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Full Title: Disappointed Hope: Reimagining Resistance in the Wake of the Egyptian Revolution

Short Title: Disappointed Hope

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Abstract

Ten years after the revolutionary upheaval, the Arab Spring in Egypt has come to signify a betrayed promise of liberation, repudiating the feasibility of resistance against oppression. Against the fatalist narratives of the uprising, I examine the politically transformative potential of disappointment. I draw on Ernst Bloch's notion of educated hope and recent interventions in utopian studies to interrogate how resisters can reconfigure their horizon of hope in response to disappointment. I argue that the resisters' grappling with their disappointment can redirect their hope towards a persistent striving for greater freedom and justice that is based on a concrete negotiation of the possibilities for action and willing to bear the risk of failure. I develop the political relevance of disappointed hope through a selected first-hand account of the Arab Spring uprising in Egypt, *Cairo: Memoir of a City Transformed,* written by a prominent Egyptian activist and writer, Ahdaf Soueif.

Keywords: disappointment, horizon of hope, resistance, Arab Spring in Egypt, Ahdaf Soueif

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Disappointed Hope: Reimagining Resistance in the Wake of the Egyptian Revolution

Hope is the opposite of security.

It is the opposite of naïve optimism. […]

If it could not be disappointed,

it would not be hope.

—Ernst Bloch, 'Something's Missing' (Bloch 1988, 16–17)

Introduction

Ten years after the Arab Spring uprising in Egypt, little seems to be left of the hopes it engendered. As Nesrine Malik[1] has observed, the phrase "Arab Spring" has come to signify "shattered dreams of liberation"—making it "painful" to remember the sense of joy, camaraderie and power that sustained the protesters during the months of revolution (Malik 2020). Many activists and protesters themselves remember the uprising with a sense of profound disappointment, bemoaning the "naivety" and "recklessness" that guided their younger selves (Malik 2020). The troubling political implication is that the Arab Spring has become not only a symbol of the failed revolution, but that "it is now held up as a repudiation of the very notion of protest" (Malik 2020; Aouragh and Hamouchene 2021). The danger, to paraphrase Lida Maxwell, is that the sense of disappointment over a particular instance of failed resistance leads into a sense of the failure of resistance as such—which in turn calls for

[1] Nesrine Malik is a columnist for *The Guardian* and the author of *We Need New Stories: Challenging the Toxic Myths behind our Age of Discontent.*

hierarchical forms of governance to offset the inherently flawed character of political engagement by the people (Maxwell 2014, 11).

The troubling political implications of fatalist narratives are compounded by the dominant tendency within the literature on emotions and social movements to view disappointment as a demobilising affect (Pearlman 2013; Aminzade and McAdam 2001). Such readings of the Arab Spring and of disappointment elide the experiential, temporal reality of revolutionary situations, and underestimate the positive political value of disappointment. Against the fatalist narrative of the futility of the resistance and the negative perception of disappointment, I examine the politically transformative potential of disappointment. Specifically, I explore how resisters can engage with disappointment in a politically productive manner and reshape their horizon of hope—by which I mean their affective sense of future possibilities offered by the given socio-political reality[2]—towards a sober recognition and negotiation of the complexities of resistant action. Thereby, I contribute to the growing scholarship that has inquired into the political relevance of the supposedly demobilising emotions, such as despair and disappointment (Gould 2009, 3; Allam 2018, 296; 2020).

To interrogate the relationship between disappointment and hope, I theorise disappointment as a sense of temporal and spatial "disjuncture" between expectations of socio-political transformation and the complexities of resistance within oppressive conditions. As disjuncture, disappointment unsettles the resisters' sense of the possibilities offered by the world and drives them to re-examine their resistance ideals in light of the disappointing reality (Mrovlje 2020; Greenberg 2014, 49; Worby and Ally 2013, 459–60).

[2] Employing the phrase "horizon of hope", I draw on the existential-phenomenological notion of "horizon" as an implicitly sensed ground of our experience—an intersubjective, socio-political context in which we are embedded and which significantly affects what it is possible for us to do or say (Heidegger 1962, 415–20; Sartre 2003, 129–52).

I draw on Ernst Bloch's notion of educated hope and recent interventions in the field of utopian studies to explore how hope informed by past disappointments—what I call disappointed hope—can help resisters creatively confront the complexities of resistance. Building on these insights, I propose three ways in which resisters can productively engage with disappointment and reconfigure their horizon of hope in response to it: 1) they can unhinge the utopian impulse from the pre-defined goal and direct it towards a persistent, ever-reborn striving for greater freedom and justice; 2) they can redirect energy towards a practice-oriented negotiation of the concrete possibilities for political action; and 3) they can cultivate an openness towards the genuinely new that is predicated upon the willingness to bear the risk of failure.

My argument about the political potential of disappointment should not be taken to imply that the workings of disappointment are deterministic or that the movement from disappointment to the maturing of the resisters' hopes is unilinear (Gould 2012, 108). I acknowledge that disappointment's effects are contingent, dependent on concrete circumstance, and shifting, fluctuating between moments of disorientation, apathy, and renewed engagement.[3] The purpose of the paper, however, is not to provide a causal account of the specific conditions under which disappointment leads, or is likely to lead, to persistent, grounded hope. Rather, I aim to show that disappointment need not signify the end of resistance, and I do so by outlining three specific ways in which resisters can grapple with disappointment in a politically productive manner. This exploration is normatively significant given that the way we perceive the political value of disappointment affects how we may be able to negotiate it in concrete contexts of political action. Revealing how disappointed hope can keep alive the radical promise

[3] For instance, scholars have suggested that activists with longer histories of political engagement and activist groups with deeper roots, who have built extensive experience of resisting under authoritarian regimes, are more likely to show resilience in the face of disappointment (Allam 2018, 310).

of resistance in the wake of failure can upend the dominant perception of disappointment as a demobilising affect and contest the fatalist readings of concrete contexts of failed resistance, such as the Arab Spring.

I develop the political relevance of this examination through a practical articulation of disappointed hope in the selected first-hand account of the Arab Spring in Egypt, *Cairo: Memoir of a City Transformed.* The memoir was written by Ahdaf Soueif, a prominent Egyptian writer, cultural commentator, and activist, well-known for her advocacy of democracy and social justice in Egypt (Ball 2022, 57–58). In *Cairo,* Soueif draws on the power of the memoir to offer an insider's personal, emotive view of a significant historical moment (Waites 2005, 379) and its ability to tell the story of a collective experience (Brabeck 2003; Smith and Watson 2012).

