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Waiting through Furlough: A Geography of Disorientation

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Waiting through Furlough

A Geography of Disorientation

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Contents

03. Sharing Experiences

04. Losing Orientation: Leading a "Shadow Life"

05. Temporal Disorientation: Out of "Work Rhythms"

06. Tensive Disorientation: "Hanging in Space, in Time"

07. Conclusion: The Disorientations of Waiting through Furlough

08 Appendix

Abstract

~ Waiting through Furlough: A Geography of Disorientation ~

This thesis tells a story of waiting. More specifically the thesis investigates the lived experience of those who waited through furlough as part of the UK Government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which paid workers to not work during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the pandemic and the scheme form its backdrop, the thesis foregrounds understandings of how waiting through furlough was lived and felt. The thesis investigates the embodied feelings and detached work life relations experienced by those furloughed and how they narrated their experience. It draws on the accounts of furloughed workers shared in thirty-five in depth interviews, and extended attention to the spatial, temporal, corporeal, felt and tensive dimensions of waiting, through literatures of waiting, affect and queer phenomenology. In doing so the thesis argues that the detachment from work life and its rhythms made life disorientating for those waiting through furlough. As such, this thesis is also a story of disorientation.

Disorientation is conceptualised in the thesis as having a plurality of forms and shaped the furlough's capacity to act, feel and endure their situation. Spatial disorientation involves an orientation towards another who becomes an emotional marker for those furloughed. Temporal disorientation is the consequence of an orientation towards work time which is maintained, substituted for, slips or become hazy. Tensive disorientation describes how the suspension from work life is felt as a series of tensions. This study's surfacing of the different dimensions of disorientations within a duration of waiting, potentially adds to understandings of embodied disorientations and (non)work life within geographies of waiting, disorientation, labour and COVID-19.

Keywords

Abbreviations

CJRS	Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
LFT	Lateral Flow Test
ONS	(UK) Office for National Statistics
PCR	Polymerase Chain Reaction Test
SARS-CoV-2	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2
SEISS	Self Employed Income Support Scheme
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol
Wi-Fi	Wireless Fidelity (connective wireless technology)

Declaration

I certify that the thesis I have presented is solely my own work.

Statement of Copyright

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Firstly, and most importantly, I want to thank the people whose experiences are the basis of this thesis for sharing them with me.

*

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~ Waiting ~

Preface

It is Spring 2004, and I am waiting for a blood test in a hospital. I am in a pale blue windowless room, blank except for a handle-less door to the left, a letter box in the middle of one wall and six blue chairs positioned in rows in the centre of the space. I slipped a yellow piece of paper through the letter box earlier. That act is the trigger for the appointment call by medics that I am waiting for. It is not the first or second time I've waited here, I've been visiting this room for the past couple of months waiting for a series of tests. I am tired. All my time is accounted for and filled, my life busy with a fulltime design job, single motherhood and extra freelance work to make ends meet. I wait unreachable by text or call as my mobile is switched off, a requirement of the hospital. I sit and daydream about what it would be like to be paid to sleep. My waits here have not always felt so relaxed. My employer imposes a two-hour window for medical appointments, so when I initially made these visits I felt the strain of delay, of waiting too long and the repercussions that might create. I am not sure what catalysed it, but I eventually let that tension go. Although I am in a potentially stressful situation, as I wait, I relax and let my mind wander. I allow the feeling of expansive time to open. Waiting has become a different kind of space, a space where I can rest and recuperate from my over full life. My waiting experiences of 2004 were of course not the only times I've waited, but the recognition of waiting as a promissory space has stayed with me.

I want to share another story of waiting. It is the 25th of July 2020 and I receive a copy of Barry Schwartz's 1975 book 'Queuing and Waiting' in the post. It is an oft quoted volume in the canon of waiting literature and after a considerable amount of searching online I was delighted to find my own copy. It is an ex-library book from an American College. Apart from the red spine which has been sunbathing, inside it is pristine and has been like that since 1975. It does not have the smell of an old book. Its pages are fresh and un-

yellowed, and the type is sharp and unfuzzy. The hand typed library loan inventory stuck in the back, is untouched like it had been glued there yesterday. It has never been loaned. There is something poetically hopeful about a book about waiting that has waited to be read for forty-five years. Perhaps that hopefulness is mirrored by own experience of waiting for the time to be right to suspend my busy life and in 2018 embark on a study of that which started to pique my interest in 2004, the act of waiting.

20th August 2023.

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~ Introduction and Context ~

Waiting through Furlough

1.1 Mass Waiting

"Good afternoon.

The economic intervention that I'm announcing today is unprecedented in the history of the British state. Combined with our previous announcements on public services and business support, our planned economic response will be one of the most comprehensive in the world. Let me speak directly to people's concerns. I know that people are worried about losing their jobs. About not being able to pay the rent or the mortgage. About not having enough set by for food and bills. I know that some people in the last few days have already lost their jobs. To all those at home right now, anxious about the days ahead, I say this: you will not face this alone".

"Today I can announce that, for the first time in our history, the government is going to step in and help to pay people's wages. We're setting up a new Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Any employer in the country – small or large, charitable or non-profit - will be eligible for the scheme. Employers will be able to contact HMRC for a grant to cover most of the wages of people who are not working but are furloughed and kept on payroll, rather than being laid off... That means workers in any part of the UK can retain their job, even if their employer cannot afford to pay them, and be paid at least 80% of their salary"
(H. M. Treasury and Sunak 2020a).

At 20:30 hrs on the 20th of March 2020, the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak made that speech as part of a live television broadcast to the UK populace. In the light of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the ensuing pandemic and the need to mitigate its spread, the government had already advised people to avoid 'social venues' such as pubs and theatres (Prime Minister's Office and Johnson 2020a). As a consequence of this advice, sectors, businesses and jobs had potentially become economically precarious. At a time of mass uncertainty, Sunak announced government measures he said were intended to protect jobs and incomes. An unprecedented intervention by a UK government, The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme enabled employers to hold jobs open in sectors that had paused trading. Through the scheme, employees were suspended from work life and paid not to work (furloughed), Sunak suggested that this was an attempt to reduce economic and job insecurity in the UK. At this point although certain sectors had been forced to pause trading such as hospitality, a widespread lockdown had not yet happened.

On the 23rd of March 2020, the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson (Prime Minister's Office and Johnson 2020b) announced a UK wide lockdown to minimise interaction between people to reduce the rate of infection of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Failure to lockdown he suggested would result in the National Health Service (NHS) operating beyond its capacity. The government advice was to 'stay at home' and only leave for essential shopping, exercise, medical treatment or travelling to essential workplaces. Workplaces such as non-essential retailers, libraries, playgrounds and places of worship were ordered to close with immediate effect. The announcement marked that the start of the first UK national lockdown would happen the next day. And thus, a period of mass waiting commenced across the UK.

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This thesis tells a story of waiting. It tells a story of a group of people, whose work life was suspended through being furloughed, waiting for it to resume. Amidst a space-time of uncertainty instigated by the COVID-19 pandemic, this group experienced an enforced detachment from their usual work life and the requirement to wait in an unknown duration for it to begin again. The situation of waiting through furlough opened an opportunity to explore waiting in unknown durations, in relative comfort, detached from

the normal flows of work life. In other words to find out what it feels like to be paid not work and wait. The study had a starting point of three lines of inquiry:

1. What embodied feelings did the space-time of waiting through furlough instigate?
2. How was a suspended relation from an organisation (workplace) lived and felt by furloughed individuals?
3. How did people waiting in unknown durations narrate their experience?

By following these lines of inquiry the study initially aimed to understand the lived experience of waiting through furlough, beyond being an economic strategy and a set of statistics, to a duration lived and felt by individuals. Through the accounts of thirty-five furloughed people and theories of waiting, affect, and queer phenomenology, the study considered waiting through furlough as a series of attachments, detachments, and orientations. In doing so, this thesis became a story of a plurality of disorientations. Consequently, the thesis argues that *the detachment from work life and its rhythms, made life disorientating for those waiting through furlough.*

Contextually, the thesis contributes to social and cultural geography by developing an understanding of the lived experience of waiting through furlough in the UK during the pandemic. In doing so, the thesis adds to the emerging geographies of COVID-19. The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic permeated all aspects of everyday life, which potentially will have resonances that will be felt within social and cultural life for some time to come. In order to understand the future impacts of furlough on individuals, it is important to have paid detailed attention to how it unfolded and how it impacted individual lives at the time. As such this study will support future waiting and geographic research with a focus on the impacts on work life and home life during furlough and the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, the focus in the thesis on the waiting body contributes to social and cultural geography of neoliberal conditions through its attention to feelings and the uncertainties of non-work life.

Conceptually, the thesis extends work on waiting in geography, by drawing on Sara Ahmed's (2006a) concept of queer phenomenology. In particular, the study draws on

Ahmed's conceptualisations of orientation, disorientation and reorientation which I suggest have an affinity with the tensions experienced by a waiting body. In working with a queer phenomenological approach, the thesis opens the opportunity to explore disorientation as a felt capacity within the embodied experience of waiting. Doing so deepens an understanding of how bodies affect and are affected by durational waiting. Secondly the focus in the study of detachment from work life through Ahmed's conceptualisation of orientation and disorientation and through theories of affect, enhances emerging bodies of work in geography exploring attachment, detachment and disorientation within quotidian and work life.

This first chapter outlines the context and themes that underpin and weave throughout the thesis. Firstly in order to ground the thesis in its substantive context I outline the new spaces of waiting during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and furlough. Secondly the chapter opens the theoretical context of the thesis through discussions of orientation, detachment, and disruptions to work life. Thirdly, the chapter details the thematic context of the thesis - waiting. In particular I discuss waiting as indicative of certain social and cultural conditions. Fourth, I outline who was most likely to be furloughed statistically and the implications of furlough for different intersections of workers. I then detail the figure of the furloughed as portrayed in media and wider discourse. Both the statistical data and media figure of the furloughed, act as a foil for the lived experiences explored in this study. Fifth, I discuss the lines of inquiry that the new circumstance of waiting through furlough opened. Finally I outline the structure of the thesis.

1.2 New Spaces of Waiting During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic or more precisely measures to minimise its spread, necessitated the creation of new forms of waiting. These in turn created new 'geopolitical and biopolitical' consequences as UK government directives distanced or contained people (Maddrell et al 2023:385; also Nieuwenhuis 2020). The pandemic produced new 'space-time' conditions (see Massey 1992b; 2001) through the government obligation to test for exposure to, or for symptoms of the SARS-CoV-2 virus requiring individuals to isolate for

hours or days for results[1]. Further space-times emerged through the practice of quarantine where people with symptoms of the virus separated themselves and waited for their illness to subside so as not to infect others, thus creating a new form of social responsibility. The UK government introduced social distancing in March 2020 (Prime Minister's Office and Johnson, 2020a). The practice of standing two metres apart from other people, necessitated that less people be simultaneously in indoor spaces such as shops (Burton 2022:219). This had the effect of creating elongated queues both inside and outside retail spaces (Joiner et al 2022:13; Jones 2022) creating a slower pace when purchasing goods and services. The UK government's mass vaccination programme (U.K. Health Security Agency, 2020) created new spaces of waiting within communities, as people waited to initially be vaccinated or for booster doses in new vaccination centres[2] (Department of Health and Social Care 2021b). Living through the COVID-19 pandemic was typified by physical distance and detachment from others. As such the new material infrastructures that surrounded the COVID-19 spaces of waiting became signifiers of social, cultural and economic conditions that the pandemic had changed.

Patterns of quotidian life transformed during the pandemic when schools and work-places closed requiring home schooling (Rose-Redwood et al 2020:99), home working (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2023; Reuschke and Felstead 2020) or waiting at home through furlough (Prime Minister's Office & Johnson, 2020b). These measures increased the demand for activity online, slowing WIFI signals and creating digital waiting spaces as we connected to others through communication platforms such as Zoom (Osler and Zahavi 2022; Walsh 2020:158). As social life during the pandemic became more mediated through online technology, those without digital access became disadvantaged

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[1] LFT (Lateral Flow) tests took 30 minutes to obtain results (Department of Health and Social Care 2021a). PCR (polymerase chain reaction) tests took 12 to 24 hours to obtain results (Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust 2020)

[2] The UK government set up temporary vaccination centres across the UK in order to roll out it COVID-19 vaccination programme (Department of Health and Social Care 2021b). These centres were housed in large venues such as 'football stadiums', 'hospital hubs' and general practice surgeries and 'community pharmacies' (ibid). My own experience of vaccination took place in a previously closed and specially reopened medical centre (three vaccinations) and a mobile vaccination centre outside a general practice surgery (one vaccination). The social and cultural conditions of the vaccination centres: their particular space-time dimensions as designated spaces, the temporality of waiting for the vaccine (or side effects) to take effect and their signification of wider social and health challenges (a medical centre closed due to health service cuts was reopened) could make UK COVID-19 vaccination centres suitable sites for (as yet to be conducted) geographic research.

economically, educationally and socially (Bambra et al 2021: 48-49; British Academy, 2021:9). For some, lack of digital access to online information about the virus made them potentially vulnerable to the disease (Beaunoyer et al, 2020:4). Whilst for others home schooling became challenging without access to digital learning (Andersen et al, 2021:4) and work impossible without internet access at home (Reuschke and Felstead, 2020). From the onset of the pandemic, women were more likely to undertake caring duties for vulnerable family members such as children and elderly relatives (Andersen et al 2022; Lupton and Willis 2021:6; Manzo and Minello 2020). Which in turn changed some women's ability to participate in paid employment or forced them to juggle caring and work responsibilities (Krajewski et al 2023:4).

What we saw and experienced whilst waiting through the pandemic, brought to the fore underlying social issues and surfaced multiple inequalities which traversed gender, race, and economic situation. For some, waiting through the pandemic opened challenges to their mental health through the social isolation of being contained at home for a protracted period (Nash and Lyon 2023:648-9) or exacerbated existing mental health issues (British Academy, 2021:30-35) However, social distancing and the temporary closing of some mental health provision meant that some of those in distress had to wait for help (British Academy, 2021:45) which may also have had significant impacts on their long term mental health. The mental health of women was more affected than men during the pandemic with a connection made between lockdowns and lower mental health (ibid:39). For those waiting for non-COVID-19 related medical treatment, being forced to wait longer due to the demands on health professionals to treat those affected by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, held potential long-term or life limiting implications (Burton 2021:221; van der Miesen 2020). In the UK, the SARS-CoV-2 virus was twice as likely to affect those in areas of economic deprivation such as the North East of England (Bambra et al 2021:9-10, 31-32). Levels of deprivation also affected the UK mortality rate. Mortality rates were highest in areas of most deprivation, with figures incrementally decreasing as deprivation in an area decreased (UK Health Security 2021[3]). Other health equalities proved even more shocking as non-white ethnic groups were more likely to die as the result of SARS-CoV-2 virus in the UK. The rate of deaths was reported as highest in

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[3] UK Health Security COVID-19 death figures use the Indices of Multiple Deprivation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2019).

'Other ethnic group'[4], followed by 'Asian or Asian British', 'Black or Black British', 'Mixed' and then 'White' (UK Health Security 2021). Starkly deaths in the 'Other ethnic' category were proportionally six times higher than in the 'White ethnic' category. The COVID-19 pandemic created a new 'deathscape' in the UK (Maddrell 2020:110), which as the pandemic progressed and further fatalities occurred may have altered previous feelings of 'distance from death' (Ho and Maddrell 2021:3). In other words, death or the threat of death became all too ubiquitous during the pandemic[5]. I draw attention to social and cultural issues surfaced by the pandemic, as a reminder that when an individual was held in a new space of waiting such as a shopping queue or a vaccination centre or at home, their wait may have been coloured by wider social conditions and multiple imbricating inequalities. As such, people waiting were conceivably experiencing new feelings and sensations.

Paying attention to individual experiences of the new spaces of waiting matters. The statistics for the COVID-19 pandemic reveal rates of infection, levels of mortality and inequalities across race, gender and economic position. Statistics indicate how many people were furloughed or in receipt of SEISS grants across industry sectors. They convey how many people eventually went back to their pre-furlough jobs or were made redundant. Nonetheless they do not disclose how the experience of waiting through furlough was lived and felt by individuals. To that end, this study set out to explore how the new spaces of waiting which emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic affected individuals. More particularly the study focusses on a form of waiting peculiar to UK workers during the pandemic, furlough.

1.3 Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

One of the major disruptions created by COVID-19 government restrictions was to work life. On March 23rd, 2020 (Prime Minister's Office and Johnson 2020a) the UK government announced that a state of national emergency created by the COVID-19

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[4] The figures were reported between 29 June 2020 to 31 May 2021 (ONS 2021c). The statistics have a 95% Confidence Interval. 'Other ethnic group' is categorised by the UK Office for National Statistics as 'Arab' and 'Any other ethnic group, please describe'.

[5] The World Health Authority (2023) officially announced the end of the global COVID-19 pandemic on 5th May 2023.

pandemic necessitated that people should stay at home and minimise interactions with others. Announced via a televised broadcast to the UK populace by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the stipulation to not be near others to mitigate the threat of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, necessitated certain workplaces to pause functioning. Workplaces including non-essential retailers[6] selling goods such as clothes or electronics, service businesses like beauty parlours and estate agencies, leisure facilities such as gyms, casinos and theatres were all required to stop trading.

In the light of the potential economic crisis created by the pandemic, on the 20th of March 2020 the UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak, announced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) (H.M. Treasury and Sunak 2020a). The scheme supported businesses to retain jobs that were unable to operate (or operate to full capacity) due to the introduction of government measures to contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Businesses could claim up to 80% of an employee's wage for the time not working, an amount capped at £2500 per month per employee (HM Revenue and Customs, 2020a). Workers whose contracted time was paid for through the scheme were 'furloughed'. The scheme could be utilised by businesses with employees working under differing contractual arrangements: 'full-time, part-time, agency, flexible or zero-hour contracts' (ibid). Whilst furloughed, employees could undertake training or voluntary work but not generate income for the business or organisation that they were furloughed from. An employee could be furloughed from more than one business or organisation at a time. Alternatively an employee could be employed and furloughed by one employer, and also be employed and working for another company, but the employments could not overlap. Whether an employee was furloughed or not was dependent on whether the employment was in a sector affected by COVID-19 induced restrictions. Over its life span, March 2020 to September 2021, the scheme supported 1.3 million employers and 11.7 million employments (ONS 2023a). A quarter of the UK workforce had been supported by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme at some point during its operation (ibid).

