared leitmotif of this volume? I believe all three are central to our ever-unfolding programmes of endurance and flourishing in the world today – what Anna Tsing and collaborators have evocatively called the 'arts of living on a damaged planet' (Tsing et al, 2017). I believe they are also antithetical to the dream of transcendence and escape with which this piece opened – and that such dreams are, as the cliché puts it, part of the problem, not the solution. A new class of settlers practicing escape pod salvationism is not what is needed now (has it ever been?). What is needed are more creative and committed forms of wake work, more and better ways of staying with the trouble, and futurisms that are oriented to staying rather than going. If any of this is to be found, it will be in a richer and more inclusive horizontalism that draws strength from the *aroundness* rather than the *aboveness* of hope. And the multiple forms of care and repair that a worldly hope ultimately powers and subtends.

Which brings us back to *The Human Condition*, and Arendt's urgent plea to 'think what we are doing'. As argued by Ella Myers (2013), Arendt's one-time working title for the book, *Amor Mundi*, or 'Care for the World' reveals a strain or emphasis not widely pursued by subsequent generations of Arendt interpreters, but which offers an intriguing (if speculative) bridge between the political and earthly aspects of Arendt's thought. In Myer's treatment, 'care for the world' pluralizes and concretizes both the 'subject' and 'object' of (democratic) worldly action. Care is something we do together, as concrete

and specific 'we's', but in combinations that are larger than an 'I', and also vis-à-vis worlds which are themselves *plural* and *specific*, and thus endowed with a specific ethical standing that exceeds a purely humanist frame (without giving up on Arendt's specific interest in and attention to the human). This makes the kinds of actions associated with worldly care both expansive and political in nature (including, as Dipesh Chakrabarty (2021) has recently argued, in their planetary and intergenerational effects). While this perspective shares much in common with subsequent feminist work, the specifically Arendtian flavour called out by Myers emphasizes the *commonality* of the world, both in the sense of being a 'shared home for all' and a go-between (or 'mediating power') between humans seeking to build and sustain this common world, which provides foundation enough for the more-than-human (but not truly 'post-human') ethics that Myers is interested to build.

As the work in this volume makes clear, inventing new (and old) forms of justice, solidarity and care for the world is essential if our communities, and our planet, are to remain habitable and hospitable places. This in turn will rest on new (and old) forms of hope that must also be cultivated and extended, including in the face of the most dire predictions of planetary peril and change, which otherwise seem as likely to inspire cynicism and despair as engaged and committed forms of action. This hope will be *thick* rather than *thin*: connected to the living of lives and to patient entanglements with the things, people and places around us. If thin hopes are external, reliant on gifts or grants from elsewhere and the actions of distant or disconnected others, thick hope keeps agency at home – though with no easy or predictive confidence of outcome. If thin hopes need heroes or saviours, thick hope needs neither, apart from the patient and ordinary forms of heroism entailed in navigating with care a broken and dynamic world. If thin hopes continue their search for a saving power, thick hope is content with what it can build from the fragments and pieces around it. No need for fantasies of escape or transcendence, when there's plenty of work here at home. No need for sputniks launching into the sky, when there are wakes and wake work all around. No need for the vertical, when the horizontal is in such rich and plentiful supply. No need for The Future, when futures are what we build and live each day.

Hope of this ordinary character is needed now more than ever. The version puzzled towards here would give up on hope's long anchoring in the sky, and the long-deferred dream of transcendence associated with escape pod salvationism. It would also multiply the cast of characters with whom and with which we can learn from and build, making our imagination and practice of horizontality a good deal more earth-y, and perhaps more humanly just as well. This perspective has much to offer to the projects of ecological reparation described in this volume. It also has much to offer to worlds of technology, where thin hopes and rockets abound.

To give up the sky, I believe, is not to give up hope. Nor is it to give up on action, or the crucial anchoring to action that hope provides. It is instead to insist on the reality and simple *efficacy* of hope – even, perhaps especially, after the rockets have left. This hope is humble, patient, even boring. By the standards of religion or critical theory's long frustrated search for transcendence, it seems hardly worth noticing. But it has the advantage of being anchored in the ordinary ways we navigate, survive and occasionally flourish in the world, including with the people and things around us. It is also widely distributed, and integral to the forms and relations of care we can choose to exercise towards each other. It supports and draws energy from a politics of material participation (Marres, 2012), rather than one of renunciation, subordination or escape. It engages with broken worlds (and all our worlds are broken) from the standpoint of their strengths, their resilience and their potentialities, and not from the standpoint of their lacks, absences or deficits. It is essential to and fuelled by caretaking relations, and suitably nurtured and supported, can lead towards modes of engagement that are modest, creative and as multiple as the world itself – including in the face of problems and changes whose immensity may otherwise overwhelm our capacity to think and act.

As this last point and the chapters in this volume make clear, it is also a hope expressed and enacted through work, including in and with what some used to erroneously separate out as the 'natural world' around us: a feet-in-the-mud, dirt-under-fingernails hope, and not one expressed in the plaintive or beseeching gaze towards heaven. A hope that looks *down* and *around*, rather than *up*, to imagine the prospective multiplicity and plenitude of the worlds around us: if only we could think and care to build them.

If there were a credo to this way of thinking – if I could sneak onto the launchpad and scrawl something on the skin of the rocket – it would be this:

The world is always breaking, carrying much of what we care about into loss and oblivion. There is nothing and no one to save us. We are always and everywhere alone, but for the profuse and teeming worlds around us.
Now let us get to work.

Note

Note though that the 'we', here and elsewhere, hides a lot: some experiences of precariousness go back centuries; for some, the apocalypse has already happened; both the consequences and culpability for these changes are distributed unevenly; and some, per Simmel's (1972) 'tragedy of whomever is lowest', are more on the receiving end of environmental loss and planetary change than others. The 'we' here is also meant to be modest and conversational, and not a massified we bundled or claimed for authority and power. As Tyson Yunkaporta (2020) has recently observed, English lacks a good word for this modest and invitational we. The version here should be read like his, as 'us-two': we who may be gathered and thinking together right now.

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