She incorporates a plurality of people's voices as well as resisters' collective utterances to portray the collective experience of the uprising and its aftermath, focusing on how the resisters have contended with the unfulfilled promises, defeats, and disappointments of the Revolution (Soueif 2014, 11–12; Younas 2022, 5–6). In particular, she unearths the political potential of disappointed hope as articulated by the protestors of a leftist, pro-democracy bent who pursued a radical transformation of society—in terms of both a democratic redesign of institutions and the demands of social justice—and who found their ideals profoundly betrayed. I tease out how they refused to give in to despair and instead translated their disappointment into creative efforts to face up to the complexities of resistant action. In addition, I read *Cairo* not only as a representation of disappointed hope but as itself a performative investment in persistent, grounded hope that contests the fatalist narratives of the Arab Spring in Egypt.

Before proceeding with the argument, three caveats are necessary. First, I employ the notion of "resisters" to denote a general category of individuals who are willing to stand up against oppression and fight for greater freedom and justice, from demanding democratic reforms to struggling for radical (or revolutionary) societal transformation. In addition, when

analysing the Egyptian uprising, I use the terms "activists" and "protesters" (as subcategories of the more general term "resister") to distinguish between individuals who have been active in activist groups or social movements, and people who joined the protests without necessarily having a prior history of activism.

Second, following Bloch, I understand (disappointed) hope to entail the elements of both hopes and expectations. Hope resembles neither pure wishful thinking without an expectation that our hopes can or will come true, nor only a realistic expectation without an element of uncertainty and hopefulness about the future. On this account, hope is to be distinguished from optimism, which corresponds to a "preprogrammed" belief that things will turn out well, regardless of the given reality, and so can be seen as an "incorrigibly naïve form of hope" (Eagleton 2017, 12; see also Goldman 2023, 6).

Third, I am not interested in any political hope, such as that of reactionary or fascist groups. I focus on the resisters' (disappointed) hope, which—in line with my understanding of resisters—embodies an aspiration towards greater freedom and justice. I examine the concrete manifestations of such (disappointed) hope on the example of the Egyptian Revolution.

The argument proceeds as follows. The first section situates the argument in the existing scholarship on the relevance of emotions for social movements. The second section builds on Bloch's notion of educated hope and recent interventions in utopian studies to explore the politically transformative potential of disappointment. The third section undertakes an analysis of the selected first-hand account of the Egyptian uprising. The online appendix includes additional information about the main actors involved in the revolution.

Disappointment, emotions, and social movements

A rich literature in the field of politics and international relations has explored the relevance of emotions for social movements, focusing on the affective dimension of

mobilisation (Gould 2009; Jasper 2019; Goodwin, Jasper, and Polletta 2000; Vogler 2021). Within this literature, emotions appear as constituting the very fabric of our political imaginaries, shaping which forms of resistance are "thinkable" and which are or become "wholly unimaginable" (Gould 2009, 3). The dominant binary within the literature is between the mobilising and demobilising emotions or affects (Aminzade and McAdam 2001; cf. Gould 2012, 108). In her analysis of the Arab Spring protests, for instance, Wendy Pearlman distinguishes between emotions such as anger, joy, pride, and hope—which encourage individuals to engage in resistant action even in the face of danger and when the chances of success seem slim—and emotions such as shame, sadness and fear—which promote a resigned acceptance of the status quo, even at the cost of accepting injustice (Pearlman 2013). Within this dichotomy, disappointment tends to be associated with a sense of helplessness and apathy, where political action all of the sudden appears useless and futile (Pearlman 2013, 396; Aminzade and McAdam 2001, 46; Kleres 2005, 170–71).

I acknowledge that profound disappointment can lead to resignation, apathy, or disengagement (Marder and Vieira 2012, 41). But I want to suggest that it need not necessarily do so. Against efforts to distinguish between mobilising and demobilising emotions, I inquire into how resisters can grapple with disappointment in politically productive ways. Thereby, I build on the growing scholarship that has explored how disappointment can drive the resisters to adapt their strategies of contestation in response to the narrowing of political possibilities (Mrovlje 2020; Greenberg 2014; Allam 2018). I contribute to these engagements by providing a systematic account of how resisters can reshape their horizon of hope in response to disappointment and reframe it towards a sober recognition and negotiation of the complexities of resistance within oppressive conditions.

To that end, I theorise disappointment as a sense of profound temporal and spatial dislocation or "disjuncture"—the sense that things "are not occurring at their appointed times" and "are not in their appointed places" (Worby and Ally 2013, 474, 459–60). Disappointment

as disjuncture arises in the gap between expectations of socio-political transformation and the complexities of resistance within oppressive conditions—by which I mean the fragile, circumscribed, and fallible nature of resistant action confronting the resilient dynamics of power and structural inequality (Mrovlje 2020, 308–9; Greenberg 2014, 49).

This understanding partly echoes the common philosophical and psychological definitions of disappointment as a response to *violated hopes or expectations*. On these accounts, we feel disappointed when a desirable or expected outcome "is snatched away by some unlikely state of affairs" (Roberts 2003, 240–41; Draper 1999, 392). The resisters' disappointment, for instance, can be traced to various concrete instances of violated hopes, such as the lack of a revolutionary transformation of society, the closing of a political space won during the initial days of the revolution, or the growing divisions between the protesters. Yet my understanding of disappointment as disjuncture also aims to capture how the resisters' sense of betrayal at the failed promise of the revolution tends to assume a more fundamental, existential significance. Their disillusion with post-uprising realities concerns the failure of a project for which many have been willing to sacrifice their lives, leading to a profound shattering of their sense of the world as well as their faith in themselves as political actors capable of changing that world to the better (Michaelis 1999, 537, 442–44).

As disjuncture, disappointment interweaves affective and reflective elements. It involves an affective experience of enduring something "other" than what the resisters had hoped (Vlies 2017, 15), which challenges their sense of what is possible and provokes reflective efforts to make sense of this experience. In turn, the resisters' reflective attempts to negotiate the gap between their expectations and the disappointing political reality entail not only a cognitive change in any specific hope. They also consist of a reframing of their horizon of hope—of their affective disposition towards reality and their sense of the possibilities for political action offered by the world (Anderson 2006, 743–44). This experiential account of disappointment treats the resisters' disappointment as a collective experience, shared among

(different groups of) resisters whose hopes have been betrayed in the wake of a failed revolution. The responses to this collective experience, however, are likely to vary across different (groups of) resisters, based on how they negotiate the gap between their hopes and the disappointing reality (Lawson 1996, 6–8).