As further lockdowns and other government initiatives were introduced during the lifespan of the scheme, sectors affected by the pandemic were forced to adapt to those

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[6] Retailers deemed 'essential' were supermarkets, pharmacies, petrol stations, DIY stores, post offices, newsagents, corner shops and banks.

changes. In the initial months of the scheme between 23rd March – 31st July 2020, the sectors with the most full-time furloughed workers were 'Arts, Entertainment and Recreation[1]' and 'Accommodation and Food Services[2]' (HM Revenue & Customs, 2020b). 'Flexible furlough' where workers could be furloughed for part of their contracted time was introduced from 1st July 2020. 'Accommodation and food services' had the highest proportion of flexibly furloughed workers from 1st of July – 31st of July 2020. Between 3rd and 31st of August 2020, the UK government ran a 'Eat Out to Help Out' scheme created to support the restaurant sector gain revenue after a period of inactivity during the national lockdown and subsequent restrictions (HM Revenue & Customs, 2020c). The scheme enabled restaurants to provide discount dining three days a week and bring workers back to work from furlough. A tiered system of local movement restrictions was introduced in July 2020 and cities such as Leicester and regions like Greater Manchester underwent more stringent localised lockdown measures. Wales entered a second national lockdown between 23rd October and 9th November 2020, and England a further lockdown between 5th of November and 2nd of December 2020. As a result, affected workers may have been in and out of furlough or flexi-furlough several times over the life span of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

A further scheme to support the self-employed, The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS)[7] was announced on the 26th of March 2020 (HM Treasury and Sunak, 2020b). SEISS grants enabled self-employed people to claim 80% of their usual income with a cap also at £2500 per month (Seely and Hirst, 2020:7). Unlike people on furlough, those in receipt of SEISS could continue to trade in their usual work but had to demonstrate that their income had been significantly reduced by the pandemic (ibid). According to UK government statistics 11.7 million jobs in the UK were supported by Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (ONS, 2023a) and 2.9 million self-employed workers accessed SEISS grants (ONS, 2021b). The UK government narrative was that these schemes were intended to protect jobs and livelihoods during the uncertain and unforeseeable circumstances of the pandemic (H. M. Treasury and Sunak 2020a; HM Treasury and Sunak, 2020b).

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[7] There were three participants in the study who received SEISS grants. All three were from the theatre sector and did not continue to work during their enforced suspension from work. For expedient reasons throughout the thesis I refer to all the participants as the 'furloughed'.

The employment practice of furlough was a relatively unknown employment strategy within pre-pandemic United Kingdom[8] (Stuart et al, 2021:5). The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which attempted to preserve jobs through furlough, was an unusual strategy for a UK government[9]. Previous UK economic downturns had garnered limited state intervention of the labour market (Bergström, 2019:102). Mitigation of the effects of other downturns were market driven, with individual businesses expected to develop their own crisis management strategies (Stuart et al, 2021:4). Redundancy had been (and remains) the general response of UK businesses to economic downturn (Shuttleworth et al 2005:1651; Stuart et al, 2021:3). An important distinction to keep in mind is that job roles were retained by the scheme and by default, individuals kept their jobs. This distinguishes the individual from the job role, they are separate entities. I draw attention to this as a reminder that as we move through the thesis, the experiences of the furloughed people are in relation to the suspension of *their job role* and that in some cases their workplace carried on activity or production without them. Continuation of planning or administrative activity occurred within sectors such as hospitality and theatres whose public facing activity ceased during the pandemic. This meant that some of those furloughed had colleagues who continued to work in their absence.

1.4 Furlough, Orientation and Disorientation

The etymology of the noun 'furlough' derives from the Dutch word *verlof* meaning an exemption from service or a permission to leave duty (OED 2022). To be given furlough is to be permitted leave of absence from work, military service or prison. Furlough originally involved a request from an employee to an employer for leave of absence (ibid).

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[8] Although a new move to protect the economy by a UK government, similar job retention schemes or schemes which subsidised wages were also utilised during the pandemic by governments in Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland (Mayhew and Anand 2020: s216; Seemann et al 2021).

[9] It should be noted that although the prevailing discourse around The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was that it was an innovation. Jay Wiggan and Chris Grover (2022) argue that it had a precedent in an earlier UK Conservative government initiative The Temporary Short Time Working Compensations Scheme. That scheme was employed by the government of Margaret Thatcher between 1979 and 1984, during a period of economic downturn. Both schemes were initiated to preserve the labour market, which for Wiggan and Grover were entangled with class politics and the 'commodification of labour'. Further discussion of the political motivation of the creation of The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is beyond the scope of this thesis, suffice to say that the two schemes operated differently at a functional level.

More recently the dynamic has reversed. In the United States, to furlough is to dismiss or suspend an employee without pay due to the economic conditions of the company or organisation[10]. Since 2020 in the U.K., furlough has been defined by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme as a practice of paid suspension from a workplace (ibid). Nonetheless whichever etymological line we follow, to be furloughed is to be absent and disconnected from a place of activity and habitual routines. For a worker, furlough was a space-time which potentially unsettled their usual orientation towards work life.

To speak of an orientation to work life or being work-orientated is to describe *a relation* with work. As a geographic concept, to be spatially orientated, one must forge a relation with a physical reference, such as a compass point (Schmit di Friedberg 2018:27-30) or symbol on a map (Massey 2005:109). And yet, compass points and maps are culturally bound approximations of space (Massey 2005:7), which are devised to cultivate a *sense of certainty* amidst otherwise spatial unknowns. Bodily, orientation may be felt through one's senses (McCormack 2009:101) via sensory feedback loops. Whether seeing a landmark (Schmit di Friedberg 2018:44), hearing a recognised sound (Hemsworth 2016:92), smelling an aroma (Xiao et al 2020), touching surfaces to way find (Edensor and Falconer 2015:607), or tasting familiar food (Sou and Webber 2021:5) the body has the capacity to create a relation with another body, which supports our understanding of feeling orientated. Likewise, to feel the surety of being orientated in time involves forming a relation to an external point of reference (Velasco 2021:444) such as clock hands, a factory whistle, or a church bell (May and Thrift 2001:15). Although as references to time, these are also culturally defined and therefore arbitrary (ibid:14-16). Doreen Massey (1994:5) argues that as space-times are socially constituted, they are a dynamic and constantly shifting 'geometry' of interconnections. These are relations that move in and out of intensity and focus (ibid). it could be said that the security of feeling orientated in space and time, are relations always in a state of flux.

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[10] In the United Kingdom, the practice of unpaid suspension from work due to the economic conditions of a company is known as 'laying off' (Department for Work and Pensions 2023b). The UK version of furlough as a paid suspension from work is different from the United States practice of furlough which is an unpaid 'laying off' of a worker.

Conceptually, feeling orientated is about finding or knowing one's position, through the formation of a relation with an external something. Beyond space or time, that external something could be a person, or action, or object, or set of objects, or a situation. Being or feeling, for example, task-orientated, technology-orientated, community-orientated, or having a sexual orientation, are articulations of a relation or set of relations a person is inclined towards and is positioning themselves within (see Bürkner and Lange 2020; Cram 2019; Jordhus-Lier 2013). Work life may be felt as a collection of relations: to colleagues, to a salary, the space of the workplace and to work tasks (Dutta 2020; Ettlinger 2004; Warren 2019). An 'orientation to work' may therefore involve a multiplicity of intersecting relations (Dutta 2020:1360). These may be felt within and outside the workplace, connecting domestic lives or social ties to work life (Carswell 2016; Hastings and MacKinnon 2017). Nonetheless, to have an orientation to one's work life is to feel orientated by something one is acquainted with and maintains a position towards.

Feeling disorientation on the other hand, can be a position in the unfamiliar (Noxolo and Preziuso 2013:168) or experiencing something familiar from an unaccustomed angle (Massey 2005:109). It is the surety of position (no matter how spuriously founded) that feeling orientated grants, and that feeling disorientated disallows. In disorientation, an orientating relation may become changed (Anderson 2015:2) or become unravelled (Bissell and Gorman-Murray 2019:708; Kinkaid 2020:180; Raynor 2017). This does not mean that the relation is lost. A residue of an orientating relation can remain within a person's feelings of disorientation. In their 'geography of disorientation', Pat Noxolo and Marika Preziuso (2013:168) open the possibility that in people's movement out of the familiar to the unfamiliar, new orientations can be formed but also relations of 'where they are no longer', can be maintained. Being furloughed does not share the enforced violence of slavery or (on the face of it) the precarity of economic migration discussed by Noxolo and Preziuso (2013), but I draw from them the notion of the folding in of existing orientations within new disorientations. I will discuss disorientation, particularly Sara Ahmed's (2006a;2006b) conceptualisation of disorientation, in more depth in the next chapter (section 2.10). Suffice it to say that a worker with an orientation towards the surety of work life, possibly found being detached from work through furlough a

disorientating experience. In their disorientation, they potentially also maintained their orientation to their former work life.

1.5 Furlough as a Detachment from Work life

Being furloughed instigated a period of waiting which detached those affected from their usual work life. Individuals furloughed may have felt the disconnection from colleagues acutely, as orientation to work and work life are for some integral to the formation of a fulfilling life (Hong 2022:3; Horgan: 2021: 24; Jaffe 2021:1; Sharma: 2014:90). A life may be formed of stages: birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age and death (Bailey 2009; Stewart 2013). Within those life stages a person may orientate towards the goal of happiness through a series of objects (Ahmed 2010b: 32). An object[11] can be anything, but whether they are a someone or something, they come to hold certain promises (Berlant 2006:20). What may be considered an object is individuated, but they may mobilise a person towards a good education, finding a life partnership, parenthood, making a home or towards certain employment. Objects orient people in particular directions in the hope of finding fulfilment and contentment (Ahmed 2010b: 32; Berlant 2006:20). As I have already maintained, orientation involves the formation of a relation with an external something. In their orientation towards it, people may create an attachment to the object of having a work life. For Lauren Berlant (2011a:13) 'attachment is a structure of *relationality*' [emphasis in the original] or a relation between a subject and an object which the subject feels an optimistic need to maintain. Sara Ahmed (2014:209) determines attachment as 'being moved *by* as a connection *to*' [emphasis in the original]. In other words, attachment to an object is the feeling of being moved by it and its promises and subsequently feeling connected to it. Both Berlant's optimistic relation and Ahmed's feeling of connection are echoed by Simone Weil (2021:160-161) for whom attachment to an object is a form of 'energy' that sustains a life. For Weil (2021:143) we form attachments because either there is something positive that we are seeking from the attachment, or the attachment is something 'we cannot do without'.

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[11] Lauren Berlant (2006:20) suggests a varied list of potential objects, 'a person, a thing, an institution, a text, a norm, a bunch of cells, smells, a good idea'. For Berlant (ibid) the object itself is unimportant, it is the orientation towards the object that creates the attachment relation and therefore it is the promise of the object that is of interest.

'All attachment is optimistic, if we describe optimism as the force that moves
you out of yourself and into the world in order to bring closer the satisfying
something that you cannot generate on your own but sense in the wake of a
person, a way of life, an object, project, concept, or scene' (Berlant 2011a:1-2).

Attachment for Lauren Berlant (ibid) is an anticipation that certain objects have the
potential to move us in specific ways towards fulfilment or in Ahmed's (2010:32) terms
happiness. Work may provide the 'satisfying something' that Berlant (2011a:1-2) alludes
to for those with an attachment to the idea of work life. However, attachments are as
complex as the situations in which they form and so not all attachments will feel or be
positive (Ahmed 2010:52; Berlant 2011a:2; Weil 2021:161). Some people may attach
positive feelings towards work life, whilst for others work may instigate feelings of dread
or apathy. Or a person may have positive or negative or ambivalent feelings towards
certain aspects of their work life. Having an attachment to work life may therefore involve
a complex structure of life orientations and feelings.

Recent work in geography that attends to attachment, primarily focusses on the
promissory nature of attachment that Berlant alludes to (Anderson 2022; Anderson
2023a; Anderson 2023b; Bissell 2022; Cockayne and Ruiz 2023; Coleman 2023; Rose
2023; Strong 2023; Zhang 2023). Ben Anderson (2022) presents a particular framing of
attachment by attending to its forms and scenes. For Anderson (ibid:11) a coalesce of
particular 'promissory objects' or promises becomes a 'form of attachment'. These
attachments open imaginaries of how a 'good life' could be lived. A person holds multiple
'forms of attachment' simultaneously which permeate the fabric of their life through the
mobilisation of attachments in different intensities, durations and scenes. For Anderson
(ibid:13), 'scenes of attachment' are intensified situations of everyday life where forms of
attachment come to the fore and are felt. For Vickie Zhang (2023:4) orientation (as a force
of desire) towards an object may or may not catalyse into an attachment towards it.
Attachments for Zhang are possible outcomes of desire but not a surety, as paths of desire
may reorientate and open other potential attachments.

Like desire, love is associated with attachment, but love involves co-constitutive tensions
of attachment and detachment (Strong 2023:10). Attachment within love is mediated

through recursive everyday practices as a way of maintaining connections with others and the wider world (Berlant 2011b:687; Strong 2023:5). For Sam Strong (2023:9) detachments create affective ruptures within attachments making their formation unequal. Strong's exposure of the potential for unequal attachments perhaps reveals the vulnerabilities that having an attachment can open. And yet attachments are very much part of quotidian life (Coleman 2023:4). Attachments to promissory objects can make a life feel stable (ibid:4). For Rebecca Coleman (ibid) a sense of 'normalcy' that makes an ordinary life feel 'liveable', is made through attachments to 'aspirational' objects. Differing intensities of attachment have the propensity to form different subject object relations (ibid:2). And so a life is held together and stabilised with attachments which nonetheless are vulnerable to the unsettling of detachment.

Mitch Rose (2023) acknowledges the importance of taking a relational approach to attachment espoused by Berlant and Anderson but places an equal importance on exploring *why* attachments are formed. For Rose understanding the why of attachments is bounded with 'pre-ontological' problems within the world and people that surround us, our bodies and how they fail. These problems in which attachments are found, are fundamentally (he argues) beyond human capacity and relationality. These draw into focus Berlant's (2011a; 2011b) position that attachments have the capacity to propel a person in certain directions.

If an attachment as Berlant (2011a:1-2) suggests is a force that draws a person out into the world, then what happens when that attachment is disrupted? Disconnecting from attachments that create a sense of continuity in a life, can disturb that sense of order (Anderson 2022:12; Weil 2021:160). In the circumstance of furlough, that detachment may have opened certain new unsettling feelings. For Daniel Cockayne and Derek Ruiz (2023:2 drawing on Berlant 2022) attachment and detachment are in relation and not opposition. Detachment may be a move to further control that which we are attached to. If a person is attached to their work life and are forcibly disconnected from it by furlough, then perhaps developing feelings of detachment could make that disconnection more bearable. David Bissell (2022:488) recognises that the process of detachment can expose the strength of an attachment. This insight of detachment may open the question of whether being furloughed and disconnected from work life surfaced the intensity of a

person's attachment to work? Did furloughed individuals who may have organised their lives through an attachment to the idea of being a worker, only realise this during their detachment from working life during furlough?

I have so far outlined attachment as a feeling which draws or connects a person to an object and detachment as a distancing of self from an object of interest. Furlough I have detailed, was a circumstance of enforced disruption to the quotidian flows of work life during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although being furloughed instigated certain time-spaces of attachment and detachment which may be of interest to geographers, the lived experience of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme version of furlough has (so far) been under studied within Geography. In recognition of the current lacuna in academic scholarship of furlough as a lived experience, I turn to other geographic literature to focus on concepts of agency, attachment and detachment within work life.

1.6 Agency, Attachment, and Detachment from Work Life

Neoteric scholarship in geography on work life has acknowledged that emotional attachment to work, can create certain imaginaries of how work and work life should be forged (Cockayne 2016:458; Dutta 2020; Ettlinger 2004; Jeffrey, 2010; Ralph, 2008; Thieme 2017:533). It could be said that such imaginaries of work are formed within the conditions of neoliberal living. Conceptually, neoliberalism is broadly understood as a set of state-led economic, political, and social processes, structuring, and intervention that are linked to notions of global market forces (Jaffe 2021: 12; Larner 2003; Peck and Tickell 2002:387-389) and a move from 'public-collective values to private-individualistic values' (Barnett 2005:8). Neoliberalism may also be considered an ideological enmeshing of market forces with the social being (Hong 2022; Jaffe 2021: 12). In the context of work practices, neoliberalism may be deemed post-Fordist (Peck and Tickell 2002:385). First coined by Antoni Gramsci, 'Fordism' refers to certain modes of standardised production in which workers exchange their time for money (Horgan 2021:68-70). A 'Fordist' mode of working involves a dislocation of mind and body in which the exploitation of the body instigates emotional disconnection typified as boredom (ibid; also see Anderson 2021:202-203).

In contrast, neoliberal work practices involve enmeshment of the social being with modes of economic production (Hong 2022:55; Sharma 2014:90). For the neoliberal worker, personal satisfaction and a sense of meaning are imbricated with work life (Horgan: 2021; Jaffe 2021; Sharma 2014:90). Within the imaginaries of neoliberal work life, work becomes a mode of finding and affirming oneself (Hong 2022:1-22). For those who try to maintain such fantasies, emotional investment in work life has the potential to direct people in certain ways and affect an individual's physical and mental well-being (Bissell 2020:87; Cockayne 2016:458; Petitt, 2018). In Daniel Cockayne's (2016:468) work with creative entrepreneurs, the fantasy of a "good life" through an attachment to certain forms of creative work, leads people to seek pleasure in work, forgo a work life balance, and have an acceptance of financial precarity. Attachment to work life is so ingrained in the culture of creative entrepreneurship that notions of life and work become interchangeable (ibid). Work becomes life. Life becomes work. As such neoliberal work practices may be deemed personally and emotionally exploitative (see Cockayne 2016; Hochschild 2012; Horgan 2021; Jaffe 2021).

The imaginaries of work life and being a worker are perhaps linked to how much 'agency' a worker feels in relation to their work life. A worker's sense of agency is linked to their sense of autonomy and how constrained they feel by their work and workspace (Herod 1997:3). Within geography, the concept of 'labour agency' has been used to acknowledge and understand that workers are not just bodies involved in modes of capitalist production, but that workers can have the capacity to inform their working spaces and conditions (see Castree 2007; Coe and Jordhuis-Lier 2010; Herod 2007). And yet, a worker's agency may be affected by wider social conditions and their class, gender, race, age, ethnicity or location (Anwar and Graham 2019:1270; Batnitzky and McDowell 2011; Coe and Jorhaus-Lier 2023:9; Dutta 2016:1). So a worker may have the capacity to exert agency, but their positionality may inform whether or not they can exert agency, and the intensity in which that agency can be exerted (Coe and Jorhaus-Lier 2023:8; Dutta 2016:2; Worth 2015). Not only that but the agency of a worker may be enabled or curtailed by their relation with their employer as well as associated employer regulations and employment structures (Carswell and De Neve 2013; Worth 2015:604). For example in Grace Carswell and Geert De Neve's (2013) work on the labour agency of Indian textile workers, employers exert control over workers through a variety of means. Through how

and when bonusses are given, through the provision of worker accommodation enabling unmarried migrant women to work, and through the provision of transport to work enabling workers living at a distance to commute (ibid:69). It could be said that through these enabling strategies, employer control seeps out of the workplace to inform the social life of the workers and therefore their agency in other domains of their life not just work life.

Work life is intrinsically social and so a worker's agency may be felt within an entanglement of 'friendships, solidarities', and 'shared experiences' (Dutta 2016:3). Madhumita Dutta (2020) recognises that social bonds may bind a person to a workplace through their relationships with colleagues. In Dutta's account of female workers at a mobile phone factory in Southern India, the workplace becomes a space where attachments are formed to a remaking of self through a workplace identity and to colleagues in the face of restrictive working conditions. Work life becomes a space-time of solidarity and care where the women form attachments to each other. Unlike Daniel Cockayne's (2016) creative entrepreneurs who are focussed on the work and any sense of community is bound to that, Dutta's mobile phone workers are emotionally attached to each other, and the practices of work are an aside. Attachment to work life may be formed through an emotional connection with the idea of being a certain kind of worker, to work colleagues, to how much agency is felt or to work practices as an articulation of self.