Employing the understanding of disappointment as disjuncture, the next section first draws on Bloch's insight into the crucial link between disappointment and educated hope, and then builds on recent interventions in utopian studies to outline how resisters can reframe their horizon of hope in response to disappointment.

The relationship between disappointment and hope

For Bloch, hope corresponds to a fundamental human propensity towards what has not yet become, the possibility of a better world (Bloch 1995, 7). In line with my focus on the resisters' horizon of hope, Bloch's conception of hope is not limited to any particular hope. It entails an "anticipatory consciousness", a disposition or orientation towards reality which is bent on transcending what is given towards the "not yet" possibilities of being (Bloch 1995, 9–11, 113). Hope, in other words, allows us to approach reality not as a "finished world", but as a "horizon of future possibilities" that go beyond the present boundaries of the possible (Bloch 1995, 139; Levitas 2013, 6; Bloch 1995, 235).

The experience of disappointment within Bloch's thought—as evident in the introductory quote—is not the opposite of hope, but its constitutive other side.[4] What distinguishes hope from naïve optimism is the possibility that it will be disappointed.

[4] Thinking disappointment as the other side of hope mirrors the concerns of scholars who have looked to the black tradition of political thinking and literature to explore the emancipatory potentials of a form of hope that is not opposed to but interconnected with a sense of melancholy and loss (Winters 2016; Zamalin 2019).

Disappointment is crucial to the process of transforming our abstract or idiosyncratic utopian impulses into concrete social and political projects—what Bloch called "educated hope" or *docta spes* (Bloch 1995, 7, 9, 146). Hope, Bloch writes, is "unconditionally disappointable" and "holds *eo ipso* the condition of defeat precariously within itself" (Bloch 1998, 341). This is because hope is by definition "futural", oriented towards the not-yet; it can therefore "have no guarantee of success, it must incorporate chance" (Vlies 2017, 14). Rather than leading to despair, for Bloch, disappointment over the unrealised hopes—the "realisation's 'minus'"—contributes to "well-founded hope" precisely because it helps us embrace the "enduring indeterminacy" of the future (Bloch 1998, 342; Vlies 2017, 14).

On this account, disappointment as a sense of disjuncture brings about a rupture in our sense of the world as a benevolent, ordered environment that we can mould in support of our projects of social transformation. To the contrary, in disappointment, the world is "revealed to be neither supportive nor trustworthy" (Marder and Vieira 2012, 38). Bloch himself referred to this experience as "the darkness of the lived moment", our sense of the world's density, complexity, and unpredictability (Bloch 1995, 289–300). Crucial to the experience of disappointed hope, then, I suggest, is the growing awareness of the fallible, complex, and unpredictable nature of resistant action.

Here I take leave of Bloch's particular articulation of the process and goal of educated hope, and strive to articulate the role of disappointment in reframing the resisters' hope outside of his process ontology.[5] I build on recent interventions in utopian studies, which—more or less

[5] In Bloch's account, it is the not-yet, the something-missing at the heart of reality that drives the movement towards concrete utopia (Bloch 1995, 306–7). While Bloch emphasizes the importance of human agency in this process, material reality itself is dynamic and tends towards the actualisation of its latent possibilities—specifically towards the Marxist vision of classless society as the embodiment of concrete utopia (Bloch 1995, 18; Moir 2019, 128, 133).

explicitly drawing on Bloch's idea of educated hope and writing under the influence of their own disappointed hope for a radical social transformation—help me identify three ways in which resisters can respond to disappointment in a politically productive manner and reshape their horizon of hope towards a creative engagement with the complexities of resistance. I consider each of the three dimensions in separate sections below, while also pointing to how they overlap and interlink.

Persistent hope

First, I suggest that resisters can respond to disappointment by redirecting their horizon of hope away from the pursuit of a pre-given end and towards persistent hope that is characterised by an ever-reborn striving for greater freedom and justice. Within utopian studies, end-oriented utopian thinking has largely been discredited due to its association with totalitarian attempts to impose on the plurality of politics a more or less defined, static vision of a perfect society. Disappointment can reorient resistance struggles away from such end-oriented hopefulness because, as a sense of the world's unpredictability, it displaces overly confident visions of revolutionary transformation that envision a clean, progressive realisation of the goals of freedom and justice (Vlies 2017, 4, 6). Instead, disappointment can serve as an occasion for resisters to embrace a different kind of hopefulness called persistent hope. Persistent hope arises from the (Blochian) sense of the not-yet, the disappointed sense that something is missing or not (yet) as it should be (Bloch 1995, 306–7). It refers to "a stubborn impulse towards freedom and justice"—the end of oppression, exploitation, and injustice—that is "reborn", "reappears" and "makes itself felt" in the bleakest circumstance (Abensour 2008, 407). Resisters can thus recognise and utilise their sense of non-coincidence between "what was projected and what has come about" as a source of a persistent, "always-new upsurge" of hope in the wake of failure (Abensour 2008, 407).

The disappointed turn to persistent hope encourages resisters to draw their hope not from their desire to achieve their pre-given goal, but from their ability to go beyond the given, to affirm their sense of themselves as acting beings, refusing to acquiesce in the injustice. This turn reorients the struggles for greater freedom and justice in two interconnected ways. First, it views losses and failures as sites of new aspirations, rather than the end of the utopian impulse (Abensour 2008, 407). Second, it resists closure, keeping any achieved goal open to contestation and a plurality of other possibilities (Abensour 2008, 417–18).

Past disappointments and failures can become sites of new, open-ended aspirations through a process Hirokazu Miyazaki calls "the inheritance of past hope and its performative replication in the present" (Miyazaki 2004, 139). Miyazaki illustrates this "inheritance" by tracing how the Suvavou people of Fiji have repeatedly sought compensation from the government for the loss of their ancestral land. In the face of the government's repeated rejection of their claims, their petitions (sent to the government over a period of nearly one hundred years) have kept their past hope alive, inherited and replicated it by projecting it towards an open future (Miyazaki 2004, 69–85). As evident in this case, resisters can use disappointment as an opportunity to return to the unfulfilled hopes inherited from past failures and derive the persistence of hope in the present "from anticipation of fulfilment contained in [the] past hope" (Miyazaki 2004, 139). It is as if, in Bloch's words, disappointment unlocked "the still undischarged future in the past" (Bloch 1995, 200). Even though the ever-reborn struggles for socio-political change are not identical to the ones that failed in the past, the disappointed turn to persistent hope can thus connect different moments of resistance within the same struggle and even inspire struggles across generations.

Grounded hopefulness

Second, I argue that resisters can productively engage with disappointment by redirecting their energies towards a concrete, practice-oriented negotiation of the possibilities for political action. We can capture this turn using Bloch's distinction between abstract and educated or concrete hope. For Bloch, abstract hope resembles mere "wishful thinking", detached from "real possibilities in the world" (Bloch 1995, 145; Goldman 2020, 60; see also Goldman 2023, 72–73). Educated hope, in contrast, is concrete in that it has comprehended the possibilities for a better world that are latent in matter itself—what Bloch calls "real possibility" or a "Real-Possible"—even if the actualisation of these possibilities is not certain (Bloch 1995, 145–47). On this account, concrete hope represents the transformation of "wishful thinking" into "will-full", practice-oriented thinking and "effective political action" (Levitas 2013, 6, 25).

Disappointment serves as an opportunity for resisters to transform abstract hope into concrete hope. This is because—in the face of a disorienting disappointment that reveals the world in its density and unpredictability—the resisters can gain a better understanding of the limiting, oppressive conditions and confront them anew. As José Esteban Muñoz has argued with regard to queer utopianism, disappointment exposes an "incommensurability" between our hopes and the heart-breaking reality, between our expectation of others and their letting us down (Muñoz 2009, 213). But this sense of incommensurability, in exposing the "gaps" that separate our hopes from their flawed manifestations in the world, also appeals to us to "live through" and negotiate these gaps, to face up to reality's "obstacles" that may appear "insurmountable" (Letson-Chambers, Nyong'o, and Pellegrini 2009, xv, x).

This renewed confrontation with reality's constraints is to be contrasted with the project of "real utopia," associated with Erik Olin Wright and his group of associates, which too is concerned with exploring the potentials for transformation inhering in the existing system. Wright's pursuit of real utopia stems from his realisation that the capitalist system of oppression is deeply entrenched and that attempts at a "ruptural" overthrow are doomed to failure (Wright 2012, 21). What is needed instead is a gradual transformation of capitalism "in a *social*ist

direction", attentive to the "complexities and contradictions" as well as "unintended consequences" of resistant action (Wright 2012, 19, 3). Yet, where Bloch's notion of real possibility is oriented to radical transformation, Wright's outline of viable possibilities is structured in a way that destines more radical challenges to the existing system for failure. Wright attributes the failure of past revolutionary projects to the fact that they were unrealistic, "unmoored" from the existing conditions, and concludes that "only 'realistic' interventions can affect normatively desirable change" (Gabay 2022, 285–86). His confrontation with reality's constraints thus too easily concedes to "what is feasible in the world as we know it" (Thaler 2018, 677), and unwittingly betrays the emancipatory potential of disappointed hope.

The disappointed turn to concrete hope can better be comprehended as an instance of "grounded" hope. "Grounded" hope is likewise informed by a sense of limitations that the existing conditions of oppression impose on resistant action (Thaler 2019, 1008). However, here the emphasis lies on shattering the illusion of the necessity and unchangeability of the status quo (Thaler 2018, 687). The renewed confrontation with the limiting, oppressive conditions induced by disappointment can reframe the resisters' sense of the hegemonic power structures from viewing them as "a fixed entity" to considering them as what Paulo Freire calls "limit-situations" (Freire 2005, 139, 99). The notion of limit-situations refers to an understanding of reality's structural constraints as concrete historical situations that human beings can overcome rather than "insurmountable barriers" that constitute the end of possibility (Freire 2005, 99–100).

By considering reality's structural constraints as limit-situations, grounded hope can inspire a critical reflection on how the given structural constraints have impeded resistance and how they can be transformed. Rather than concluding those projects that failed are impossible or unrealisable, it can impel resisters to contest the boundaries of the possible, broaden their sense of the alternatives which the hegemonic order has proclaimed to be unrealistic (Moir

2019, 128–29; Levitas 2013, 129).[6] Even though this broadening of alternatives may aim at broader societal transformation, it is first and foremost oriented to experimenting with the possibilities for living otherwise in particular, everyday social practices and milieus (Thaler 2019, 1008). Thus construed, grounded hopefulness supports the resisters' persistent struggle in the face of defeat, showing how past failures can inspire a re-examination of the limiting conditions and become sites of new possibility. Yet it also recognises that the outcomes of resistant action are bound to remain unpredictable and flawed, subject to ongoing negotiation of the constraining political conditions (Gabay 2022, 297–98).

Hope and failure

Third, I propose that resisters can approach disappointment as an opportunity to cultivate an openness towards the future that is willing to bear the risk of failure. This is because, as an experience of disjuncture, disappointment puts into question a teleological view of history as progressive realisation of a pregiven end, where failure is perceived as a "lacuna" or "lack" in the fulfilment of the utopian blueprint (Marder and Vieira 2012, 44). Released from the lure of teleology, resisters are placed face to face with the complex and fallible nature of resistant action and can come to view (the risk of) failure as an inevitable part of their grounded negotiation of the boundaries of the possible (Thaler 2019, 1012).

Disappointed hope, then, need not view failure as a phenomenon that "helps define the boundary between the realistic and unrealistic" (Gabay 2022, 285). To the contrary, failure can draw the resisters' attention to a plurality of "marginalised possibilities" constituting the fabric

[6] In this respect, grounded hopefulness echoes the recent explorations of the "grey zones of resistance", which delve into the complexities involved in resisting oppression to enrich our imagination of the possibilities for opposition and struggle (Mrovlje and Kirkpatrick 2019).

of history, which "on the grounds of being unrealistic at a given socio-political conjecture" have been eclipsed, rejected, or forgotten (Marder and Vieira 2012, 43). Thus, disappointed hope can challenge the hegemonic attempts to entrench in resisters or the general populace the sense that resistant action against the system can never work or be effective (Thaler 2019, 1012).