I have so far elucidated ideas of worker agency and attachments to work life formed through certain imaginaries of work by those who are actively employed. Furlough was a period of detachment from work life and an enforced space-time of waiting for work to recommence. Therefore furlough became a period of anticipation for the future object of work life. Other similar disruptions to work life may form through redundancy, unemployment, and garden leave. Redundancy is characterised as a job role being terminated and a worker being released by that employer as they no longer have a position for them (Warren 2018:695). Any return to that workplace would legally have to be within a different role. Unemployment may be perceived as a period of non-employment within an unknown temporality (Griffin 2021:167). During redundancy, a period of notice is given to an employee by an employer which has a definite end point to

their job role (Department for Work and Pensions 2023a). In unemployment, there is no foreseeable beginning point to work life (unless a person has been recently hired and is waiting for a start date).

Furlough is a tension between these experiences - a pause in work life and an anticipation of its (re)start. Furlough holds similar characteristics to 'garden leave', the employment practice whereby an employee who has resigned is retained and paid not to commence work for a rival company within a specified time period (Aydinliyim, 2022:651; Sullivan 2016:298). The practice is linked to the non-transferal by an employee of commercial intelligence from one company to another (Lembrich, 2002:2292). However, those waiting through garden leave are generally considered 'high value' workers (Sullivan 2016:293) whereas those put on furlough through the UK Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme were least likely to be in managerial or directorship positions (ONS 2021a). The two schemes may share the characteristics of an enforced suspension of work life, but garden leave involves high net worth individuals and a legal surety of the recommencement of work life.

Imaginably for some of those furloughed, the pause in work life disrupted their feelings of agency or altered their attachment to their work life. Or perhaps the attachment stayed but tantalisingly could not be fulfilled. In its paused state, work life had the potential to become an object of anticipation and optimism for those furloughed, something to orientate towards. The present may or may not have been a happy one, indeed for those attached to work and left in a space between work lives, furlough may have become a breach in their sense of (work) self. And yet the future where work life might be reinstated perhaps held a promise of happiness. Objects of happiness may of course be fantasies, but they can stimulate how a life is lived and indeed shape how a person waits.

1.7 Furlough as a Form of Waiting

Furlough was an enforced period of orientation towards a restart in work and as such became a particular space-time of waiting. Within contemporary flows of production and consumption that create 'time-space compression' or the feeling of an accelerated world, waiting is a ubiquitous occurrence within the interstices of everyday life (Massey

1992a:8). Acts of waiting are often neglected as passive moments of no consequence (Gasparini, 1995:29; Singer et al, 2019:1) but can become indicators of wider cultural and social phenomena. For Doreen Massey (1992a:8) for example, that we still wait is an indication of the non-universality of time-space compression. With their capacity to detach us from everyday flows, acts of waiting therefore become spaces of alterity which can reveal certain capacities, conditions, attitudes and emotions. I will explore waiting as a phenomenon in more depth in the next chapter but suffice to say that recent work in geography has mobilised 'waiting' as a lens to foreground a range of social, economic and cultural phenomena. Geographical work that focusses on waiting, highlights that structures of power can create inequalities (Olson 2015:517) such as through governmental measures like austerity (Hall 2023; Hitchen 2021:306) or bureaucracy (Carswell et al 2018; Secor 2007). Another vein of geographic work thinks with the velocities of waiting and its impact within mobilities (Bissell 2007; Cresswell 2011), immobilities (De Backer et al 2022; Conlon 2011; Gray 2011; Mountz 2011) and social mobilities (Axelsson et al 2015; Cangià et al 2021; Jeffrey 2010). Other work has brought to the fore waiting as a pervasive time-space colouring different aspects of lives, such as for those waiting for immigration status (Mountz, 2011; Pardy 2009) or medical treatment (Bournes and Mitchell, 2001) or for meaningful employment (Pettit 2018; Thieme 2017). Therefore it could be said that one never just waits, waiting is always relational to contexts and expectations (Dastur 2000; Gasparini, 1995:30). The relational capacity of acts of waiting has opened them to geographers as potential barometers of the wider conditions in which they are made. To flip this notion over, if furlough is a duration of waiting as I earlier determined, how do the wider social and cultural conditions that brought it into being affect a furloughed waiting body?

How a body is affected by waiting, can be informed by certain organisational processes. For example Ed Kiely's (2021) work concerning people waiting for mental health services is a useful illustration of how acts of waiting can be indicators of underlying circumstances. Kiely suggests that within mental health services in the UK, multiple acts of waiting create a 'holding pattern' whereby access to health services is deferred and delayed. The 'holding pattern' consisting of a series of waiting acts, conceals the slowness of service delivery (ibid). The delays are, Kiely opines, an effect of government cuts to the health service. Waiting in this context has a direct relation with the UK government

strategy of austerity, a form of 'fiscal retrenchment' devised to reduce public expenditure (ibid:2). An individual held in this infrastructure of delayed care and left to wait in an unknowable duration experiences a range of emotions, from hope to abandonment to disillusionment (ibid:7-11). The experience of a deliberate organisational delay strategy in Kiely's (2021) example drew out certain feelings from those held waiting. This opens the question of the nature of the feelings that the process of enforced furlough surfaced.

Rebecca Foster's (2016) work on the multiple waiting experiences of prisoner's families surfaces feelings of powerlessness. The families are constrained by multiple carceral infrastructures which involve waiting at court, waiting to visit and waiting for release. Folded within these waiting experiences are further acts of waiting, like waiting for a prison visit date, the prison waiting room and waiting for a visit to end. As such, incarceration (itself a process of waiting) is shown to not only delay and defer the lives of those imprisoned, but the complex and inflexible structures inherent within incarceration systems are surfaced through their impact on the lives of families of prisoners whilst waiting. Thinking with the multiple interweaving infrastructures of government and employer requirements, begins the question of how power and powerlessness manifest for those waiting through furlough.

Nina Williams' (2022) work on bio-designers waiting for bio-cultures to grow, is a reminder that the temporalities of lived durations may be imperceptible for those waiting with them. The slow processes of growing biomaterial are currently speculative and operate outside market forces (ibid:1, 8) which allows bio-designers to wait for undeterminable durations. For an individual bio-designer waiting time drops away from clock-time and becomes lived through the rate of growth of a bio culture transposing the notion of lived time to furlough, away from clock-time, how did those furloughed live time?

These three examples demonstrate that foregrounding acts of waiting enables nuanced readings of relations and structures that surround people in a particular circumstance. It is the focus on *waiting* in these examples that is revealing of those conditions and how those conditions affected individuals. The circumstances of delayed health services and waiting for an incarcerated loved one, are instances where a perceived lack of agency

during a period of waiting can instigate a sense of powerlessness. To make someone wait is an exertion of power, to wait at someone else's behest is an acceptance of that power whether being made to wait by an organisation or individual (Schwartz 1974:844; Barthes 2002:40). Conversely, waiting can instigate feelings of hope for a positive resolution, as per the bio-designers waiting for bio-cultures to grow. Therefore, how we wait and why we wait can generate feelings that become central to how we encounter individuals, sites and organisations (Secor 2007:42; Farman, 2018:6). This opens the question of how a detached relation from the organisation of work life during furlough was felt by individuals. Those waiting for health services and within the judicial system are held within specified waiting spaces, but their experiences of waiting seeps beyond those designated spaces. Waiting can become a pervasive presence in the background of lives influencing feelings, interactions with others and decision making. Acts of waiting therefore have temporal and spatial dimensions, but they can also influence bodily and emotional capacities, which opens the question of how the space-time of furlough was felt by individuals.

1.8 Who were the Furloughed?

In an evaluation of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme published in July 2023, the UK government reported that 11.7 million employments had been supported by furlough payments (ONS 2023a). But who were those furloughed? Between July 2020 and April 2021, more women (2.26 million) than men (2.15 million) were furloughed (HM Revenue & Customs, 2020b). This changed between May and September 2021 when more men were furloughed than women (ONS 2021e; ONS 2021f). The Office for National Statistics (2021e) suggests that the change between the sexes reflected a decrease in jobs in sectors such as 'Accommodation and Food Services' which traditionally employ higher numbers of women. At the end of the scheme on the 30th of September 2021, more men remained on furlough (615,100) than women (527,200) (ibid).

Those aged between 19 and 24 years (35%) were most likely to be furloughed (ONS 2021a; ONS 2021d). This was followed by the over 65s (30.9%) and then those under 18 years of age (30.2%) (ibid). Workers aged between 35 and 44 years were least likely to be furloughed (22.7%) (ibid). Therefore those at the beginning and end of a working life

(under 24 or over 65 years old) were most likely to be furloughed. For those aged under 24 years, furlough perhaps created a discontinuity in their career development. For the over-65-year-olds, the 20% reduction in income was perhaps significant if they were working post-retirement in order to top up their pensions.

Of workers with disability status through the UK Equality Act 2010, 28.1 % were furloughed (ONS 2021a). The act defines disability as having a physical or mental impairment that negatively impacts a person's ability to conduct their normal everyday activities (U.K. Government Equalities Office 2013). Whilst 25.8% of those identified as disabled not under the act, were furloughed (ONS 2021a). Disabled workers were overrepresented in sectors affected and closed by lockdown measures such as 'hospitality, catering and retail' (UK Parliament 2021). These are sectors employing workers on part-time and flexible working contracts and potentially not robust enough to withstand the economic effects of being temporarily closed (Roberts et al 2020). The furloughed with a disability in those sectors, faced the precarious situation of their furlough ending in redundancy (ibid). This had potential implications for the 'disability gap', the difference in employment levels between non-disabled and disabled workers (House of Commons 2021).

The higher a worker's educational qualifications the less likely they were to be furloughed (ONS 2021d). 16.4% of those with a degree or equivalent were furloughed, whilst 37.2% of those without qualifications were furloughed (ibid). Those with A levels as their highest qualification were more than twice as likely to be furloughed than those with degree-level education (ibid). This is also reflected in the skill level[12] attained by workers. Corporate managers, directors and those in professional occupations classified as at skill level 4 were least likely to be furloughed. Whilst those with a skill level of 1 (ONS 2020b) in 'elementary' jobs where a 'minimum general level of education' is required, were almost three times as likely to be furloughed than those with a skill level of 4. The Office for National Statistics (2021a) report that the trend for those with more qualifications to not be furloughed and those with less qualifications to be furloughed, may be a reflection of 'specific job responsibilities or levels of experience across people

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[12] ONS determined skill levels through the UK Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) 2020 (ONS 2020b)

with similar jobs'. During the pandemic when businesses ceased trading to the public and no longer required front line staff, managers and administrative staff still worked to keep the businesses functioning at a strategic level.

In terms of households, single parents were more likely (31.2%) to be furloughed than parents within a couple (24.2%) (ONS2021a). This, in turn, will have affected the household income levels of those with one worker and a family to support. In April 2020 one month into the furlough scheme, 48% of those furloughed were on an income lower than pre-furlough (HM Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs 2023). The other half (41%) were on an income equal to their pre-furlough pay (ibid). At the end of the scheme in September 2021, 48% of those furloughed, were in receipt of pay equal to their pre-furlough level and 23% had pay higher than their pre-furlough level [13] (ibid). While 28% were still receiving an income less than their pre-furlough level (ibid). The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme had the most positive impact on middle-income households and the least positive impact on households with the lowest and highest incomes (HM Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs 2023). The lack of positive impact of furlough payments on low-income households was due to those households having single earners. Those on a low income and receiving state benefits such as Universal Credit, had benefit entitlements affected by receiving furlough payments (ibid). The household incomes of top earners were affected by the £2500 cap on furlough payments to individual workers, potentially giving them a significantly lower monthly income.

Overall figures suggest that those furloughed were most likely to be ethnically white (26.9%) (ONS 2021c; ONS 2021d). Whilst those with mixed ethnicity (20.3%) or Asian ethnicity (20.5%) were least likely to be furloughed. However, although those ethnically white were most likely to be furloughed, the spread of ethnic groups was not even across the employment sectors. When broken into employment sectors, the figures reveal that the sector with the most furloughed workers 'Accommodation and Food Services' also had higher levels of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic group workers (ONS 2022). Sectors such as 'Accommodation and Food Services' with the most furloughed workers (HM Revenue & Customs, 2020b) also had the most zero contract workers (ONS 2023b). On

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[13] The ONS based their analysis of pay levels on a sample size of 2.3 million employments, equivalent to 19% of the total of those furloughed.

the 15th of December 2020, a meeting of the Women and Equalities UK parliamentary committee of MPs drew to the fore the precarious nature of those on zero-hours contracts, particularly those from the BAME community (UK Parliament 2020). Zero hours workers it was reported had their hours reduced to zero instead of being furloughed by employers (ibid). In the same committee meeting, it was reported that BAME employees were and are disproportionately represented amongst zero-hours contract and gig economy workers. Between April 2020 and September 2021, zero-hours contracts accounted for between 23.4 and 25% of those employed in the 'Accommodation and Food Services' sector (ONS 2023b). So although the 'Accommodation and Food Services' sector saw the most BAME workers furloughed, there were also potentially more BAME workers denied furlough as they were in zero-hours contracts[14].

The furloughed were not a homogenous group, the scheme encompassed a plurality of bodies affected by being furloughed through different factors. Statistically, the furloughed were typically those with lower educational and/or skill attainment than those with a higher education. Demographically, the furloughed were more likely to be aged below 24 years and over 65 years. At the start of the pandemic, more women were furloughed than men, but as employment decreased in certain sectors during the pandemic, by the end of the scheme more men were furloughed than women. However, it should be noted that there were less than a third of those on furlough at the end of the scheme than at its beginning. Financially, furlough adversely affected those on low or single-household incomes. Nonetheless, the majority of those furloughed were more likely to be financially worse off at the start of the scheme than at its cessation. This does not of course account for people made unemployed during the scheme. Parents were more likely to be furloughed at the start of the scheme, but this became less prevalent during its life span

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[14] Though beyond the scope of this thesis, it should be noted that there were other workers denied furlough by their employers as per those I mentioned on zero hours contracts. A poll by the Trade Union Congress (TUC) of fifty thousand working mothers in January 2021 reported that 71% had a request for furlough denied (TUC 2021). Parents denied furlough bore the burden of childcare as well as work life when schools and nurseries closed during lockdowns, potentially creating emotional, social and financial burdens for those affected. Citizen's Advice (2020), a national charity that provides free advice, reported that in sample of 450 vulnerable workers who had contacted them for employment advice during the COVID-19 pandemic, 70% of the sample who were at high risk of infection from the SARS-CoV-2 virus had not been furloughed. Amidst the multiple uncertainties of the pandemic being denied furlough conceivably had financial, familial and health consequences.

(ONS 2021g). The unequal representation of ethnic groups and the disabled across employment sectors meant that the disabled and certain ethnic groups were more likely to be furloughed or potentially denied furlough if on zero-hours contracts.

The composition of 'the furloughed' changed as the circumstances of the pandemic altered. When lockdowns were lifted and businesses opened again or closed for good, as their temporary closures meant that they became financially unviable, the levels of those furloughed changed within sectors and decreased overall. How a body waited through furlough may have been informed by multiple factors of sex, age, education level, ethnicity, disability, income level, or most likely multiple combinations of these factors. The lived experience of furlough potentially involved plural and intersecting factors making the experience and the perception of the experience idiosyncratic to particular individuals. Qualitative research by the Office for National Statistics, for example, found that furloughed workers' perceptions of whether furlough payments had impacted their personal finances, were based on their pre-furlough financial position (ONS 2023b). This was regardless of whether or not they received 80% of their wage or whether their employer topped it up to 100% or whether the £2500 cap on furlough payments had reduced higher earner's incomes (ibid). Living an experience and feeling precarious (or not), is inevitably more nuanced than the statistical reporting around it.

Within this study, the usual work of the study participants was mostly hospitality, entertainment, charity, and non-essential retail. These were the sectors most affected by the UK governmental restrictions instigated by the pandemic (ONS 2021a). The participant's ages ranged between twenty-three and sixty-five, with an average age of forty-two placing the participants of the study in the age category least likely to be furloughed. May 2021 was a statistical tipping point whereby the official figures began to show that more men than women were furloughed (ONS 2021f). The interviews within this study with those furloughed, were conducted between January and July 2021, with most participants identifying as female. The participants were mostly ethnically white and mostly identified as non-disabled. It should therefore be noted that the participants in this study are not a representative sample of those furloughed[15]. This study is intended

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[15] Further details of the furloughed participants can be found in the Appendix section 8.1.

as an exploration and representation of how furlough was lived and felt. As such, the study attempts to fill in some of the understanding gaps that the statistical data of furlough has opened.

1.9 The Figure of the Furloughed

The thesis works with first-hand accounts of the lived experience of furlough, nonetheless it should also be acknowledged that during the lifespan of the scheme, that the 'figure of the furloughed' emerged in wider discourse, in social and news media. Figures are abstract representations of certain cultural and social attitudes, collectively understood, anthropomorphised and given form through language (Ahmed 2010a:22)[16]. A 'figure' is 'an object of feeling' through its ability to attract differing emotional tensions (Ahmed 2014:22). Feminist scholar Sara Ahmed mobilises various 'figures' across her work who have the capacity to gather differing affects, for example the bogus asylum seeker (2014: 47), the international terrorist (ibid:79), the ideal woman (ibid:136), the lesbian feminist (2006:192) or the complainer (2021:2). The bogus asylum seeker for example attracts feelings of 'hate' amidst a wider narrative of 'uncertainty and crisis' (Ahmed 2014:47) and the feminist 'killjoy' may be a figure of irritability and wilfulness (Ahmed 2017:10). That the 'complainer' may be widely deemed a 'tiresome' figure, means that those who complain potentially carry the baggage of being considered tedious (Ahmed 2021:2). The coalesce of emotions and attitudes that figures attract do not stay

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[16] The figure as a device to express particular conditions or attitudes has been articulated across the discipline of Geography and its sub-disciplines in a variety of ways. 'The figure of the human' as a manifestation of a previous tendency in Human Geography to universalise bodies is a space of debate around the plurality of bodies (Lorimer 2022:75; Yusoff 2021:664). Whilst 'the figure of the global Indian' is an amalgam of certain discourse around migrant aspirations (Bose 2014:398). Coalescences of ideas around neoliberal economic life have variously formed around 'the figure of the entrepreneurial self' (Anderson 2022:12), 'the figure of the Caribbean immigrant entrepreneur' (Best 2016:445), 'figure of the house wife' as a consumer of labour saving goods (Blunt 2005:508), the 'figure of the timber baron' as a consolidation of commercial and governmental forces (Vasile 2020:1956) and the 'figure of the scientist' as a symbol of aspirations around economic progress during the Cold War (Vitale 2016:1379). The figure has been used to express certain anxieties, for example the figure of the stranger as a coalescence of societal anxiety around urban life (Koch and Miles 2021:1380; Koefoed, L. and Simonsen, K. 2011), the figure of the island as a gathering of debates around the Anthropocene (Chandler and Pugh 2021:397), the 'figure of the Anthropocene' as a consolidation of debates around political ecological change (Loftus 2020:984) or the 'figure of occupation' as a coalescence of debates around the nature of spatial politics (Vasudevan 2015:318).However there is scope within the discipline for further discussion around figures and how and why they are mobilised by geographers and their use in wider social and cultural discourse.

as abstractions, they have the potential to inform attitudes by and around real people. During the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the act of furlough and the figure of the furloughed became cultural objects whose signification changed over its lifespan. In media and wider discourses[17] the furloughed were considered variously as a person in a precarious situation (M.O.A. 2020: A6936; B3227; B725; C6706), a fortunate person (M.O.A. 2020: H5724; P5842), an idle person (Clark 2022; M.O.A. 2020: A2) or the victim of a deviant employer who abused the system (Hurley 2023; Neate 2023; Salmon 2020). The 'furloughed' became a figure attracting feelings of pity, envy and suspicion. These feelings circulated within wider atmospheres of economic precarity generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the instigation of the scheme the furloughed became precarious figures in danger of redundancy. This narrative re-emerged each time that the scheme was due to end, in June 2020, September 2020, March 2021 and finally when it did end in September 2021.