More than this, this changed understanding of failure in response to disappointment also foregrounds an openness to the future, its risk and unpredictability (Marder and Vieira 2012, 35). Hope informed by past disappointments can view failure as an important source for uncovering radical possibilities residing within each break with the status quo, even if they remain unrealised (Gabay 2022, 288). For instance, even revolutionary events that can be considered a failure can have deeply transformative effects, reminding the participants (and onlookers) of the power inherent in experiments in democratic self-governance and collective action (Goldman 2023, 155). This should not be read as a defence of revolutionary martyrdom, making light of the sacrifices and losses endured by those defying an oppressive system. Rather, by opening their imagination to the existence of alternative futures residing within the past, past losses and failures can inspire the resisters to continue working for a better world despite the possibility of failure. The motto of such disappointed hope is well encapsulated in Samuel Beckett's injunction to "Try again. Fail again. Fail better". Here failing better mirrors grounded hope's coming to terms with and confronting the contradictions, tensions, and losses of resistant action (Thaler 2019, 1012). In addition, it encourages the resisters to regard their actions as directed not only to their own present but also to the future, inspiring future generations to take up their hopes in their own context. In the words of the German anarcho-socialist Gustav Landauer, they might see their position, as one of the "thousands of tiny, decentralised beginnings" on the path towards greater freedom and justice (Gabay 2022, 304).

Disappointed Hope in *Cairo: Memoir of a City Transformed*

Using the theoretical framework developed above, this section analyses Soueif's first-hand account of the Egyptian Revolution, *Cairo: Memoir of a City Transformed*. The memoir tells the story of the Arab Spring in Egypt in three stages: first, the spontaneous uprising in January-February 2011 that ended in the ousting of Hosni Mubarak (Revolution I); second, the resisters' efforts throughout the rest of 2011 and 2012 to ensure the transfer of power to an elected parliament, end the rule of the military and draft a new constitution that brought victory to the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and its presidential candidate Muhammad Morsi (Revolution II); and third, the protests against the MB and president Morsi in the summer of 2013 that led to the military coup and the coming to power of the counter-revolution (Revolution III).[7] The public mood in Egypt after the 2013 counter-revolution could hardly be more at odds with the sense of joy and achievement that had gripped Egyptians after the downfall of Mubarak (Abdelrahman 2014, 135). Yet Soueif narrates the revolution not as a finished event that failed, but as a process that is ongoing and open (Soueif 2014, 12). She reveals how the resisters have productively engaged with disappointment and reconfigured their horizon of hope towards a persistent, grounded striving for radical change that appeals to its readers to "try and fail better" in the future.

My turn to the memoir accounts for how an individual author's record of the revolution can serve as a reliable guide for the understanding of the experience of multiple actors. Soueif is aware of the responsibility entailed in writing a story of a collective experience (Soueif 2014, 11). She does not aim to provide a comprehensive account of the Egyptian Revolution or ascribe disappointed hope to every protestor who participated in the uprising. Nevertheless, her account is representative of a plurality of the resisters' affective experience. She composes "a polyphony

[7] In the analysis, I follow the memoir's depiction of the revolutionary process, and only draw on secondary sources to provide additional details about main actors or events.

of voices", drawing on testimonies of prisoners, journalistic and human rights reports, blog posts and images of martyrs as well as official regime statements (Younas 2022, 5–6). This polyphony creates a "blended but fractured we", producing a collective story that lends due weight to differences of experience (Smith and Watson 2012, 605–7). Furthermore, Soueif engages with this polyphony of voices and sources to record how the resisters experienced and reflected on their disappointments as well as how they acted in response to them. Thus, she gains access to their disappointed hope as an affective response observable in the way it reconfigured the resisters' horizon of hope, rather than as an inner mental state.

"Nobody is going to step back into the nightmare": turn to persistent hope

The initial phase of spontaneous protests, taking place from 25 January to 11 February 2011, joined people in the demand for freedom, bread and social justice and instituted a decisive break with the status quo. Even though the uprising did not actually bring about the end of the unjust regime, it nudged the populace out of the complacent acquiescence that characterised their everyday lives—what Soueif calls "a zombie existence" (Soueif 2014, 53). The uprising instilled in the people the sense that things can be otherwise and that it is in their power to make them so (Soueif 2014, 77, see also 211). When Mubarak finally resigned, the streets of Egypt were an image of hope. As Soueif described it: "It's a party; joyful cries ring out constantly, people are dancing and jumping up and down on the traffic roundabout, dancing on the roofs of their cars, handing out candy" (Soueif 2014, 148).

The resisters' initial disappointment over the slow progress of the revolution referred to the actions of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF)—a military body entrusted with ensuring a peaceful transition of power to an elected parliament—which at first seemed to support the demands of the protesters while actually blocking "every practical aspect of the revolution" (Soueif 2014, 63). Then followed the widespread disenchantment over the rule of

the MB and Morsi, who demonstrated "that the only real project they had was their own empowerment" and profoundly betrayed their initial "commitment to the goals of the revolution" (Soueif 2014, 209–11).

This sense of disjuncture led the resisters to abandon their initial, end-oriented hope for a "swift" realisation of their revolutionary demands (Soueif 2014, 60). As Soueif writes, their disappointment led them to realise that they "were never going to clean out the residue of forty years of degradation and corruption in eighteen days, or a year" (Soueif 2014, 204). Yet the resisters responded to this sense of non-coincidence between their hopes and the disappointing reality by viewing the failures of the revolution as sites of new aspirations. Rather than giving in to despair, they held on to "the transformations that have taken place in our cities and in ourselves"—including the affective bonds of solidarity forged among the protesters and their sense of collective power to change things for the better (Grimm 2022, 27)—and drew on the unfulfilled past hopes as an inspiration for a continued struggle (Soueif 2014, 154). Soueif expressed this reorientation towards persistent hope when she wrote that while it was "not possible to say what will happen next, […] I know this won't stop. No one, nobody, not one of us, is going to step back into the nightmare" (Soueif 2014, 56).

Persistent hope was evident in the resisters' continued organisation of demonstrations and sit-ins to ensure that SCAF honoured its promise to secure a free election; that police officers accused of murdering protesters were arrested; that the court-martialling of civilians stopped; and that the new government established social justice programmes, such as minimum and maximum wages (Soueif 2014, 67). For instance, the November 2011 Million-Person March (Millioneyya) of One Demand, joined all political parties and resistance groupings in

protest against SCAF's attempt to control the writing of the Constitution.[8] The people again occupied Tahrir for several days, insisting that parliamentary elections happen on the 28th November as scheduled (Soueif 2014, 163–69). Their persistent hope drew from their sense of solidarity and collective power that they inherited from the experience of the initial protests in January 2011 (Soueif 2014, 167). One example of this inheritance was the resisters' spontaneous organisation of field hospitals, with the people donating equipment and medicines, young doctors volunteering their services and young men ferrying the injured from the front lines to the field hospitals on motorbikes (Soueif 2014, 167).