The figure of the furloughed as a pawn in fraudulent employment practices also surfaced during and after the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme ended. The Guardian newspaper for example, reported that furloughed workers had been forced to keep working by employers during their furlough period, with the threat of redundancy compelling workers to comply (Obordo 2020). The 'furloughed' as a figure has dipped in and out of UK media discourse since the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme's inception in March 2020. As 'figures' attract affects and affects can be sticky (Ahmed 2006a:40), I draw attention to the figure of the furloughed as a point of reference for the rest of the thesis. The fate of individuals furloughed, and the affects associated with the figure of the furloughed inevitably entwine and inform how the furloughed were perceived by themselves and others.

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[17] To explore wider attitudes to furlough and the furloughed I analysed news media discourses (Appendix 8.4) and worked with insights gained from the Mass Observation Archive (Appendix 8.3). In particular I worked with the Summer Directive 2020 Part 1: COVID-19 and Time. The Mass Observation Archive is a charitable organisation that records everyday life by collecting diary reflections from volunteers from across the UK. The diaries are written on the 12th of May each year. In times of national events the MOA collates additional material through directives sent to the volunteers on a specific topic such as COVID-19. The codes used here refer to the anonymised contributions of individual diary writers responding to the Summer Directive 2020 Part 1: COVID-19 and Time.

1.10 Lines of Inquiry

Furlough, for those affected by it, was a capsule period of waiting (March 2020 – September 2021). It emerged abruptly as a cultural object, created through governmental instigation amidst the conditions of a global pandemic. On the face of it being furloughed through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was a detachment from quotidian work life within a financially secure duration of waiting. As a UK government intervention, the scheme was said by the government to be a mode of economic reassurance for those employed in jobs made potentially untenable by the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic. I outlined in detail earlier how the scheme's introduction allowed businesses to keep workers on their payrolls. Furlough was an opportunity for those affected to keep their jobs and experience a paid non-working life. But what is the significance of a paid non-working life?

Within the context of neoliberal living, work plays an important role in what may be considered a fulfilling life (Hong 2022:3; Horgan: 2021: 24; Jaffe 2021:1; Sharma: 2014:90). As such work life for some provides certain promises of fulfilment which people become attached to (Cockayne and Ruiz 2023; Dutta 2020; Ettlinger 2004; Jeffrey, 2010; Ralph, 2008; Thieme 2017). People's attachment to work life moves beyond the workplace itself and becomes part of their construction of self or how they perceive themselves (Cockayne 2016; Dutta 2020). Work life therefore (for some) involves greater significance than earning a wage and holds imaginaries and promises of leading a good life (see Hong 2022; Pettit 2021). A work life is structured within certain temporalities creating a pulse within both work and quotidian lives (Beradi 2009; Lefevre 2004; Shaw 2022:4-7). As lives are enlivened by the promises, attachments and rhythms ascribed to work life, being furloughed was potentially a disruption to this. As 11.6 million jobs were supported by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (ONS, 2021a), waiting through furlough has become an important social, cultural and economic object.

Attention to waiting I have determined, creates particular space-times which offer an opportunity to explore wider social, cultural and economic conditions. Focussing on waiting can surface issues such as infrastructures and their ineffectuality (Kiely 2021), inequalities of status (Axelsson et al 2015) or immigration immobility (De Backer et al 2022). How a person waits is in part determined by the context in which they wait

(Gasparini, 1995:30). It can also be informed by their personal circumstance which in turn can ignite a range of complex feelings from the excitement of imminent parenthood (Holman Jones 2017; Kowal 2009) to the frustration of delayed travel (Hutchinson 2000:109) or the shame and humiliation experienced by migrants waiting for status or to feel that they belong (Chattopadhyay and Tyner 2022:1234; Griffiths 2014:1998; Pardy 2009). A person waiting through furlough had an experience influenced by the conditions of the pandemic, government measures, their employer, their home life and their attachment to work life. Therefore an individual waiting through furlough possibly became a barometer for wider social and cultural changes. But what is at stake here?

Beyond its instigation as a political strategy, as a cultural, social and economic object furlough will have significance for some time to come. The sustained resonances of furlough, what furlough has meant, what it currently means and what it will mean are continually unfolding within wider political and social discourse. In order to understand the future impacts of furlough on individuals, it is important to pay detailed attention to how they unfolded and how it impacted individual lives at the time. Furlough as a government intervention devised to retain work roles, is entwined with neoliberal notions of work and work life. I have maintained that neoliberal work life, may be entangled with a range of attachments: to the work itself, to the idea of being a worker, to a worker's feeling of agency, to the construction of a person's identity and emotional connections to colleagues. The lived and felt experience of waiting through furlough, offered a chance to explore how work permeates workers' lives through exploring its absence.

The space-time of furlough presented the opportunity to explore the significance of work in people's lives through paying attention to their detachment from work life for a duration of protracted waiting. The pause in work life opened the potential to attend to how lives are orientated and attached to certain ways of living: to being a worker and to an expectation of certain rhythms within everyday life. Focussing on attachments, detachments, orientations and disorientations is critical for understanding how people *felt* whilst waiting through furlough. Attending to *feeling* within the pause of furlough is where this thesis enhances current geographic (and wider) scholarship of feelings within

work life and scholarship of protracted waiting durations. To do this the study started with three lines of inquiry:

1. What embodied feelings did the space-time of waiting through furlough instigate?
2. How was a suspended relation from an organisation (workplace) lived and felt by furloughed individuals?
3. How did people waiting in unknown durations narrate their experience?

The first question is one that tries to open *the felt experience* of being furloughed. It works with the fundamentally geographic notions of time and space. Specifically it opens questions of how people felt about their everyday life becoming a period of waiting in an unknown duration. It prompts questions of how the furloughed's perception of time was shaped whilst removed from the usual temporalities of work life. In doing so, it adds to inquiry of the ways in which worker's lives are shaped by the temporalities and rhythms of work life. That furlough was waited out in the space of the home, opens questions of the extent to which feelings during furlough were shaped by waiting it out in a familiar space. Thus the thesis adds to inquiry of how space affects bodies held waiting for protracted temporalities through its exploration of how feelings around this are made and remade. These questions are explored throughout the thesis. In Chapter 04 I explore how through the abruptness of being furloughed a sense of loss of life orientation was instigated for those affected. This in turn created feelings expressed as a disorientated spatial navigation around a proximate or absent other. In Chapter 05 I examine how the furloughed felt and managed temporal disorientation created by their detachment from the space-time of work life. In Chapter 06 I explore the furloughed's articulations of feeling spatial and temporal disorientation as tensions, and how they came to suspend these tensions and accept feeling disorientated.

The second line of inquiry explores how relations to organisations (in this case the workplace) were felt by individuals. This line of inquiry investigates how the process of furlough and ensuing detachment from work life may have influenced worker's feelings towards their employer or their work life. It explores how feelings may have evolved over the lifespan of the scheme. It also explores the extent to which bodies are shaped by

neoliberal work life and what shape they form when it is removed. This line of inquiry moves across the chapters. In Chapter 04, I address how the furloughed experienced their abrupt detachment from the structures of work life as a loss of orientation. In Chapter 05 I explore how the loss of the temporal rhythms of work life, created an awareness for the furloughed of how temporal structures are intrinsic to their quotidian lives. In Chapter 06 I discuss the furloughed resistance to and acceptance of the loss of their orientating relation to the structure of work life.

The third line of inquiry explores how people chose to narrate uncertainties and disruptions in their lives. This question prompts analysis of how pasts and futures become present through the telling of a waiting experience. In doing so this question opens consideration of the extent language can be a conduit for feelings and where its limitations may lie. In Chapter 02 I explore the representation of feelings within situations through Kathleen Stewart's (2007:4) notions of affect and scenes. In Chapter 03 I explore narrative through interviews as a means to share experience. How the furloughed chose to communicate with me their experiences verbally and non-verbally is accounted for across the three empirical chapters (4, 5, 6). The three lines of inquiry address the feelings initiated by the space-time of furlough, its ensuing detachment from work life and how people choose to couch that experience. In the next section I will outline in more detail how these lines of inquiry are addressed across the chapters of the thesis, towards creating a fuller picture of how waiting through furlough became a geography of disorientation.

1.11 The Thesis Structure

In Chapter 02 'The Dimensions of Waiting' I set up a conceptual approach that enables an analysis of furlough as a form of waiting and how it was lived and felt. Drawing primarily on the waiting literature, the chapter begins with a focus on the tensions of waiting. These I argue determine how the detachments and orientations during waiting are lived and felt. The chapter then separates four dimensions of waiting experience, the spatial, the temporal, the corporeal and the felt, to consider how waiting experiences are shaped. Initially I consider the spatial arrangements of waiting and consider how these are set up to detach and orientate bodies. Within that section I discuss the home as a space-time of

waiting during furlough. I then turn attention to the temporal qualities of waiting as a lived duration in which I argue differing temporalities create differing tensions, detachments and orientations. Waiting creates certain embodied responses which I argue are culturally learnt and heightened by sensory responses. I explore the felt experience of waiting with a particular attention to feelings that surface in detached relations between an individual and an organisation making them wait. I acknowledge that the attention to feelings in the thesis relies on previous work on emotion in geography. I then turn to recent social and cultural work in geography for conceptualisations of orientation and disorientation. The chapter then moves to Sara Ahmed's (2006a; 2006b) notion of queer phenomenology in order to draw on her conceptualisation of how bodies orientate, disorientate and reorientate. As waiting involves a coalescence of tensions, spatial, temporal, corporeal, felt dimensions and orientations, the chapter ends with a consideration of Kathleen Stewart's notions of affects and scenes as an approach to thinking and writing experiences which accounts for their messy plurality.

Chapter 03 'Methodology & Methods: Sharing Experiences' details the methodological strategy for the research and writing up process. The study utilised a raft of methods[18] which supported my understanding of the wider circumstances of furlough. This chapter focusses in on methods that generated the research material used to understand how waiting through furlough was felt by individuals; semi-structured interviews via Zoom written as cases. In order to research the felt dimensions of waiting, it was necessary to utilise a research method that could capture felt responses to a situation. Firstly, through vignettes of research encounters I outline the challenge of researching feelings. Second, I discuss co-presence as a research approach that enables an openness to the affective pluralities of research encounters within mediating technologies. Third I outline the challenges and benefits of research encounters via Zoom within the multiple governmental restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. I argue that Zoom provided a space that enabled participants to share intimate details of their lives through a discussion of the online intimacy literature. Fourth I discuss interviews as a relational

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[18] The study utilised a discourse analysis of news and social media when mentioned furlough. It also was enhanced by an archive analysis of the Mass Observation Archive's COVID-19 directives which referred to furlough and waiting. Undiscussed in the final thesis, I also developed a Live Diary via WhatsApp with study participants. Details of these methods are in the Appendix - Chapter 08.

approach to research. I consider how people organise, construct and narrate experience through semi-structured interviews. Finally I make the case for creating fuzzy cases from the interview data as a mode of representing and sharing experience.

Chapter 04 'Losing Orientation: Leading a "Shadow life"', begins to open an understanding of the lived experience of furlough. Working with the four dimensions of waiting I outline in Chapter 02; I argue that the rapid change in circumstance created by being furloughed ignited certain feelings of disorientation. By leaning on Sara Ahmed's (2006) queer phenomenology in particular its conceptualisations of orientation and disorientation I draw out how individual bodies struggled to reorientate within the waiting period of furlough. These ideas are explored over four sections where I argue that the detachment from work life created multiple feelings of disorientation manifest as spatial distance, emotional impasse, a temporal disconnection from the present and sensory intrusions. Firstly I explore the spatial dimension of waiting as a relational navigation around a proximate or absent other. In doing so I draw attention to the furloughed's propensity to make their own spatial needs secondary in the light of a productive other. This highlights a disorientation created by not feeling productive. Secondly, I detail the furloughed's emotional navigation around the heightened emotions of another. In particular I focus on the strategy of detached emotion as a form of self-care. In doing so I bring to the fore that disorientation can be found in emotional impasses. Thirdly I outline a temporal disconnection from the present as an inability to decide how to fill time. The disorientation around making decisions surfaces a form of guilt about being a non-working body. The last section explores sensory disorientation created through the actions of another touching things, making noise and leaving smells. In doing so the furloughed experienced acute sensory disorientation. The sensory actions surfaced feelings of disorientation expressed as not feeling at home. This first chapter starts to argue that detachment from work life created multiple feelings of disorientation. In doing so this chapter enhances emerging work in the geographies of disorientation and geographies of attachment and detachment.

Chapter 05 'Temporal Disorientation: Disrupted Rhythms' builds on the notion of furlough as a disorientating experience, through an exploration of how the furloughed felt about being detached from work rhythms. By working through the four dimensions

of waiting I argue that work rhythms are embodied and detachment either feels like a threat of disorientation or is felt as embodied disorientation. Firstly, I discuss how the furloughed chose to try and maintain work rhythms as a way of holding themselves together in the face of potential disorientation. The furloughed did this through conducting voluntary work which mirrored their usual work rhythms and clock time. In doing so the section highlights the importance that some people place on work rhythms as a part of maintaining their well-being. Secondly, I explore how in the light of being detached from work rhythms, the furloughed created new non-work rhythms as a strategy to not be disorientated through not working. However those who substituted for work rhythms did so with activity that did not rely on clock time but became time lived. Substituting work rhythms was perhaps a strategy of slowly coming to terms with being a non-working body. Thirdly, I outline the experiences of the furloughed who slipped out of work and quotidian rhythms and failed to or actively did not reinstate them. Either way the furloughed who slipped out of work rhythms experienced embodied forms of disorientation. Slippage from work rhythms was a reminder of how bodies align themselves with clock time in order to calibrate with work life. Lastly this section, details the furloughed who either before or on returning to work realised that they had a hazy grip on work rhythms and tried to reinstate them. The inability to recalibrate into work rhythms highlights how movement out of disorientation and into quotidian rhythms may be a slow process, unlike the abrupt movement into it. The exploration of embodied (non)work rhythms in this chapter adds to geographies of non-working bodies and disorientation.

Chapter 06 'Tensive Disorientation: "Hanging in Space, in Time"', adds to the preceding chapters which focussed on the detachment from work and its rhythms, by focussing in on the loss of work life itself and its ensuing period of waiting in suspended time. I articulate the loss of work life as a series of tensions. Firstly I outline the experiences of those of not wanting to be in the empty time of non-work life and resisting it. Feelings of resistance highlight attachments to work life and the difficulty of letting them go. The second section details how people welcomed furlough and the suspension of work life because it offered an alternative to the pressures, weariness and uncertainties of work life. The active embracing of furlough reveals the excesses of work life and how it can take a toll on a worker's well-being. The third section discusses how the empty time of

furlough was perceived as stagnant time by the furloughed. The articulation of empty time as stagnant highlights that for some a life filled with activity and work is preferable. The fourth section considers the detachment from work life as a feeling of floating. Being untethered from work life for some was felt as a strain, for others as a privilege. Either way, the feeling of floating highlights that work life provides an anchor in some people's lives. The final section discusses how an acceptance of the loss of work life opened the opportunity for the furloughed to notice and re-evaluate things about themselves, their work lives and their environment. This section highlights how the temporal rhythms of work life disallow time for reflection and re-evaluation of lives. This chapter contributes to work on detachment and the tensions and temporalities of (non)work life.

In the conclusion, Chapter 07 'The Disorientations of Waiting Through Furlough', firstly, I outline the approach in the study of separating four dimensions of waiting and waiting tensions, as a tactic towards creating a nuanced account of waiting. In doing so I was able to identify that waiting through furlough was lived as an experience of plural disorientations. Secondly, I discuss the experience of waiting through furlough as lived out through feelings of disorientation. The discussion draws on articulations by those furloughed of their spatial, temporal, corporeal and felt relations to being detached from work life. I discuss three main conceptualisations of disorientation 1. 'Shadow Life' a spatial disorientation, 2. 'Out of Work Rhythms' a temporal disorientation 3. 'Hanging in Space, In Time' a tensive disorientation. In doing I discuss a key argument of the study that *that the detachment from work life and its rhythms made life disorientating for those waiting through furlough.* Thirdly, through concepts of attachment, detachment and disorientation I argue that elongated waiting in detachment from work life, surfaced the multiple ways in which work life informs feelings, embodied rhythms, bodily processes and how this was narrated by those furloughed. In doing so the section connects the thesis to current work on disorientation, attachment and detachment. Fourth, I suggest some areas of future research that this thesis could support substantively and conceptually. Finally I outline the contribution of the thesis to the discipline of social and cultural geography within geographies of COVID-19, waiting, disorientation and labour and give some final thoughts about the 'Waiting through Furlough: A Geography of Disorientation' study.

02

The Dimensions
of Waiting

2.1 Conceptual Moves

Amidst the backdrop of multiple scenes of waiting created by the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the previous chapter introduced waiting through furlough and those furloughed as emerging cultural objects. As an emergent phenomenon with potential resonances beyond the immediate, I am suggesting that paying attention to furlough as an act of waiting is important. In particular I am proposing a focus on how furlough as a period of waiting was lived and felt, therefore moving beyond existing discourse of the furloughed as statistical data or broad assumptions given form in the figure of the furloughed. I am also proposing that attention to furlough creates the opportunity to focus on people experiencing a protracted period of waiting, detached from work life but in relative financial security. This thesis is, therefore, an exploration contextually, of the lived experience of furlough as an act of waiting and conceptually of the felt experience of waiting in the context of detachment from work life. To enact these conceptual moves, the thesis draws on theoretical ideas drawn from across social science disciplines: cultural geography, anthropology, sociology and psychology in literatures of waiting, affect and queer phenomenology.