Another prominent way in which the resisters' persistent hope showed itself was in the stubborn efforts to dispute the lies broadcasted by the state media. The authorities' version of events was that "the revolution's succeeded and everything is fine and on course and needs to be left to the authorities" (Soueif 2014, 85). Everyone who was still protesting was considered "a traitor" likely to bring about "the downfall of the country" (Soueif 2014, 85). In response, a coalition of activist groups, including 6 April, No to Military Trials and the Mosireen Collective, started presenting documentary footage and witness statements testifying to the abuses the military committed against the protesters (Soueif 2014, 182). From this initiative emerged a people's street campaign called "Kazeboon" (Liars), which arranged unannounced public screenings across the country and played a decisive role "in stripping the military of popular legitimacy" (Soueif 2014, 183).

The resisters' persistent hope also was manifest in the October and November 2012 protests, which joined liberals, leftists, secularists and Christians against president Morsi. These

[8] Here some of the initial unity of the protestors was still active, even though the MB already started to organise separate protests because of the disagreement over the writing of the new Constitution (a development I elaborate on in the second subsection on grounded hopefulness).

protests were inspired by the recognition that Morsi had been president for one hundred days, yet little progress had been made towards the resisters' initial demands for freedom, bread and social justice, and the violations of human rights by the state continued (Soueif 2014, 202–4). On Friday, 12 October 2012, fittingly called "a Friday of Accounting," the anti-Morsi protesters gathered to demand that more women, young people, Christians, and seculars to be represented in the Constituent Assembly; a restructuring of the Ministry of the Interior; justice for the murdered and injured protesters; and minimum and maximum wages (Soueif 2014, 204). The independent unions (formed after the initial uprising in January 2011 to provide an alternative to old, state-dominated unions) and the revolutionary left raised their voices against Morsi's neoliberal policies that shied away from radically restructuring economic power relations (Soueif 2014, 203–6).

There were moments when "the nightmare chase[d] us, surprise[d] us, attack[ed] us"—when the realisation dawned on the resisters that maybe even the democratic electoral process "[would] "not lead to where we want[ed] to go" (Soueif 2014, 99). Nevertheless, some resisters of the leftist, pro-democracy bent—whom Soueif calls the "resolute core" (Soueif 2014, 214)—responded to the experiences of disappointment and failure by calling for vigilance. Their persistent hope was determined to keep any achievement of the revolution open to contestation, wary about how democratically elected institutions may betray the revolution's original aims. This turn is evident in one of Alaa Abd El-Fattah's messages from prison. Alaa—Soueif's nephew, a prominent activist and one of the leading voices of the 2011 uprising imprisoned for criticising the military abuses against the protesters—argued that the sense of being "let down" by the regime should warn the resisters against too easily trusting the institutions of the parliament and the president, and drive them to keep the pressure on the newly elected decision-makers through direct political action (Soueif 2014, 186–87).

"The Revolution Continues": on grounded hopefulness

Throughout the first eighteen days of protests, the resisters enjoyed a sense of moral clarity: there was "no doubt then who was on the side of right" (Soueif 2014, 119). Soon after the fall of the Mubarak regime, however, the political landscape became "more ambiguous, more confused" (Soueif 2014, 60, 12). The disappointment of the resisters concerned the resilience of the regime and its oppressive practices, the gradual closing down of the "public space" won during the revolution as well as the growing divisions among the protesters (Soueif 2014, 156, 63, 77). In response to these experiences of disjuncture, the resisters abandoned their abstract hope that the desired change would "follow on automatically from the success of the revolution and the removal of the head of the regime" (Soueif 2014, 98). Instead, they grounded their hope in a concrete negotiation of the possibilities for political action within the constraints of the existing system.

First, the resisters' grounded hopefulness manifested itself in their channelling their energies into struggles for freedom and justice in specific areas or spheres of activity, such as the workplaces. Frustrated by the lack of a plan on how to enact the goals of the revolution on the national level, people started to strike for elections, transparent budgets, and democratic control in state institutions and across the public sector, including factories, hospitals, universities, banks, law courts, ports, and schools (Soueif 2014, 63). Rather than accepting the existing boundaries of what is possible, they sought to transform the limiting conditions by struggling to "cleanse the state of the old regime" (so-called *tathir*)—to remove not only the representatives of the Mubarak regime in government, but also the "old regime" military and police officers that have penetrated all layers of state administration and public-sector institutions (Alexander and Bassiouny 2014; Soueif 2014, 60).

In July 2011, local council workers in Alexandria's Western Quarter locked the head of the council, an unelected general, out of the building and democratically elected a new head (Alexander and Bassiouny 2014, 299). Farag Sha'aban, the newly elected head, explained that

they were trying "this experiment" in democracy "in order to lead a movement for reform and change in society locally" (Sha'aban 2011). Even though this experiment in democracy only managed to institute a temporary rupture in the existing state institutions, it embodied the potential "to remake a small part of the Egyptian state from below" (Alexander and Bassiouny 2014, 299–300).

Similarly, several public hospitals in Cairo removed Mubarak-era managers and instituted forms of democracy in the workplace through the establishment of independent unions of hospital staff (Alexander and Bassiouny 2014, 296). In the case of the Manshiyet al-Bakri hospital in the northern suburbs of Cairo, the union ensured equal representation to all workers within the hospital, including manual workers, administrative staff, nurses, and doctors. As Fatma Zahra'a Abd-al-Hamid, representative for temporary admin staff on the union's council, explained: "After the revolution, we found that the issue of democracy and the legitimacy of the majority opinion became an 'open area' for everyone. […] In the meetings of the union council, for example, the manual worker rep sits next to the doctors. There is equality" (Alexander and Bassiouny 2014, 296).

Even though these struggles failed to translate their demands into a political programme and organisation that would represent them in the field of formal democratic politics (Alexander and Bassiouny 2014, 238, 223), their meaning was significant. By implementing the revolution's aims in their "own lives and workplaces" (Soueif 2014, 335), the people refused to accept their demands are unrealistic and experimented with the possibilities of bringing about a different world in the here and now.

Second, the resisters' grounded confrontation with the concrete possibilities for political action was evident in their efforts to negotiate the differences among varied resistance groups that participated in the uprising. What arose spontaneously at the beginning of the revolution—the coming together of various political groups, including Liberals, Progressives, the MB,

Salafis,[9] and the Islamic Group (Gamaat Islamiya), who "had rebelled together, broken bread together […] and finally died together"—all of the sudden seemed difficult, if not impossible (Soueif 2014, 77).

Soueif describes an initiative during the summer 2011 to make the Islamist, liberal and leftist forces work together to agree on the common goals of the revolution. To build the initial level of trust, the meeting was organised and chaired by people, including Soueif, who were not associated with any faction (Soueif 2014, 75–76). Nevertheless, the debate failed to result in an agreement on common goals. By that time, the disagreement concerned the writing of the draft constitution. Most liberals and leftists insisted that the constitution should be drafted before the parliamentary elections by an inclusive body representative of the Egyptian society, to ensure that the Islamists (likely to win in the elections) would not dominate the process. The MB, in contrast, wanted to avoid extending the interim period of SCAF rule and argued that the new constitution could only be legitimate if it resulted from a popular vote (Soueif 2014, 227–28; Jermanová 2020, 658). As a compromise solution, different groupings—including some formed across the secular-Islamist divide—created proposals for the selection of a representative founding committee and outlined general constitutional principles that would serve as a framework for the constitution (Soueif 2014, 228; Jermanová 2020, 658). These proposals did not bear fruit, however, as the secular forces were adamant to limit the Islamist influence over the constitutional process and the Islamists refused to bind themselves to any pre-constitutional agreements (Jermanová 2020, 658–59; Soueif 2014, 228).

Another disagreement among the resisters concerned the opposition between electoral politics and direct action. On the one hand, the Islamist current, including the MB and the

[9] While the Muslim Brotherhood has cast itself as a moderate Muslim party with electoral ambitions, the Salafis have been known for focusing largely on legal-theological issues and for advocating a return to a pure, traditional form of Islam (Ranko and Nedza 2016).

Salafis, pulled back from street action after the resignation of Mubarak. They directed their efforts to building a strong support base among the people for the upcoming elections, thereby inviting the charge that they were using the revolution for political ends (Soueif 2014, 188). On the other hand, the liberals and the progressive Left continued the protests to keep the pressure on the military, while failing to build a strong coalition for the parliamentary and presidential elections (Soueif 2014, 172, 188).

At the last minute before the parliamentary elections, the Left managed to build a coalition around "The Revolution Continues" campaign, which joined socialist, liberal and a liberal Islamic party formed by former youth activists of the MB (Soueif 2014, 172; Alexander and Bassiouny 2014, 259). Their programme focused on the redistribution of wealth in society, a democratic form of government with full equality for women and religious minorities, and freedom of expression and assembly (Ali 2011). Nevertheless, the coalition was not strong enough to compete with the organisational resources of the MB and the failure of presidential candidates on the Left to join forces led to the electoral defeat (Soueif 2014, 200). The winners of the parliamentary elections were the MB and the Salafis (Soueif 2014, 172), while the two powers heading for a run-off in the presidential elections were the MB and the Mubarak regime (Soueif 2014, 200). Soueif related the "terrible" choice between allowing the regime to come back and betraying all the sacrifices of the revolution on the one hand and supporting a religion-based, economically and politically conservative party, which itself engaged in the repression of protesters during its time in power (Soueif 2014, 200). As she relates the fateful moment: "I had been all set to write 'The Revolution Continues' right across the ballot. But I put my tick in front of Morsi's name and went home ill and miserable" (Soueif 2014, 201).

Their grappling with the disappointment over the failure of unity—and in particular over the failure of aligning strategically with the lesser of two evils—led the "resolute core" of the resisters to recognise that the goals of freedom, bread and social justice would be achieved neither under the old regime nor under the Islamist leadership (Soueif 2014, 214, 212). One

initiative that resulted from this realisation was the Revolutionary Path Front that was launched in late September 2013 and joined members of leftist parties, student and worker representatives, pro-democracy opposition groups, and activists (including Soueif) (Abdelrahman 2014, 115).

The initiative's learning to "fail better" was evident in their foreseeing the consequences of the people's protests against the MB and president Morsi in the summer of 2013, which called on the army to step in and thus lend legitimacy to the military coup (Soueif 2014, 213). The Front warned the (left and liberal) critics of Morsi against aligning themselves with remnants of the old regime, including the military. Its grounded hope was to establish a new unified front "in an urgent effort to advance the goals of the revolution" and to provide an alternative to both the MB and the military (The Revolution Path Front 2013). The Front's principles included the redistribution of wealth, a democratic redesign of state institutions, complete equality before the law, accountability for crimes against the people and a reform of the security apparatus to prevent the return of repressive practices (The Revolution Path Front 2013). Even though short-lived, these efforts on the left to build a revolutionary coalition illustrate the political potential of disappointed hope by sustaining the belief that a radical alternative to the past regime is possible (Abdelrahman 2014, 136).

Third, the resisters' grounded awareness of the limiting oppressive conditions did not result in a politics of compromise. Rather, they translated their disappointment over the resilience of the oppressive regime into a sober reflection on the ways existing conditions have constrained the actions of the resisters as well as how it might still be possible to move forward. As Soueif emphasized, it was necessary to recognise the "failures of our state," the "ills of our society" as well as the wrong turns of the revolution "if we are to put things right," "to clean out the corruption that has eaten into every aspect of public life" and "rebuild" the institutions (Soueif 2014, 204). The resisters' grounded hope recognised that real change is not possible by replacing any individual ruler but required changing the oppressive conditions and policies

"that marked the Mubarak era" (Soueif 2014, 213). This recognition allowed some resisters, like the ones joined in the Revolutionary Path Front, to insist on the possibility of a radical alternative, while acknowledging change could not be achieved with one sweep of the magic wand (Soueif 2014, 214).

"Our future has been paid for with their lives": hope and failure

The disappointed recognition of the complexities of resistant action inspired the resisters to view failure as an inevitable part of their utopian aspirations that can bring to light the neglected or marginalised possibilities for resistance. This was especially evident in the case of the resisters' profound sense of disappointment and betrayal at the brutal repression that the police and military forces perpetrated against the protesters. Their engagement with the losses they endured encouraged the resisters to keep alive the unfulfilled promise of the revolution—the possibility of an alternative future that the protesters' enacted during the revolutionary uprising, through experiments in self-governance and collective action. As Soueif expressed this promise and this possibility: "we had come together, as individuals, millions of us, in a great cooperative effort" and "placed our lives, with all trust and confidence, in each other's hands" (Soueif 2014, 16, 29).