This chapter is presented in two parts. In the first half of the chapter, I will consider waiting as detachment and orientation by reflecting on the differing tensions and spatial, temporal, corporeal and felt dimensions intrinsic to acts of waiting. I do this by drawing on the work of waiting scholars across a range of disciplines. In doing so I set up the potentialities of waiting experiences and establish the thesis as having a dialogue with existing waiting literature. By conceptually separating the spatial, temporal, corporeal

and felt dimensions of waiting, I make an analytic move towards understanding the nuances of waiting experiences. In reconceptualising waiting this way, space becomes a dimension of arrangement, time a lived dimension, whilst the corporeal and felt involve dimensions of capacity and intensity. At the end of the first part, I situate the thesis within previous work in geography that has attended to feelings. Within that section I outline conceptualisations of affect, feeling, and emotion that are drawn on in the thesis. The second half of the chapter initially explores concepts of orientation and disorientation through previous scholarship in geography. I then work with Sara Ahmed's (2006a) concept of Queer Phenomenology and its evocations of orientation, disorientation and reorientation. Ahmed's work, I propose, supports an exploration of how the detachment from work life created certain embodied and emotional disorientations for those furloughed. Finally I outline Kathleen Stewart's (2007:110) approach to thinking and writing in scenes as coalescence points of affect and experience. For Stewart scenes are indicative of wider social, cultural and political affects which manifest around bodies in given situations.

2.2 What is it to Wait?

If this thesis is a story of waiting, then what is it to wait? The early (thirteenth century) etymological roots of the verb to wait speak of watchfulness and intense observation towards a possible act of aggression like an ambush (OED 2022). Later (in the fifteenth century) the meaning of waiting expanded, becoming more broadly linked to expected future events (ibid). Either way, (as I outlined in the first chapter) there is no such thing as waiting in itself as it is always relational to a context. As such acts of waiting within a circumstance, can become potential barometers of wider conditions (Dastur 2000; Gasparini, 1995:30; Gray, 2011:241). As I wait in a long queue at a supermarket to pay, I feel the pressure of an understaffed business. As I wait for a train to arrive, I feel the anticipation of a reunion with a much missed loved one. That sense of anticipation is intrinsic to the future orientated quality of acts of waiting (Bissell 2007:282; Mattingly 2019:17; Schwartz 1975:167; Schweizer 2008:11-12). In the supermarket and at the train station, I may wait *for, with* or *in, alone* or *with others*, as waiting can be both a 'solitary' or a collective act (Bishop, 2013:138; Schweizer 2021:26). Whether waiting to commute, with a friend, in a relationship, for a decision, to realise an ambition, or to

belong, from the routine to the life changing, our everyday lives are constantly entangled within innumerable scenes, acts, or events of waiting full of attachments and orientations, detachments, and disorientations.

2.3 Tensions of Waiting

That acts of waiting transpire in differing durations and intensities means that they have the potential to activate and hold contrasting tensions. The tensions I will outline, reveal the tensity between a *detachment from* and an *orientation towards* that are intrinsic to acts of waiting and reveal them to be acts of suspension. Gabriel Marcel (1967:280) proposes that a spectrum of tensions can exist within acts of waiting, which encompass 'inert waiting', 'active waiting' and 'torpor'. For Marcel, 'inert' waiting has no tension as those who wait have an assuredness about the denouement of waiting, which is almost blasé, like waiting in an ATM queue where we can see the endpoint. Whereas 'active waiting' involves an inner feeling of anticipation and preparation for mobilisation. For Marcel it is (almost) akin to 'hope' (ibid:281). Marcel asserts that when the tensions of 'active waiting' are 'relaxed or stretched' within a longer temporality, then waiting becomes a devitalised form of 'torpor'. For Marcel then, those who wait can feel low-level, acute or long-drawn-out tensions.

Marcel's tensions of waiting find echo in Peter Dwyer's (2009) extension of Lars Svendsen's (2005) work on waiting in boredom. Dwyer (2009:21) outlines two tensions of waiting, 'situational' and 'existential'. For Dwyer (ibid:18) 'situational waiting' is circumstantial whilst 'existential waiting is 'embodied'. Situational waiting finds parallel with Marcel's 'active' waiting, as there is a sense of engagement with time which can be actively played out or passively sat out (ibid). Either way time is ever present. Dwyer's (ibid) existential waiting finds parallel with Marcel's waiting in 'torpor', as existential waiting is boundless and all-encompassing and is something lived and disconnected from clock time (ibid). Gasparini (1995:37) evokes 'existential' waiting as a form of embodied spirituality. For Christian believers it is linked to their eschatological movement through life as a form of waiting for death and the afterlife. Existential waiting is characterised as a quotidian present driven by feelings of hope, which are in tension with a 'detachment 'from the world' in the belief that a person will ultimately move into a transcendent afterlife (ibid:38). In contrast, Siegfried Kracauer's (1995:135) essay 'Those Who Wait'

details existential waiting as a form of 'void'. He details the experiences of the secular middle class in Germany in the 1920's who rebuffed religion and community for 'isolation and individuation' (ibid:130). As a consequence they open a desire for existential meaning. Their waiting becomes a form of orientation towards an, as yet unknown, fulfilment. The secular life of waiting for existential meaning finds an interesting contrast and parallel with the Christian belief of a lifespan as a period of waiting[19]. Dwyer's (2009:18), Gasparini's (1995:37-38) and Kracauer's (1995) evocations of existential waiting involve embodiment and disconnection from clock time, but Gasparini's (and perhaps Kracauer's) version also links to the fabric of a person's spiritual being.

Luckily not all tensions of waiting are so inescapable. Within circumstances of 'chronic' or long-term waiting, Craig Jeffrey (2008:955-956) identifies four tensions of waiting: 'surplus time, heightened suspense, lost time, and panic and inertia'. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's (2000) rendering of the future as either imminent or vague and imagined, Jeffery defines 'surplus time' as amorphous and unstructured. He likens waiting in surplus time to the C.S Lewis' (2009) description of life in mourning as 'like waiting; just hanging about waiting for something to happen. It gives life a permanently provisional feeling... almost pure time, empty successiveness'. Jeffery's 'surplus time' therefore shares similarity with Marcel's 'torpor' and Dwyer's 'existential' waiting. Alternatively Jeffrey's 'heightened suspense' is characterised by a feeling of imminence which may or may not play out. Those waiting in 'heightened suspense' are dominated by the hope that a longed-for object will materialise, in Jeffery's (2008) example a government job. 'Heightened suspense' finds some parallel with Marcel's 'active waiting' as it is maintained by hope and attachment to an object. Jeffrey's (2008:956) tension of waiting in 'lost time' is characterised by feelings of exclusion: from opportunity, from entry into the next life stage and from how peers are allowed to conduct themselves. This leaves those waiting in 'lost years' with a sense of feeling 'left behind' or perhaps detached from others. Finally Jeffrey (ibid) offers a fourth form of waiting 'panic and inertia' in which extended periods of waiting time that feel purposeless are punctured by events of 'acute crises'.

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[19] For a discussion of waiting as earthly quotidian life in movement towards an afterlife of transcendence, see Simone Weil's (2001) 'Waiting for God.

When drawn together the waiting tensions I have outlined form a spectrum: from the momentary (inert), to the anticipatory ('active' or 'circumstantial' or 'heightened suspense'), to the devitalised ('torpor' or 'existential' or 'inertia'), the excluded ('lost years') and the existential. It demonstrates that bodies may feel the pressures of detachment, deferral and delay in a plurality of intensities and that differing tensions of waiting may instigate a range of emotions and bodily comportments. Thinking of waiting as a spectrum of tensions, is a reminder that waiting is not felt homogeneously and feelings about waiting change in relation to contexts, temporalities and certain relational triggers.

The tensions of waiting can move across our perceptual range. Waiting can feel sharp in focus or conversely colouring the backdrop of a situation. For those waiting for something imminently, attention to waiting fizzes in the fore until its cessation. For those waiting for life changing events like for the right job (Masquelier 2013) or for a baby to be born (Kowal 2009), waiting becomes pervasive, contouring how lives are lived. Although felt as omnipresent, in those circumstances the feeling of waiting can oscillate between the foreground and background. For those in temporally protracted situations of waiting its pervasive quality cannot be escaped. These may be circumstances like waiting out a sentence in a prison (Foster 2015) or waiting with a terminal diagnosis in a hospice (Flaherty 2019), or within a displaced territory (Sa'di-Ibraheem 2020) whereby the act of waiting is lived out in a dedicated space of waiting that the person waiting cannot remove themselves from. In those conditions waiting may come to feel all encompassing.

The tensions of waiting however, all orientate towards the end of waiting, as all waiting is temporary[20] and all acts of waiting will end. There are few waiting circumstances where a person waiting does not orientate towards waiting's cessation, unless perhaps it involves end of life (see Flaherty 2019). As discussed in the first chapter via Berlant (2011a: 1-2), attachment to an object orientates a person in certain directions. Attachment is characterised as a set of promises or promissory objects, which are future orientated and come to form the fabric of a life (Anderson 2021; Berlant 2011a:2; Coleman 2023). The lure of an attachment could lead a person towards a certain path, but

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[20] Even eschatological waiting time as espoused by Gasparini (1995: 37-38) and Simone Weil (2021) is temporary if we follow the logic that earthly life is short compared with the infinite time of the afterlife.

that lure doesn't always lead to an attachment (Zhang 2023:4). A tension of waiting held by the attachment to the event of its cessation, may end differently from how it was expected at the outset. Waiting may hold the promise of one outcome but lead an individual to another one.

We constantly traverse acts of waiting in a myriad of forms. From the trivial to the significant, in spaces familiar and strange, through positive and negative feelings, consciously and unconsciously we find ourselves held by forces outside ourselves (Vannini 2002:193). Current literature on waiting gives attention to its ubiquity (see Gasparini 1995:29; Schweizer 2005:777), to its relational quality (see Auyero 2011:7; Bissell 2007; Dwyer 2009; Schouw Iverson 2022:229), its anticipatory orientations (see Axelsson et al 2015; Barthes 2002; Tantchou 2021:2), and its multiple holding tensions (see Gasparini 1995:37-38; Jeffrey 2008:955-956; Marcel 1967:280). Waiting is therefore a complex event.

In order to push forward understandings of the intricacies of waiting and potentially create further understandings of its complexities, I make a conceptual move in the thesis to separate certain dimensions of waiting. Within acts of waiting these dimensions are not unconnected but entangled in their constitution. Drawing out these dimensions, is an analytic move towards building a nuanced conceptual understanding of the lived experience of waiting through furlough. In the next four sections, I draw out the spatial, temporal, corporeal and felt dimensions of waiting. Each dimension involves different qualities: *space* of arrangement, *tim*e as *lived*, whilst *the corporeal* and *felt* involve capacities. Within each dimension I will consider how that dimension informs feelings of detachment and orientation with situations of waiting.

2.4 The Spatial Dimensions of Waiting

In scenes of waiting, space is a dimension of arrangement holding, slowing or delaying bodies. For the purposes of this thesis, I outline scenes of waiting unfolding in three spatial arrangements: *permanently* dedicated, *temporarily* delineated and *circumstantial* which encompass both the physical and digital spaces. Permanent dedicated spaces of

waiting such as an airport departure lounge, a prison cell or the green room[21] in a theatre hold bodies for a (usually) specified duration. These are spaces which wait to be filled by those who will wait. Whether entered voluntarily or by force, there is an expectation that a person within a dedicated waiting space will be held, confined and then released within a time period. Permanent dedicated spaces of waiting remain when the person who has waited moves on. Residues of the waiting experiences of previous people may linger, in the indentations of a newly vacated seat, in detritus left behind or in doodles on a wall. Dedicated waiting spaces can be 'spatial expressions of power' (Singer et al, 2019:2). Spatial in this context can be both physical, as in being detached physically from others in a separated space like an anteroom (Goffman 1959:84; Puff 2019:17-34), or an emotional detachment deliberately created between people like that between a border guard and migrant (Mountz 2004). A prison cell is, for example, a waiting space of confinement, one where structures of carceral power have detached a prisoner from friends and family and wider society, creating physical and emotional distances (Armstrong 2018; Moran 2015:30-31). A prison cell is a scene of multiple detachments, from those in authority who hold a prisoner and control their movement through incarceration and from those in close proximity whereby the sharing of space in a cell involves a series of spatial negotiations (Moran 2015:32). I am not suggesting that waiting through furlough was like a prison sentence, but I draw attention to permanently dedicated spaces of waiting as they may be how the furloughed came to *feel* about their waiting space.

Temporarily delineated waiting spaces involve levels of agreement with others. They are arrangements that involve removeable structures such as safety barriers, traffic cones, ropes or floor stickers. Safety barriers can be pushed away, cones moved, ropes unhooked, and stickers peeled away, and so temporary waiting spaces require a level of compliance by those waiting due to their transitory nature (Gasparini 1995:32). Those waiting are physically orientated towards a spatially determined endpoint such as, music lovers waiting outside a club behind safety barriers who comply within the temporary structure because they understand that it is a requirement of entry. Or a driver forced to wait in a road blocked by traffic cones for a police safety check, will do so to be perceived

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[21] A green room is a space beside a theatre stage in which actors change and wait to perform.

as a law-abiding citizen. And yet beyond being a temporary structure, these spaces can also be imbued with a corporeality that is 'intensely present' (Vannini 2002:195). For Phillip Vannini (ibid) in his reflection of waiting for a train in Agra India, the presence of hundreds of other bodies in the queue pulled him viscerally into a feeling of involvement with the world through a series of acute sensory engagements, such as the intense smell of urine.

During the COVID-19 pandemic in the UK, new waiting spaces emerged in line with government requirements to socially distance from others (Prime Minister's Office and Johnson, 2020a). People were held in queues outside supermarkets and fast-food outlets at a two-metre distance by taped markers on the ground (Burton 2021:219; Jones 2022; van Eck et al 2020:378). Compliance was understood as a move to protect self and community from the spread of the SARS-Cov-2 virus. For those experiencing furlough, the home became a temporary waiting space which for some involved spatial negotiation with others (this is further outlined in Chapter 04 'Losing Orientation: Leading a "Shadow life"').

Whereas delineated waiting spaces (whether permanent or temporary) compel an individual to acquiesce to the spatial requirements of an organisation, circumstantial waiting spaces are determined and felt by an individual. Circumstantial waiting spaces are relational to a specific activity or expectation which when met dissolves the space as one of waiting. The exterior wall of a cinema (Ayaß 2020:434), outside a lift (Bishop 2013:134), the space beside an ATM machine or in a kitchen beside a kettle (Bailey and Suddaby 2023:7) may become scenes of waiting. Circumstantial spaces of waiting appear as a need arises. They emerge and then fold back into an existing space. For example, in a retail space aside from a dedicated queue area, a retail worker may experience the shop as a space of multiple waiting. They may wait for customers to serve, for breaks, for the shift to be over. In waiting for a customer to enter, the shop as a waiting scene gathers multiple affects that are influenced by the financial needs of the shop owner and worker, by consumer trends and wider economic conditions. When a customer arrives, a break is taken or the shop worker leaves the shop, all temporary forms of waiting cease. During their period of furlough, a furloughed person may have traversed temporary and

circumstantial forms of waiting which emerged and submerged as circumstances arose and changed.

So far, I have outlined spaces of waiting as physical sites, and yet waiting can occur in digital spaces which may also be permanent, temporary or circumstantial. The spinning wheel of a website loading, the slow creep of a progress bar, the pulsing dots of an imminent response to a text message (see Farman, 2018 for further evocations of digital waiting) may be circumstantial waiting spaces. When the website loads or the text message is received, the waiting is over. A permanently dedicated digital waiting space may involve for example a mobile phone user being held in a queue or put on hold as a matter of an organisation's call handling process. It will be a protocol that is permanent and one which all callers to that organisation follow. Similarly, a regular meeting held on Zoom may have a 'waiting room' to hold participants before allowing them into the Zoom space. The 'waiting room' remains even when the call participants enter the main space. The spinning, pulsing or creeping of digital waiting technologies creates rhythms that feel aligned to chronological time, but are spaces that are subject to the arbitrary variabilities of Wi-Fi connections and bandwidth usage. I draw attention to digital waiting spaces, as during the COVID-19 pandemic the UK government requirement for social distancing created an increase in use of online communication platforms such as Zoom and Teams (Aagaard 2022; Osler and Zahavi 2022). As physical and digital waiting spaces can imbricate, a person waiting in a physical space can also be waiting in a digital space. This may have been the experience of those waiting through furlough at home, scrolling through a phone or waiting to be let into a Zoom conversation.

I have proposed that waiting spaces as arrangements, may be created intentionally as permanent or temporary structures or emerge as circumstantial organisations. Whatever the arrangement they are in relation to a context and other people. As such they are arranged to create emotional and physical detachments between people. These detachments may involve negotiating within or navigating around power relations with others and organisations (something I will further argue in section 2.7 of this chapter). Waiting spaces may include particular material set ups such as dedicated furniture or nothing materially permanent such as when one stands beside an ATM machine. This means that a waiting space may or may not have physical indicators of their delineation.

Nonetheless we explicitly or implicitly understand them as spaces which hold and delay, detach and orientate us.

2.4.1 Waiting at Home

The period of furlough took place in the space of the home. For the duration of furlough (and lockdowns during the pandemic) the home became a temporary waiting space. Nonetheless, what is a home? Etymologically a home is a space of dwelling. As a geographic concept home is more than a spatial idea (see Blunt and Dowling 2006; Harrison 2006; Massey 1992a). A home may indeed be a physical site but is also a space which can draw together and be a tangle of emotional attachments, notions of identity, power relations and cultural significances (Blunt and Dowling 2006:1-3,22; Brickell 2012;hooks 2000:205; Massey 1992a:14). Within a home, differing scales of involvement, both intimate and external, connect a person through lines of relation to other spaces, people and social and cultural conditions (Adey 2006:91; Brickell 2012:227; Massey 1992a, 2000). Drawing on Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling's (2006) claim that there is a 'politics to home'[22], Katherine Brickell (2012:227) asserts that the home as a geographic site is crucial to understanding the wider conditions that surround a situation. For Brickell (ibid) the home can become porous to wider political and social conditions (also see Massumi 2002:85 affective porosities of the home). Following Massey (1992a) and Brickell (2012), I suggest that the instigation of furlough and its consequence of workers being obliged to wait at home created a relation. This relation traced a line connecting an individual's feelings to their work identity, to their workplace to governmental COVID-19 policy.

Feelings about homes are not universally or homogeneously experienced, as homes may provoke a range of feelings for individuals. Homes may feel safe (hooks 1990:384[23]) or repressive and estranging (Ahmed 2006a:2; Blunt and Dowling 2006:10) or all of these feelings and more simultaneously. One can feel at home in a space like a workplace

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[22] For Blunt and Dowling (2006: 259, 169) focussing on the home is a means to understand wider political conditions and social factors instigated by situations such as Hurricane Katrina and the war on terror. As a mode of analysis Blunt and Dowling conceptualise the home as multi-scalar, a space of attachment and a space that opens attention to social and cultural factors.

[23] hooks' (1990:384) evocation of 'homespace' is as a safe space and healing refuge for black bodies, the need for which is a result of white dominated structural racism.

perhaps connected to a sense of affinity and shared intimacies with colleagues (see Thorne and Hochschild, 1997 for their elucidation of academia as a space of home). Likewise, feeling not at home can be instigated in spaces we are familiar with but feel out of sorts with, like a familial house (Ahmed 2006a:11). Feelings of being at home or not at home conceptually speak to feelings of comfort and discomfort whether or not directly referring to a person's actual home. An individual's emotional attachment to home can grow whether it is a temporary situation as for asylum seekers in hotels (Mountz 2011:390) or spaces of long-term occupation (Bachelard 1994:4-37; Relph 1976:40, 55; Tuan 1977:144). Whether temporary or long-term dwellings, experienced with feelings of comfort or discomfort, homes and the notion of home entwine with an individual's sense of self (Ahmed 2006a:9; Massey 1992a, 2000).