Drawing on victim testimony and human rights reports, Soueif painstakingly recorded how the police and military forces drove cars into groups of protesters, how snipers shot men and women from the rooftops, how the thug militias (*baltagis*) sponsored by the regime threw Molotov cocktails and stones on them, and how the protesters were kidnapped from the streets, arrested, tortured and jailed (Soueif 2014, 32–33, 36, 39, 122–23, 125, 181). The memoir did not cast them into the role of the sacrificial martyrs whose sacrifice was a necessary step on the path of revolution and therefore redeemed. In contrast, it recorded how the resisters' memory of loss and disappointment was invoked as an inspiration to continue fighting in the face of

defeat. For instance, a father of a killed protester proclaimed: “He died for the revolution, and I will live for the revolution” (Soueif 2014, 80). As Soueif encapsulated the protesters’ commitment to persisting in the struggle: “If we tire or our hope dims, if our optimism for a moment falters, we will open our hearts and they [the murdered comrades] will come to us […] we will create the Egypt they died for” (Soueif 2014, 40–41).

Remembering the victims of the revolution allowed the resisters to persist “in the break,” to keep alive the promise of the impossible. For instance, the banners with stencilled faces of the victims, such as Mina Danial—a Coptic Christian activist known for his commitment to social justice and opposition to sectarian tendencies—lifted the protesters’ spirits “at the darkest points of our confrontations with the military” (Soueif 2014, 156). As Soueif writes, Mina’s banner always denoted a space that was “human and humane and inclusive and clever and free”, characterized by a gathering of “kindred spirits” (Soueif 2014, 156).

Similarly, the Muhammad Mahmoud Street, the infamous site of a massacre of protesters by the military, became “the place we went to for emotional and spiritual sustenance” (Soueif 2014, 202). The graffiti, drawings and texts there spoke of the victims of the revolution and “reminded us what it was we were fighting for” (Soueif 2014, 202). The reinterpretation of the losses of the revolution as an inspiration for the future countered the hegemonic narrative furthered by the regime that resistant action by the people was bound to fail. To the contrary—while acknowledging that those who have lost their loved ones may have no more strength to persist in resistance—the practices of mourning signified an appeal to everyone to join the fight for the vision of the future that their children died for. As Soueif expressed this appeal: “Our future has been paid for with their lives. There is no turning back” (Soueif 2014, 149).

This future-oriented practice of memorialising the failures and losses of the revolution mirrors the role of the memoir as an exercise in persistent, grounded hope, an appeal to its readers to “try and fail better” in the future. Soueif relates the moments of the revolution, its

successes as well as failures, so as to help us understand the path that "got us" to where we are now, in the present—and thus to help future generations find inspiration in the unfulfilled possibilities prized open by the uprising (Soueif 2014, 17). By narrating how the resisters confronted the complexities of resistant action and reconfigured their actions in response to disappointment, the story works to inspire the reader to "try to respond to" and learn from defeat, to continue the struggle *in spite of* the risk of failure and embrace the unpredictability of the future (Ball 2022, 60). In this way, Soueif encourages us to understand the failed revolution as a beginning or one of the many beginnings that eventually will bring about its "great, human aims" (Soueif 2014, 214).

Conclusion

Against the dominant perception of disappointment as a demobilising affect, this essay explored the politically transformative potential of disappointment. I argued that the resisters' grappling with their disappointment can lead them to reconfigure their horizon of hope towards a persistent, practice-oriented striving for greater freedom and justice that is willing to bear the risk of failure. Thereby, I sought to contest the fatalist narratives of the futility of resistance, specifically as articulated on the example of the Arab Spring uprising in Egypt. Through a careful reading of Ahdaf Soueif's memoir of the Egyptian Revolution, I showed how the resisters' disappointed hope creatively confronted the complexities of resistance in the wake of a failed revolution. I analysed Soueif's memoir as itself a performative investment in persistent, grounded hope, telling the story of the Revolution's disappointments and unfulfilled promises so as to inspire the readers to learn from past failures and thus amplify the possibilities for future revolutionary engagement.

My argument about the transformative potential of disappointment should not be seen as prescribing a moral duty, chiding resisters who give in to despair as somehow morally

deficient, or as a panacea in response to a failed revolution. There are limits to what the resisters' grappling with their disappointment can do in the face of overwhelming repression, and sometimes disengagement or capitulation are unavoidable. Acknowledgement of the limits of disappointment as a transformative affect is especially pertinent in light of the ongoing crackdown on resisters in Egypt, which has all but extinguished the political space for protest. Nevertheless, an exploration of the potential positive value of disappointment is politically significant, given hegemonic attempts to misuse disappointment to instil in resisters or the general populace a sense of despair and fatalism. In such contexts, disappointed hope can open a political space of possibility that gets foreclosed when viewing disappointment as a demobilising affect. Soueif's narrative of the Revolution as an exercise in persistent, grounded hope represents an important instance of such an opening. By tracing how the resisters refused the lure of fatalism, constantly reconfiguring the forms of revolutionary praxis in response to disappointment, it heeds Soueif's recent appeal to keep alive "the spirit of revolution" in the face of defeat in the present (Ball 2022, 60).

Revealing how resisters can productively engage with disappointment and reframe their aspirations towards persistent, grounded hope in response to it is important in complicating the overly idealised visions of resistance as immediately effective, without however abandoning the possibility of change. Recognition of the many complexities and failures of resistant action may easily lapse into a reformist politics of compromise or a withdrawal from political engagement altogether. Disappointed hope, in contrast, keeps alive the radical potential of resistance, exploring the however limited possibilities for expanding the sphere of freedom and justice within the constraints of the existing system. The resisters' disappointed turn to persistent hope draws the inspiration to continue the struggle in the bleakest of circumstance not from the confidence of success but precisely from the unfulfilled hopes inherited from past failures. Grounded hopefulness, in turn, pushes the boundaries of the possible, while remaining aware of the flawed character of oppositional action within oppressive conditions. The resisters'

changed relationship to failure, finally, offers the resources for braving the risk and unpredictability of the future, appealing to future generations to continue their struggles in their own time and context.

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