And yet home is not a fixed concept, its mutability means that the feeling of home and homes can alter as we and circumstances change (Ahmed 2010: 77; Baxter and Brickell 2015). During the COVID-19 pandemic, lockdowns and being furloughed, the home assumed new dimensions. It became a space of confinement (Bissell 2021:155), of care (Andersen et al 2022; Maddrell et al 2023:3), of home schooling and home working (Rose-Redwood et al 2020:99) and for some domestic violence (Cuomo 2022). Of course, there were homes before the COVID-19 pandemic that were sites of restriction and waiting, for example the circumstances of convicted criminals who are electronically tagged or those waiting for immigration status. The home was also already a scene of work (ONS 2020a) and home schooling (Long and Danechi, 2022). As a temporary site of waiting during furlough, the home may have developed new resonances and relations for those furloughed. For those accustomed to working out of the home, the assumption may be that the home during furlough developed some of the characteristics of dedicated or delineated waiting spaces that I outlined earlier. The government requirement to 'Stay at Home' (Prime Minister's Office and Johnson 2020b) may have felt for some that the home had become a space of imposed captivity. One where outside forces (the UK government and employers) were having an influence over how a person lived in their home to an extent they had not previously encountered. The home also became a promissory space, as the furloughed orientated towards the promise of a return to their former work life. As such, the sense that the home had become a waiting space, may have instigated new feelings around spatial restriction. Those feelings could potentially have provoked

particular bodily comportments and generated further new felt capacities and intensities. The home, as a container for the furloughed, may have felt emotionally and physically transformed by those living through it.

2.5 The Temporal Dimensions of Waiting

Within acts of waiting, time is a lived dimension. The act of waiting implies that an action will happen but not at the present time (Bissell 2007:282; Schweizer 2005:789). St Augustine (cited in Gasparini 1995:30) defined waiting as 'the present of the future', which speaks to a certain attachment to or orientation towards a future event. Acts of waiting could also be considered the 'connective tissue' between past and future events (Schwartz 1975:192-3). In other words, waiting time is a temporality of betweenness or suspension. Waiting can last for a range of intervals, like the moment of waiting for a match to light, for a decision or through the lifelong movement from birth to death. Waiting time may be heterogeneous, like waiting for a particular parcel to be delivered on a particular day. Or they may be part of an array of change processes within a corporate workplace (Bailey 2018). Or waiting may be part of an annual cyclical rhythm, like a farmer waiting for the seasons to change so rain will water their crops (Hage 2009a:8). The elongated temporality found within a torpid tension of waiting, may provide a longer time frame for multiple feelings to gather, surface and fade in and out of attention with varying intensities (Marcel 1967:280). Whereas rapid transition through an inert form of waiting may become a temporal blur (ibid).

2.5.1 Time Lived

Time within a scene of waiting becomes a lived orientation. I turn here to Henri Bergson's (1911:14) conceptualisation of lived time or 'duration', as Bergson accounts for time in waiting as part of our inner being. Across the waiting literature, scholars have also turned to Bergson's notion of duration to articulate the corporeal experience of time during waiting, in situations as diverse as travel mobilities (Bissell 2007:286-287; Vannini 2002), migration (Brekke 2004:25), bio-cultivation (Williams 2022) gender transition (Pitts-Taylor (2019) waiting rooms (Bishop 2013; Brault-Dreux 2019) and waiting itself (Schweizer 2005; 2008; 2017). For Bergson (2002:216) 'Time, which is pure duration, is always in the course of flowing', a duration involves experiencing time as a dynamic

present which pulls the past forward into an unfolding future. The future becomes a 'promise' within a register of continual unfolding (ibid). Bergson's (ibid) rendering that 'real duration is *experienced*' [emphasis in the original] accounts for time as lived. This is a counterpoint to what Harold Schweizer (2005:778) calls 'official time within whose economic determinations we live'. Schweizer (ibid) determines that focusing on Bergson's notion of duration in relation to waiting as lived, enables us to be open to the 'repressed rhythms' and 'deeper dimensions of our being'.

Bergson (2004:100) conceptualises duration as one temporal period consisting of separate experiences whose singularity does not come into focus. He illustrates this through an account of stirring sugar into a glass of water and waiting for the sugar to dissolve. The time the individual sugar crystals take to dissolve and become one solution, is not connected to clock time or 'thought time', but time becomes 'something *lived*' (Bergson 1911:12-13), much as the experiences of the bio-designers in the previous chapter waiting for cultures to grow (Williams 2022). Bergson cannot determine the length of time he has to wait until the sugar dissolves, the *duration* of his wait is ambiguous and unknown. People who experience a duration tend to homogenise the individual moments that fill that duration and consider them as one mass (Bergson 2004:86). In other words, people find holding the individual moments of a duration difficult and so prefer to think of it as one temporal experience. Bergson provides various analogies for experiences in a 'duration': a flock of sheep (ibid:76), 'soldiers in a battalion' (ibid), bells ringing in a peel (ibid:86) and notes on a musical score (ibid:101). Time may (or may not) be a pre-existing phenomenon (for a discussion of this see Bloch 1970:124-138) but the experience of waiting has the capacity to materialise time when we feel we are living through a duration[24]. That materialisation in Bergson's (1911:12) sugar example, is manifest as feelings of 'impatience' at his non-ability to influence the length of the duration of the sugar dissolving. Bergson's impatience surfaces a certain tension and awareness of time passing, which I argue if not felt as a strain might not be so noticeable. How we feel and experience a duration of time 'is sometimes the revealer of its nature' (Bergson 2002:216). I want to loop back here to my earlier assertion that acts

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[24] For Harold Schweizer (2008:11-13; 2021:21) Samuel Beckett's play 'Waiting for Godot' in which two men converse to pass time as they wait for a person called Godot but nothing much happens, is an example of the materialisation of time. Schweizer (2008:11) suggests that the point of the play is for the audience to move through time and feel it; as 'time itself is shockingly on display' (Schweizer 2021:21).

of waiting are influenced by the wider conditions in which they are made. Bergson's duration opens the possibility that the temporalities of the multiple attachments, detachments, and new orientations opened by waiting through furlough, may have influenced how people surfaced and felt the passing of time during that period.

Bergson (1911:14) establishes that durations are not singular or isolated, the material world consists of a plurality of durations that fold into each other. Durations are rhythmic with a multiplicity of (slow, fast) tempos and (relaxed, tense) tensions (Bergson 1896:132). These differing tempos and tensions 'fix their respective places in a scale of being' (ibid). Waiting through a duration for Bergson involves a plurality of tensions, something I also argued at the top of the chapter. Bergson (ibid) suggests that it is difficult to think of duration in terms of multiple rhythms because of the propensity for people to perceive durations homogeneously. It is our 'perception' that brings certain durations (or not) to the fore (Bergson 1914:15). Such foregrounding of a duration may become a marker in a person's memory of that time (Bergson 1896:50).

2.5.2 Temporal Landmarks

The period of waiting through furlough may have become a 'temporal landmark' in a person's life. Coined by psychologist Michael Shum (1998) 'temporal landmarks' can be personal events that happen for the first time and have a lasting effect on a person. Shum's account of 'temporal landmarks' is bound with his work around memory and autobiography. 'Temporal landmarks' are events that an individual can refer to in order to orientate themselves in time and are a form of 'personal referencing system' (ibid:424). 'Temporal landmarks' can firstly be public events, such as the UK Prime Minister's announcement of the first lock down. These are events that for an individual leave a lasting affective resonance once they are over. Shum acknowledges that responses to public events are not uniform and will have differing resonances for different people experiencing them (ibid:426). Secondly, they can be 'personal events' in particular (but not exclusively) events that happen for the first time, such as a first day of being furloughed or having a meeting with someone. Again these are events that have an individual affective resonance. Thirdly they can be 'calendar' or lifetime periods with a duration (ibid: 425), such as the timespan of a meeting or someone's period of waiting

through furlough. The key point is that these are 'vivid' experiences that act as reference points in a person's life story (ibid:427). 'Temporal landmarks' are used by an individual to link past, present and future temporalities when recounting memories (ibid:426). If waiting through furlough was experienced in an acute way, it could have been felt and remembered as a 'temporal landmark'. A person carries a temporal landmark and its lived dimensions with them as a way of defining a time period in their life. The unusual circumstance of furlough could potentially become for some a defining temporal landmark in their lives. How time was *felt* during furlough, may become embedded within how that period is remembered.

The memory of furlough may be influenced by how a person filled their time. Michael G. Flaherty (2011:26) proposes that 'when we have to wait, time's fate hangs in the balance: some try to save it; others try to kill it'. For Flaherty, killing time involves filling the empty time of waiting with small activity like flicking through television channels when waiting for adverts to finish, or reading a book whilst waiting for medication to take effect. In this instance, killing time fills short intervals of waiting. For those waiting for longer intervals, filling and killing empty time may involve lengthier and more involved activity. For example, those who are long term under-employed and waiting for meaningful employment in Senegal, describe killing time through elaborate tea making sessions which sometimes stretch across the time of a day (Ralph 2008). Therefore 'killing time' can encompass various temporalities. Killing and filling time involve anticipating waiting time's potential to feel hollow and being compelled to fill it. Filling time is an act of non-allowance of the possibilities that empty time may hold. It is an act of control, of attempting to make certain that which is potentially uncertain. In a Bergsonian rendering of duration, the individual acts of killing and filling time may not be remembered by those enacting them as they may become part of a homogeneous memory of that time period.

Objects of distraction offer the promise of not being subsumed by the empty time of waiting (Schweizer 2017:82). They become a form of 'anaesthesia' from the burden of time waiting (ibid:84); and the 'the intimacy' of one's 'own narcissistic self-absorption' (ibid:82). And yet filling time with distractions can also involve saving time. To save time is to fill time efficiently in order to squeeze out extra time (Flaherty 2011:29). Those who wait may kill and save time simultaneously, by filling time with activity to negate its

empty feeling in a manner that enables a sense of having created extra time. An example might be making a cup of tea whilst waiting for a bath to fill and drying the dishes whilst waiting for the kettle to boil in order to make the tea. In this example all potential waiting time is filled. The time of waiting for filling the bath has been filled by tea making and dish drying. The time of dish drying is folded into the time of waiting for the kettle to boil which is in turn folded into the time of waiting for the bath to fill. Feeling that one is saving time whilst waiting can therefore involve multiple activities collapsed into each other.

Killing and saving time both play on a perception that waiting is empty time. And yet waiting time can also open opportunity for further deliberation over an uncertain decision or situation (Gasparini 1995:41). Waiting in this instance provides time to think and strategize (ibid). A similar sentiment is echoed in the practice of 'watchful waiting'. 'Watchful waiting' refers to the medical practice of waiting to see how an illness or treatment will unfold over time (Baraitser and Brook 2020). It makes a temporal space within an experience where care becomes noticing over an elongated duration. Care and noticing are time lived. For those being watched, watchful waiting can exacerbate feelings of anxiety as well as extending time periods of pain (ibid). 'Watchful waiting' can be transposed to circumstances whereby people pay attention to the unfolding nuances of a situation over a drawn-out time period and need care. During furlough employers waited for the conditions of the pandemic to change and for government restrictions to lift. Whilst furloughed employees waited for acts of care from their employers in the form of communication about their well-being and jobs.

After a certain amount of time waiting, a duration becomes an investment which is attached to the anticipated object of waiting (Schwartz 1975:15). For some people, having given extended time to waiting, there must be a payoff. Those who wait in unknowable durations may be exercising cruel optimism. Lauren Berlant (2006:21) describes cruel optimism as an attachment to a future orientated object that may cause those waiting for it harm. The attachment to the object (no matter how detrimental it becomes for those holding it) is a form of 'continuity' holding a life together (ibid). This may be so for those furloughed whose sense of self was folded into their work with their job providing a constant in their life. This opens the question of how the furloughed

orientated towards the future promise of the re-instigation of work life in a present where they were held in uncertainty?

Alternatively, Harold Schweizer (2017:80) considers that extending the temporality of waiting can be a form of resistance to the notion that waiting is undesirable and unproductive. Lingering in waiting can become an act of resistance to the velocities of contemporary life and to the convention that the end of waiting is a desirable end goal (ibid:92). By taking control of one's waiting and lingering in it, waiting opens the possibility of an extended attention to the world and self (ibid:93). In Matti Eräsaari's (2017) exploration in a Fijian village, Naloto in Verata, slowness and waiting for life to unfold are not resisted but welcomed. As most work where time is considered money is conducted elsewhere (ibid:309), leisure, slowness and waiting for life to unfold are a part of the collective spirit of the village (ibid:314). Waiting is not felt as a tension, however going against the flow of slowness and not waiting time out with others is frowned on (ibid:321). As in Naloto waiting and slowness are part of a prevailing sense of collective living, Nalotoians are living out Schweizer's call to wait and resist feeling a faster pace of life.

Conceptualising waiting time as a lived dimension through Bergson's (1911:12-13) notion of duration, accounts for waiting through furlough as lived experience. Bergson's positioning of duration as a process of becoming, reveals the dynamic nature of living through time and having a position orientated towards an unfolding future. Waiting time may feel like an empty space to be filled, but Bergson's conceptualisation of duration allows that time is not empty but filled by experiences, rhythms and tensions. Small activity that kills, fills or distracts those waiting and tensions such as care, resistance, slowness or attachment become part of the fabric of a lived duration of waiting. Some tensions and activity come to the fore and become temporal landmarks. These may be forgotten and subsumed as part of the homogeneity of a duration remembered as a particular time period.

2.6 The Corporeal Dimensions of Waiting

A waiting body involves certain capacities and intensities which may draw into focus or exacerbate certain bodily and sensory responses which I will explore in this section. Waiting can instigate a range of corporeal comportments which can signal to an onlooker the inner feelings of those waiting. Tension during waiting may be felt as stiffness (Tanner 2018:71), anxiety as restlessness (Brault-Dreux 2019:206), resignation as inertia (Bishop 2013:142), happiness as relaxation (Eräsaari 2017:313) and boredom as yawning (Anderson 2003:748). When a body is held in a queue or forced to sit in a waiting room for a duration it may be deemed stilled and restricted. And yet a waiting body can also find itself vibrating within the margins of its confinement. Whether pacing in a waiting room (Foster 2015:13; Schweizer 2021:21), jigging a leg, drumming a finger on a chair, or tapping into a mobile phone (Farman 2018:13) a waiting body may not be stilled but creating its own rhythm through the duration of its restriction. Indeed, bodily rhythm (through pacing, jigging, drumming, tapping) may be manifestations of how certain feelings take hold inside and outside of bodies (see McCormack 2002:483-484). Pacing, jigging, drumming, tapping are therefore rhythmic refrains of bodies constrained within certain tempos of waiting. In Sarah Armstrong's (2015) work on the imaginaries of confinement during imprisonment, an incarcerated body is perceived to be waiting immobilised. And yet circulating between cells and activity sessions is part of the experience of an incarcerated body (ibid:142). Waiting as a deferred body in a specific space may open the imaginary of a certain form of captivity and stillness, but the lived experience may play out quite differently.

A waiting person may have a direct reaction to their environment such as: waiting for food in hunger on an air flight (Schindler 2020:10); seated in a barber's chair in anticipation (Corbridge 2004:184); poised to cross a pedestrian crossing (Harris and Coleman 2020:617) 'shivering with cold' in a welfare office (Auyero 2011:11). There are waiting spaces which have an expectation of certain bodily comportments, such as medical waiting rooms that minimise conversation to a low hum. An escaped sigh may reveal the tedium felt by a person waiting, or a tut of irritation may signal that a queue hasn't moved forward as expected. A mumble of dissatisfaction may indicate those waiting may have begun to feel discontent, a vocal complaint disclosing inner feelings. Or a disempowered and angry voice may cut through the air, a body loudly breaking its

constraints (Carswell et al 2018:68). For some, waiting in a public space may instigate feelings of self-consciousness which in turn may make a person's body language closed, for example people waiting in a hospital waiting room in a medical gown (Tanner 2018:68). Equally there may be those who value being seen to wait in public, such as those who slowly enter social events through roped off VIP queues.

The tensions of waiting ascribed earlier as chronic, momentary, anticipatory, devitalised or excluding, may prompt differing bodily comportments. People who wait in public spaces such as airports for long durations may relax into a devitalised tension of torpor and even sleep (Bissell 2009a). A sleeping body in this instance may be an outward sign of acceptance of a long duration. Marcel's (1967:280) 'active' tension where people expect their period of waiting to end but are unsure when, may instigate the pacing, jigging, drumming, tapping that I outlined earlier. Active waiting may also involve Marcel's (ibid) 'inert' tension of waiting whereby the end of waiting is known and imminent, may instigate bodily comportments such as an arm raised wanting attention, a finger swiping a mobile phone or the enactment of displacement activity like wiping a kitchen surface. Such bodily reactions to different temporal tensions of waiting may be socially learnt behaviours.

A body learns to hold itself through recursive social and cultural acts (Bourdieu 2000:141; Lefebvre 2004:39). Henri Lefebvre (2004:39) posits the concept of 'dressage' or behaviour learnt through repetition as a form of social conditioning. Even when the circumstances are not quite the same, repetition of social codes is a means of conditioning people to behave in certain ways (ibid:40). What I am suggesting is that how a body comports during waiting, is socially conditioned and therefore may not be natural but learnt. Queuing is one such conditioned waiting behaviour (Corbridge 2004:184-185; Moran 2005:284). In the United Kingdom, bodies are conditioned to follow certain ethics of queueing behaviour and to not follow these is to be deemed transgressive by those queueing with you (Corbridge 2004:185). Those queueing wait their turn with an implicit acceptance of the order of service. To queue jump or move ahead of your allotted space in a queue is to push against a set of tacit queue ethics and notions of social equity (ibid:184). The ethics of the queue are unsaid and ingrained through embodied repetition.

2.6.1 Sensory Geographies of Waiting

During waiting, bodies comport, contort, are energised and are listless through a range of bodily intensities. Even in stillness waiting bodies are feeling and revealing those intensities (Bissell 2008:1704; Bournes et al 2002:62; Christou 2021). Such intensities may be played out as sensations from external sources such as the vibration or internally through sensory stimuli. Each sensory modality[25] ,vision, smell, taste, hearing and touch[26], gives dimension to and colours our embodied experiences of waiting by drawing out certain feelings or sensations. The conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic created certain new conditions prompting new sensory responses to waiting. This section will not only give an account of sensory intensities felt whilst waiting, but how these changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the time period when the furloughed waited.

The sense of sight during acts of waiting may involve a complex eye dance (Schweizer 2021:21-22) between display boards, smartphones, the ground, the road, the tracks, into the air, other people. These 'gaze anchors' (Ayaß 2020:449) allow a waiting eye to avoid or minimise interaction with other waiting eyes (Bissell 2007:285). Amidst the eye dance of avoidance, waiting eyes may also be enacting a form of vigilance (Ayaß 2020:449). Vigilant waiting eyes may be looking for a destination to flash on a board, for a person to arrive, for a meal to be served. Eyes that wait may therefore be simultaneously attentive whilst enacting inattention.

With their capacity to affect a person corporeally, emotionally and socially (Classen et al 1994; Xiao et al 2020:7) smells have the potential to heighten acts of waiting (Tantchou 2021:7). A smell has the ability to affect and connect spaces and people simultaneously

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[25] I acknowledge that by drawing out how vision, smell, taste, hearing and touch are engaged by a body during waiting, I am drawing certain Western notions of the sensory body. For discussions of how sensory perception is culturally determined see Classon et al (1994), Rodaway (1994:22-24) or Stoller (1997).

[26] The 'multi-sensual experience of everyday geographical experience' (Rodaway 1994) started to be accounted for by geographers in the late twentieth century when the discipline of geography took a sensory turn. Geographers such as Yi-Fi Tuan (1979), Douglas Pocock (1981), J. Douglas Porteous (1990) and Paul Rodaway (1994) recognised the importance of the sensory in their ongoing understanding of lived human experience as something not immediately quantifiable. Although some attention has been made to the sensations of waiting (see Bissell 2007; Jones 2022; Naidu 2023; Pitts-Taylor 2019; Vannini 2011 for examples) there is scope for more in depth sensory attention to waiting, particularly within the discipline of Human Geography with its focus on human experience.

(Porteous 1985:358; Rodaway 1994:61). The trans-corporeal[27] nature of smell (Hsu 2020:152; Nieuwenhuis 2015) gives those waiting a direct physical connection to a waiting space. Temporally, smells can trigger memories[28] that not only connect a person acutely to their current scene and other people (Vannini 2002:195), but to past scenes (Hoover 2009:238). On the other hand, unlike smells which are experienced involuntarily, to taste something requires active contact. A waiting person distracting themselves by chewing gum or smoking a cigarette (Schweizer 2017:81) has to actively put a piece of gum or a cigarette in their mouth to experience the taste of spearmint or nicotine. That food has to pass over taste buds on the tongue and smell receptors in the roof of the mouth in order for a person to experience flavour, suggests that taste is 'a form of touch' (Rodaway 1994:63).

The sensory modality of touch is mediated by the surface of the skin (Manning 2007:9; Rodaway 1994:43; Paterson 2009:780) as a form of tactile knowledge making (Paterson 2009:768). In this way touch is an immediate embodied relation formed via intimate contact (ibid:136). Whilst waiting, a body may clench a fist in anticipation, scratch a head in embarrassment, hold a document in readiness, trace a finger or feel soft carpet under foot. Through the contact of touch, 'social formations' may be created (Bissell et al 2020) as forms of non-discursive communication (Rodaway 1994:44) such as a squeeze on a shoulder as a gesture of reassurance (Bournes and Mitchell 2002:63).

Waiting may be typified by silence or low-level sound (Ayaß 2020:448). Silence may feel 'deafening' when people waiting are disconnected and engaged in distraction activity (Ralph 2008:5). Alternatively waiting may take place in spaces full of sound and activity such as a busy ferry terminal (Vannini 2011) or in a prison (Hemsworth 2016). Waiting sounds may not be pervasive or of note other than as a signal of an imminent shift in an act of waiting (Tantchou 2021:6-7) such as a tannoy announcement (Ayaß 2020: 440), a

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[27] The use of the term 'trans-corporeal' by Husan Hsu (2020:152) and I draw on the work of feminist environmental scholar Stacey Alaimo's (2010) for whom trans-corporeal refers to the notion that human bodies are not bounded, and non-human elements can flow in around and through bodies.

[28] The capacity for smell to transport an individual to another space and time through smell memory is known as the 'Proustian Effect'. Named after a passage in Marcel Proust's (1913) 'Swann's Way' where the protagonist eats cake crumbs with tea that provokes an involuntary memory of his aunt and her garden.

call to prayer (Naidu 2023:14), 'nurses clogs' before a name call (Tanner 2018:67), or a shout of 'fire' (Pederson 2019:86). Spatio-auditory experiences are not just involuntarily felt but are also imbued with personal, cultural and social significances (Duffy and Waitt 2013:468; Gallagher et al 2017:620; Porteous and Mastin 1985).

2.6.2 The Sensory During COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic new sensory dimensions through new spatial navigations were created due to the government requirement to social distance. These navigations held and corralled bodies in queues delineated by temporary signage, tape or stickers (Burton 2021:219; van Eck et al 2020:378). Bodily proximities in waiting spaces such as queues created a new form of social anxiety, as people understood others as potentially contaminating and kept their distance (Joiner et al 2022:13; Jones 2022). Care for self and others took the form of spatial distance and a refusal to touch. Touch and being touched became a potential source of vulnerability (Linder 2021:68; Nguyet Erni and Striphas 2021:227) as the porosity of skin meant that the virus had the potential to infiltrate bodies through its surface (Dixon and Jones 2015:230; Nieuwenhuis 2019). Everyday touchpoints such as doorknobs or other people became scenes of potential threat from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This resulted in the ubiquity of the spraying of surfaces and hands with anti-bacterial sanitiser (Linder 2021:80).

The home developed new smellscapes during the pandemic. Practices of mitigating the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus initiated by the UK government (Prime Minister's Office and Johnson, B. 2020a) insisted on the cleansing of hands and surfaces with sanitisers and disinfectants which in turn released smells into homes (Allen 2023:266; Tullet and McCann 2022:173; Vannini 2020:269). However these new anti-bacterial smellscapes may not have been experienced by all, as symptoms of COVID-19 included anosmia the loss of the ability to smell and taste and parosmia a distorted sense of smell and taste (Tullet and McCann 2022:172). Confinement to home during furlough with the absence of familiar smells may have been disorientating for those with anosmia or parosmia or equally for those wearing face masks or living with new sanitising smells.

The government requirement for people to stay at home decreased the use and sound of cars and lorries in transit (Rose-Redwood 2020:98; Torresin et al 2020). With less traffic,

the sounds of nature came to the fore (Nash and Lyon 2023:650; Searle and Turnball 2020). Other new sounds emerged during the first lockdowns in the UK, as communities created a noisy soundscape from their doorsteps on Thursday evenings, by clapping and banging pots and pans as an act of gratitude for the care of NHS health workers (Mosteau 2021:63; Wood and Skeggs, 2020). Although this soundscape subsided as health workers themselves articulated unease at the practice (Plyushteva, 2023: 56) in the face of perceived government mishandling of the pandemic and previous government cuts to the health service (Wood and Skeggs 2020:644). Indoor soundscapes developed new dimensions as people lived and worked at home (Torresin et al 2020). Some found exposure to the sounds instigated through new proximities to co-habitants and neighbours reassuring, whilst others detached themselves by adopting the silence of noise cancelling headphones (ibid:8).

The corporeal experiences of a waiting body manifest within bodily comportments, rhythms, vocal and physical articulations. And yet how a body waits may not be entirely natural but be formed through recursive exposure to social and cultural conditioning around waiting acts, events and practices. However, no matter how waiting acts are instigated they influence bodily intensities which may be felt on a sensory register. Sensory intensities can inform how a waiting body interacts with other bodies or its environment, such as through an eye gaze or a finger stroke or a shout. Such sensory responses may orient a person in certain directions through a familiar aroma or voice or taste. Likewise these may disorientate a person if those sensory stimuli are unwelcome. The practices of mitigating exposure to the SARS-CoV-2 virus created new corporeal and sensory responses to waiting. Sight and sound were heightened as we became aware of the proximities of others. Touching and sniffing laid a body open to the potential danger of infiltration by the virus. A body waiting through furlough was therefore subject to a range of existing potential comportments and intensities layered with new considerations of proximities and porosities.

2.7 The Felt Dimensions of Waiting
Waiting bodies feel certain emotional capacities and intensities. Harold Schweizer (2008:2) expresses the plurality of feelings ignited by waiting as 'Between hope and

resignation, boredom and desire, fulfilment and futility, waiting extends across barren mental and emotional planes'. Here, Schweizer succinctly accounts for the multiple tensions and felt capacities and intensities experienced whilst waiting. His pairing of hope and resignation for example combines the waiting tensions of active waiting (hope) and the devitalised waiting tension of torpor (resignation). Expressions of feelings therefore become expressions of how waiting tensions are felt. This is something I will explore in this section whilst considering how temporalities, spatialities and relations between individuals and organisations contour and influence feelings in waiting experiences.

Feelings during waiting may be part of the fabric of a life. Hope, for example, contours the lives of those waiting through the eschatological movement from birth to death (Gasparini 1995:37). The afterlife becomes an object that Christians wait in hope for over a lifetime. Most waiting acts do not last a lifetime, nonetheless feelings can imbricate and contour how lives are lived over long durations. In Stacey Holman Jones's (2017) essay on waiting for queer parenthood, waiting initially feels like 'low-grade 'simmering'. This eventually catalyses into waiting that 'feels right' and is felt more dynamically when Holman Jones is shown a photograph of their prospective child. Feelings here move between intensities of active waiting, from feeling the potential of an outcome, to being catalysed into a more involved feeling of active waiting. For Emma Kowal (2009) waiting through pregnancy feels 'intense' although bound with feelings of 'excitement'. In the first half of her pregnancy, intense 'feelings' she explains are tied with having no pregnancy bump, therefore little to show for her excitement. Her pregnancy is felt as a tension of transition between waiting to detach from her current life and for a new life to begin (ibid:2014). Her shift in feelings belies a shift in her orientation towards parenthood.

Within waiting experiences, multiple feelings may circulate contouring a person's experience of a situation. In Sarah Armstrong's (2015:140) study of prisoners on remand waiting for an adjudication, their wait is influenced by feelings of 'boredom, frustration, hope, fear' (Armstrong 2015:140). These feelings become part of the course of their day, ebbing and flowing in line with their physical movement between jail, court and prison cell. The ebbs and flows of feelings are linked to bodily movements which are beyond their control and orientated towards others who are responsible for making decisions

about their lives. The changing intensities of feeling are part of the flow of their day. For others orientation and feelings may shift if the flow of their day is disrupted through acts of waiting. Catherine Bailey's (2018:16-17) study of a cleaner whose working day encompasses multiple events of waiting for others to enable him to complete his tasks, results in him feeling 'frustrated and annoyed'. Although initially feeling motivated, the flow of his day is punctuated by being made to wait for others so he can proceed to his next task. The disjuncture to his workflow results in him feeling demoralised about his work (ibid). Bailey's example demonstrates how if an orientation is disturbed, in this case towards completing his work, orientations and feelings can shift direction.

When a person is orientated towards a promised end to waiting that does not materialise, it can instigate a feeling of despondency (Auyero 2011:13). In the context of waiting for welfare decisions, the attachment to a failed promise can leave a person feeling 'impotent' (ibid). The feelings of impotency and despondency may be in relation to the level of intensity of wanting waiting to end. The non-ending of waiting may make a person feel stuck. Feeling 'stuck' waiting in a situation that is beyond one's control, may cause a person to feel 'jolted by its irregularity' from the flows of quotidian life (Baraitser 2021:39). Here stuckness is a disorientation from an expected orientation. And yet the feeling one should be moving forward from a situation but have come to feel 'stuck' in it, may make someone feel that they are 'waiting out' time (Hage 2009b: 99). 'Waiting out' something is actually waiting for the situation to pass us by (ibid:102). For Ghassan Hage (ibid) 'waiting out' is a 'passive' and 'ambivalent' feeling. Waiting here is a Bergsonian duration. A feeling of a dynamic shifting present through which events unfold. Feeling that one is *waiting out* a circumstance, is perhaps a feeling of letting time move past us.

Stuckness can also instigate feelings of non-care by others. Melanie Griffiths' (2014: 2003) work on those refused asylum status in the UK and waiting for repatriation, finds them feeling anxious as slow bureaucratic processes hold them in limbo for unknown durations. Those waiting for immigration status, begin to understand the slow bureaucratic processes and organisational detachment as neglect (ibid). Being outside of everyday flows of experience makes them feel 'abnormal' and other (ibid:1998). This chimes with Baraitser's earlier assertion of feeling the irregularity of being outside imagined flows of normal quotidian life. Feeling 'abnormal' is a sentiment bound with a

feeling of organisational neglect where there is an expectation of care. Organisational non-care may also be felt in circumstances where there is an expectation of care, such as waiting in a medical waiting room (Bournes and Mitchell 2002:59) or on a waiting list for a medical procedure (Baraitser et al 2021). Care for those waiting in medical settings manifests as an expectation of communication and reassurance from medical professionals (Bournes and Mitchell 2002:59). For those in the asylum system and those in medical waiting situations, the detached relation is felt as powerlessness. The lack of communication from those making them wait, perhaps intensifies feelings of lack of autonomy and alienation.

In Sam Strong's work on food poverty those waiting at a foodbank do so with the feeling of 'shame' (Strong 2020). Shame is linked to feelings of failure at not being able to provide for self and family. And yet this failure is an effect of the governmental strategy of austerity, a strategic withdrawal of governmental care (ibid:78). Feeling shame becomes an internalised manifestation of governmental policy over which an individual has no control. When a person waiting feels that they are not in control of their situation and the object that they are waiting for is promissory, feelings of resistance may grow. Resistance may take the form of non-acceptance of their situation[29]. Young people in 'waithood' for example, develop a form of resistance to their status quo. Waithood refers to the global phenomena of young, educated people waiting for employment commensurate with their education (Honwana 2012; Morán & Fernández de Mosteyrín, 2017; Ungruhe & Esson, 2017). The young people resist taking employment that they consider unworthy of their educated status whilst waiting for meaningful work opportunities which may or may not materialise (Singerman, 2007; Jeffrey, 2010). This feeling of resistance is fuelled by a detached relation to a certain way of life within an as yet unknown workplace, orientation towards which is contoured by hope that waiting will unfold a particular employment outcome for an individual.

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[29] Homer's figure of Penelope is symbolic of how waiting with a feeling of resistance can give a person agency in a circumstance whereby the denouement of waiting may only be promissory and their personal circumstance uncertain. In his 'Odyssey' (2003) Penelope becomes a figure of waiting as resistance as she weaves a shroud, the completion of which she has agreed will mark the end of her waiting for her husband the king to return. Penelope's weaving creates a political impasse where those wanting to supersede her husband in political office are forced to wait by her actions. Her public weaving of the shroud marks time as lived. The private unravelling of the shroud extends her wait and becomes an act of political resistance.

And yet, waiting as resistance can also open positive feelings and new relationships. Karen Schouw Iversen's (2022) work on displaced people waiting for settlement in Colombia and Robert Wirth's (2019) work on those waiting for Scottish independence, both reveal that when a group of people are made to wait for a collective change then waiting can open new connections with others, new forms of collective resistance and new opportunities to mobilise ideas. The longer the individual waits, then the more they feel part of a community of like-minded people. Waiting alone and feeling resistant mutates and becomes 'productive' when connected with others (Schouw Iversen 2022: 240). Feelings of resistance grown by a detached relation to something promissory, may move a person towards new orientations.

Conversely, ceding power during waiting is not always felt negatively especially if an act of waiting marks the delay of a perceived negative event or opens waiting as a space of rest and recovery (Schweizer 2017:80). Waiting without personal agency may be desirable for some, particularly if the thing being waited for is undesirable, like deportation (see Drangsland 2020) or redundancy (see Simpson 2021 for an evocation of feelings around redundancy). In those circumstances people waiting may be optimistic of a positive outcome, but the receipt of their end notice must mark the end of hope. Some of those furloughed may have felt pessimism that their jobs would be made redundant, whilst others waiting through furlough may have felt hopeful of a return to work. Others may not have enjoyed their job and furlough was perhaps a merciful reprise from their work life. Waiting, in those instances, is a delay potentially linked with feelings of hope, optimism and relief.

The space a body waits in can influence feelings. Waiting in a restricted physical space can intensify pre-existing feelings of 'isolation, boredom, and loneliness' (DeBacker et al 2022:8). In Mattias De Backer and colleagues (ibid) study of asylum seekers waiting in an asylum centre, their confinement during lockdown becomes 'stressful, complicated'. These were people waiting in a situation that was already limiting their opportunities of work and social interaction. The asylum seekers expressed that the lack of space had exacerbated their negative feelings. Waiting spaces may not be permanently delineated like the asylum centre, they may be circumstantial to a context, as such their set up can instigate certain feelings. At military checkpoints in Syria in 2011 waiting bodies were

made to line up in public (Ilcan 2020). This leaves those waiting feeling 'humiliated' as being seen to be waiting in line is an indicator to others of 'low status, rejection, or exclusion' (Ilcan 2020). Humiliation is bounded with feelings of hopelessness and 'desolation' (ibid:14). These feelings are perhaps exacerbated by having to wait in a public space in the view of others.

Spaces during waiting may not be physical, they can be immaterial atmospheres which influence waiting feelings. Feeling an atmosphere can create an emotional tone in a waiting space such as 'friendly' and 'pub-like' in a car park waiting for a ferry (Vannini 2011:290); 'paranoia' whilst waiting in a workplace for an unknown outcome (Hitchen 2021:308) or 'insecurity' whilst waiting in a location of criminality (Sa'di-Ibraheem 2020:349). In Phillip Vannini's description of a 'pub-like' atmosphere we understand that waiting for the ferry felt like a certain form of collective sociality. Esther Hitchen's 'paranoia' is a shared feeling of instability. Yara Sa'di-Ibrahee's feeling of being in an 'atmosphere of insecurity' expresses community held feelings of fear and uncertainty felt at an individual level. Atmospheres are felt spaces which intensify collectively shared and individually held feelings.

Feelings of hope, excitement, boredom, frustration, shame or resistance may orientate people in certain directions (or not) and towards other people. And yet feelings do not always outwardly contort or comport bodies. During the first government lockdown in the UK, shopping queues became spaces of quiet acquiescence, coloured by a backdrop of uncertainty about the pandemic and compliance with government requirements (Jones 2022: 544-545). Those in lockdown shopping queues did not resist or connect with others but mostly waited in quiet impassiveness (ibid). A person waiting may have felt vulnerable or bored or reflective but be masking those feelings in a non-display of emotion. Or in a COVID-19 queue, a facial mask might have been hiding any non-verbal expression of feeling. Feelings, during waiting therefore may be contained, not expressed outwardly and difficult to interpret unless they are articulated.

The felt dimensions of waiting involve a tangle of emotional tensions, intensities and resonances. How waiting is felt is always experienced in relation to others and the context of that act of waiting. Dependent on context, feelings may motivate bodily comportments,

attitudes or positions, which in turn may become internalised and restrict a person or are not visibly apparent. Or feelings may be externalised and shared which may mobilise a person waiting, to shift orientations, create new ones or feel differently about detachments. The relation between an individual and an organisation may be felt as a dynamic of power, the strength of which is dependent on the feeling of personal agency held by those waiting. The level of agency that a person feels within a dynamic with an organisation, may create a positive or negative or perhaps ambivalent waiting experience.

2.8 Geographies of Feeling

The chapter has outlined a range of feelings that acts of waiting may surface such as anticipation, compliance, resistance, anxiety, irritation, anger, self-consciousness, and excitement. These feelings have emerged in the chapter through discussion of the spatial or temporal contexts of waiting, and the bodily intensities that waiting may instigate. Although I set out at the top of the chapter to separate the spatial, temporal, corporeal, and felt dimensions of waiting, the list reveals that feelings are difficult to separate within evocations of lived experience. For example, if I say, "I am feeling my way", I may be referring to an emotional or corporeal experience or both (Sedgwick 2003:17). In the evocation of *the felt* in the thesis I work with concepts of affect, feeling, and emotion and acknowledge that each term has a different conceptual resonance, although I also recognize that they imbricate within lived experience. In this next section, I will work through these terms and acknowledge that their use in this thesis is the legacy of previous geographic work that foregrounds emotion.

The focus in this thesis on 'feeling' and 'affect' has been opened by earlier work in geography that gave attention to felt experiences. At the beginning of the 21st century, UK geographers looking for new analytic modes that accounted for the messy nature of human experience and its surrounding conditions, took an affective turn (Thien 2005). Early affect work found some form in the emergence of emotional geographies, feminist geographies, and non-representational theory (Pile 2010). Geographers of emotion (see Anderson and Smith 2001; Bondi et al 2005; Davidson and Milligan 2004) opened the discipline to critiques of subjective experience and the representation of emotion. Early

work included emotional geographies of psychoanalysis (Callard 2003), mental health (Parr 1999; Philo and Parr 2004), vulnerability (Philo 2005), and music as a conduit for emotion (Wood and Smith 2004). Simultaneously, feminist geographers not only paved the way for critiques of experience through emotion, but they opened the possibility of the politicisation of emotion (Pile 2010). This move enabled a range of work on emotions, such as fear as a multiscale modality (Pain 2009), 'the intersubjective nature of emotion' during clothing consumption (Colls 2004), and geospatial technology and emotion (Kwan 2007).

Non-representational theories subsequently emerged in the discipline as an approach to meaning-making through a focus on 'thought-in-action', relationality, and socio-immaterialities through concepts of affect (Anderson and Harrison 2010:22,15,16). Geographers working with non-representational theories experimented with articulations of feelings and affects through evocations of creative practices, such as performance (Dewsbury 2011; Thrift and Dewsbury 2000) and visual art (Hawkins, 2015:19) and through accounts of bodily experiences such as feeling pain (Bissell 2009b), dancing (McCormack 2003) or walking (Wylie 2005). Since these earlier conceptual moves in geography, thinking with affect, feelings and emotion has generated a wide range of scholarship that mirror the multiplicities of human experience. A slice through recent work on affect, feelings, and emotion in geography, reveals a diverse range of interests: boredom (Anderson 2021), incarceration (Armstrong 2015), affective infrastructures (Bosworth 2022; Wilson 2023), gender transition (Brice 2020), nationalism (Close Stephens 2016), entrepreneurship (Cockayne 2016), sexual difference (Colls 2012), negativity (Dekeyser et al 2021), meteorological atmospheres (Engelmann 2021), queueing (Jones 2021), chemical weapons use (Joronen,2023), gig work (Keller 2023; Straughan and Bissell 2022), race and gentrification (Lee 2023), curfew (Nassar 2023), and desire and attachment (Zhang 2023). The list exposes how attention to affect, feelings and emotion currently permeates a range of preoccupations and subdisciplines in geography.

Within the thesis I use the term *felt* as a cover term for affect, feelings, and emotions, but what is intended by these terms? As a concept, affect attracts a multitude of definitions

and approaches[30]. Work in geography, however, tends to draw on a relational approach to affect via Gilles Deleuze's (1988) and Brian Massumi's (1992) translations of philosopher Baruch Spinoza's ideas; and psychologist Silvan Tomkins' (1962) approach to affect via a critique by literary scholar Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003). For Silvan Tomkins (Nathanson 1962: xiii) 'the experience of affect tells us only that something needs our attention'. An individual may recognise affect as a sensed something, an intensity that escapes the definition of an emerged emotion or sensation (McCormack 2003:495; Massumi 2002:28; Thrift 2004:63; Tomkins 2008: xiv) such as hope or an itch. Affect surface from the hinterland of experience as forces that emerge, circulate, and pass between bodies (Brennan 2004:6-7; Seigworth and Gregg 2010:1-2; Stewart 2007:2). In his rendering of affect, Spinoza makes a distinction between two elements of affect, the transit of affect (affectus) and the recognition that a body has been affected (affectio) (Deleuze 1998:49). Affectus is connected to the mind whilst affectio is related to the body. For Spinoza therefore, affect is the capacity for a body to affect and be affected (ibid:123). This does not happen in isolation, as affect is mediated through relations between bodies, practices, materials, and temporalities (Anderson 2009:80; Berlant:2011:4; Lorimer 2008:552; Sedgwick 2003:19).

The sensing of affect is not homogenous. How a body senses affect is individuated (Deleuze 1998:123) and not all affective experiences are the same, as 'different types of relations' instigate 'differences' in intensity of affect (Anderson 2006:741). In a given situation it is 'the intensification of affect' as a growing 'accumulation', that makes affect 'come to your attention' (Ahmed 2010b:175). Sara Ahmed (ibid) discusses suddenly noticing feeling cheery or irritated as examples of how affect can intensify and become a feeling before you notice it. Ahmed (ibid) suggests that she could extend her cheeriness to others by directing it at them with a smile. As the bodily movement of a smile may have the potential to transmit positive affect (see Brennan 2004:10). Ahmed's irritated

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[30] Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (2010:6-9) identify eight possible evocations of affect which include: an uncanny relation between humans and nature, a similar relation between humans and technology, a transpersonal capacity, an innate psychobiological capacity, a relation between vulnerable bodies and structures of power, pre-linguistic sensing, collectively shared feelings and a relation between matter and human feelings. Gregg and Seigworth (ibid:9) acknowledge that these articulations of affect may standalone or imbricate, and that affect as a theoretical frame is continually countenancing new approaches, so their list is not exhaustive. As affect theory is not one approach but traverses a range of theoretical and disciplinary positions, it opens 'affect' to a range of interpretations and representations.

feelings once acknowledged, may move her to try and unpick the relation which has caused her irritation, towards becoming unaffected. Ahmed is discussing not just how affect can creep up on a person through its intensity, but how affective feelings can be directed at and affect other bodies. For Ahmed (2010b:175) the intensification of affects as the result of a relation, can produce positive *or* negative feelings. The point is that intensification of affect into consciousness, leads us to recognise affect *as feelings* (Anderson 2014:80; McCormack 2008:426; Stewart 2007:3). It should be noted that conversely, an affect can lose intensity and fade out of attention. This may be connected to the passage of time (see McCormack 2008:425). Temporally, affect can last a moment or become 'sticky' and linger (Ahmed 2006a:40) Or even last a lifetime (Sedgwick 2003:19). The ongoing intensity of affect is dependent on context and the extent of their recognition by an individual (Massumi 2002:217). Kathleen Stewart (2007:2) describes that affect can feel like 'an empty pause or a dragging undertow', which reiterates the idea that affect is not homogenous and can be triggered in differing tempos and intensities.

I want to loop back here to the acknowledgement that affect through its growing intensity, can lead to the registering of a feeling. Feelings are found between the sensing of affect and that which may find form as a nameable emotion (Nathanson 1962, xiv; McCormack 2008:414) or sensation (Massumi 2002:97). Feelings can be expressed. It is much easier to talk about feelings and say, "I feel that" or "I have a feeling that", than to articulate affect which a person might sense but cannot articulate. If, for instance, someone says that they have an awkward feeling about something, we know that they are expressing the sense of something unsettling. Through their manifestation, feelings therefore indicate the 'presence of an affecting body' (Anderson 2006:736). That presence may be felt on both an emotional register and/or through the body. Earlier in the chapter, I discussed torpor as a tension of waiting via Gabriel Marcel's work (1967:281). Torpor is felt both as an emotional disconnection or 'daze' and as a form of bodily 'devitalisation' (ibid). In Marcel's example, torpor is instigated by an intensity of feeling in relation to an expected train or airplane that does not arrive. As an emotional and corporeal feeling, torpor may be felt by an individual and although perhaps not articulated as 'torpor' may be described as feelings of disconnection or weakness.

Emotions on the other hand are nameable, we can say that we are happy, excited, angry, sad, or surprised. For Brian Massumi (2002:28) 'an emotion is a subjective content, the sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of experience which is from that point onward defined as personal'. He goes on to say that 'emotion is qualified intensity… owned and recognized'. In other words, emotions are emerged, and we can not only sense and feel them but also name them. Not only that, but emotions become personal, in contrast to affect which may be considered 'prepersonal or transpersonal' intensities (Anderson 2009:77). In addition, a person's emotions may become apparent to other people in the way that an experience of affect or a feeling may not. For instance, a shouting voice may alert those around them to a person's anger at waiting for a long duration (Carswell et al 2018:68). Or a contorted body may alert others to a person's humiliation at being made to wait at a military checkpoint (Ilcan 2020).

For Sara Ahmed (2004:28) emotions are formed within a relation which may be with 'selves, objects or others'. So in a detached relation from work, for example, a person may come to feel the emotion of powerlessness. Or in the circumstance of a furloughed person having a start date for their work life to begin again, they may have become excited. In both instances, the emotion is instigated by their relation to their work life. That relation is not exclusive. Emotion as the result of a relation instigates a 'responsiveness to and openness towards the worlds of others (ibid)'. Conversely, the expression of our own emotions may have the capacity to affect others (ibid). Thus, waiting next to an angry person may make another feel tense, afraid, or annoyed. Or experiencing another's humiliation whilst waiting may instigate emotions of shame or fear.

In this section, I have endeavoured to present separate renderings of affect, feelings, and emotions in order to demonstrate their conceptual differences. And yet within a given situation, such as waiting, a person may be sensing affect, having feelings, and experiencing emotions of different intensities and significances simultaneously. Such felt entanglements produce, for instance, the excitement of anger or the joy of surprise (Sedgwick, 2003:19). Felt entanglements may sustain a prolonged emergence of an affect or subsume it within an emerged emotion or sensation. Likewise, a lingering affect may inform the intensity of an already known emotion. Within felt experiences, feelings may be held individually or shared with other people. This opens the possibility of a person

being affected by another's felt experience. This transmission may be person to person or spatially as immaterial atmospheres. Atmospheres, as I previously discussed in section 2.7, are an emotional tone felt in a location (Anderson 2009; Böhme 1993:119; Stewart 2011). Attention to the relational dimension of felt experiences and their intensities (affect, feeling or emotion), opens the potential for new understandings of how people, objects, and situations inform a person's experience of the world. For the purposes of this thesis, these felt understandings are towards the lived experience of waiting through furlough.

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2.9 Orientation and Disorientation

Within the chapter, I have discussed waiting as a lived experience, shaped by spatial and temporal conditions and a range of corporeal and felt responses. I have argued that waiting bodies are held for a duration and orientated toward an event that will eventually end their waiting. That an individual experiences acts of waiting at different temporalities and tensions some of which disrupt lives and some of which go relatively unnoticed, makes it feasible that bodies may simultaneously be navigating multiple acts of waiting. Within that navigation, bodies may continually be orientating, disorientating, and reorientating themselves.

2.9.1 Orientation

The original etymology of the noun 'orientation' is a turning or facing towards an easterly direction (OED 2023). Northern European churches were traditionally built facing eastward as the position where the sun rises in what was known as the Orient. Orientation came to mean the placing of oneself in a specific direction with a compass point, or towards the 'relative direction of something' (ibid), as such orientation may be considered an intrinsically geographic concept. Later orientation was used as a term to discuss a person's beliefs or feelings around a particular felt or intellectual position, such as religion or sexual preference. In that way having a certain orientation aligns a person to particular groups of people or sets of ideas. Latterly orientation has come to mean the process of introducing a person to a new situation towards becoming better acquainted with it. Temporally, orientation can involve pre-knowledge or remembrance of a space-

time (Fernández Velasco et al 2021:448), a holding position in the present (Raynor 2021:4), as well the hope of a (perhaps better) future time (Anderson 2010: 778; Berlant 2011a:). Orientation, or being orientated, involves a series of socio-spatial and temporal subjectivities towards creating a relation that establishes one's position. An orientating relation can therefore be towards a singular object like a clock hand or a person or a surface texture, or a set of objects such as a group of people or a situation or scene.

2.9.2 Disorientation

Disorientation, on the other hand, involves disruption to relations that orientate us. When an orientating relation is altered or lost, disorientation is the experience of feeling unfamiliar or coming to understand the familiar from a different perspective. Disorientation can also involve a feeling of impasse or feeling one is held in a situation where there is an expectation to move on (Auyero 2011:13). A relation that orientates us or has orientated us, can be changed and become disorientating for a multitude of reasons. To be spatially disorientated is to feel lost and separated from orientating relations (Hughes 2021:339). To be disorientated this way can make spatial unfamiliarity feel acute (ibid:341). For example, physical atmospheres such as precipitation or fog which can hide physical spatial markers through the obscuration of visibility, disallow spatial orientation and create the conditions for a person to become spatially disorientated (Martin 2011:456; McCormack 2008). Spatial disorientation may also be felt when orientating relations are not lost but altered or changed. Spatial disorientation for instance, may be felt by migrants who move from one country to another (Schmidt di Friedberg 2018:82). Migratory transitions involve the alteration of existing orientating relations (spatial, emotional, and perhaps temporal) amidst developing new disorientations in the unfamiliar (Noxolo and Preziuso 2013:168; Simonsen 2013:20). Megan Nethercote's (2022:937) concept of 'unhoming', as example, names disorientation felt by racialised bodies destabilised out of belonging or made to feel 'out-of-place', through infrastructures and legal processes which can make being orientated by feeling at 'home' feel precarious. Temporally this form of disorientation may be an enduring feeling or catalysed suddenly by an event like an eviction (ibid:945). Nethercote's (2022) disorientation through unhoming, is an articulation of the potential fragility of a person's orientation and how easily it can be disrupted.

The feeling of disorientation in a new spatial arrangement may involve the immaterial as well as the material. A change in affective atmospheres in a space can instigate feelings of disorientation. For example, football fans may feel unable to express emotion towards their team and create positive atmospheres when their team moves to a new home stadium (Edensor 2013:85). The change in spatial configuration to a new home site disrupts feelings of being at home in what was once a familiar relation (ibid). Accumulated spatial orientations and emotional attachments formed over time, abruptly become lost and become difficult to replicate and reinstate (ibid). This is also an example of how disorientations may be felt by individuals, transmitted to others, and become collective disorientations. Collective disorientation may be constructed through affective transmissions of socio-biological sets of sensory and chemical responses (like pheromones) in a situation, which in turn connect individuals into a group with shared emotional responses (Brennan 2004:3; Closs-Stephens 2015:185).

Feeling orientated may involve one's proximity to people or groups of people we are well acquainted with and feel comfortable with (Blunt and Dowling 2006:40). Disorientation may be felt when those orientating relations to people we are close with, change or end. In the disorientation of a lost relation through bereavement for example, Avril Maddrell (2016:177) suggests that grief may cause a bereaved person to retreat into a 'safe space' or reduce their spatial use, as familiar spaces come to feel altered without a loved one present (ibid). The unwelcome disorientation felt through grief, may come to be felt as a loss associated with a particular space (ibid). Moreover, absence as a catalysation of disorientation can be created through the loss of orientating things as well as spaces and people. An orienting object could be something like an official document connecting an asylum seeker to a state (Darling 2014: 491). For people such as asylum seekers with minimal possessions, losing an orientating thing can carry more weight when it not only bears a person's future hopes and orientation towards a different life but is also one of the only things that they possess (ibid). Possessions may act as coalescent points for a person's pasts, presents, and futures through their imbuement with certain personal meanings (Tolia-Kelly 2014:317). As such, possessions may act as orientation markers for a person and their loss perhaps exacerbates feelings of disorientation. Furthermore, a person could also feel disorientation at the loss of something that they have never had

or through expecting something that doesn't arrive, like a delivery that never turns up (Mutter 2022:170).

Loss of orientating relations may be felt through the body. Air travel, for example, creates bodily disorientation through a person's rapid temporal movement through time zones whereby a body orientated in one time zone is forced into another (Anderson 2015:3). The ensuing jet lag disorientates bodily rhythms such as sleep and the digestive system (ibid). Rapid bodily disorientation may also be felt at slower speeds. When moving through high-density cityscapes, disorientation may be felt as the experience of trying to process too much fragmentary information at once (Harris and Coleman 2020: 610; Macfarlane 2023:183; Massey 1992a:7). Momentary encounters with things and people, require swift perceptual shifts which may make those things and people difficult to comprehend or connect with. Such quick movements through spaces may be sensorially disorientating (Macfarlane 2023:183) through a person's inability to engage with a high volume of visual and auditory stimuli simultaneously. Similarly, if a situation is changed suddenly sensorily, such as sudden noise, vibration, or visual flashes as in warfare, disorientation may be felt as violent sensorial shifts from a once known body to one that is disoriented by new and jarring sensations (Gregory 2016:39-40; Thornton 2015:571). Relatedly, if a person uses a particular sense to orientate themselves, and that relation changes, they may experience bodily disorientation. In Katie Hemsworth's (2016) work on the sounds in prisons, prisoners orientate themselves through the habituated sonic rhythms of the prison. These orientations become disorientations when new sounds are introduced, such as hearing the heavy footsteps of riot police entering the prison. The stomping boots of the police are intended to act as sonic intimidation to disperse altercations between prisoners, but they in turn create new forms of anxiety and disorientation for some of the prisoners hearing them (Hemsworth 2016:93).

Disorientation may be felt as bodily incapacities, through both mental (Nieuwenhuis and Knoll 2021:7; Parr 1999:679; Ward et al 2023:2) or physical illness (Flaherty 2019:67). Such bodily incapacities may also involve spatial disorientations. In Marjin Nieuwenhuis and Emily Knoll's (2021) work on people who hear voices in their head that are 'not heard by others', one participant is orientated by voices he hears in his home but feels disorientated by voices he experiences in external spaces. In Hester Parr's (1994) work

on people in psychiatric wards experiencing delusions, disorientation is discussed as experienced by being in the physical space of the ward whilst a patient articulates retreating to the cognitive space of the imagination. For Parr (ibid) a person can be physically spatially disorientated whilst simultaneously occupying a different mental space. These examples demonstrate that disorientation need not be experienced as all-encompassing. Disorientation may only be part of a person's lived experience.

And yet disorientations can also be felt as welcome, such as the experience of tourists encountering an unfamiliar place for the first time (Edensor 2007:207). In that instance, disorientation has the potential to lead to excitement, although as Tim Edensor (2007) suggests being a tourist involves a set of orientating conventions. So although a tourist experiences an unfamiliar space and may feel the thrill of a certain form of disorientation, disorientation for a tourist, is folded within a set of known and orientating conventions. Similarly, disorientation may be embraced as a feeling of surprise experienced within a sudden unknown but happy event, like an unknown birthday party or receipt of an unexpected gift. After initially feeling disorientated through the lack of prior knowledge of the event, once processed the disorientation becomes welcome and enjoyable.

In this section, I have conceptualised feeling orientated as a relation formed between a person and an orientating marker of some sort. That marker may take the form of a geographical direction or an object or a group of people or a cluster of ideas. The point is that orientation is about holding a relation with something else towards creating a feeling of security in one's spatial, temporal, or emotional position. Orientations may feel immutable like a geographical direction (the East) or mutable like a sense of belonging. Conversely, disorientation involves the undoing or loss or denial of orientating relations. Altered orientating relations may be spatial or temporal or felt and experienced concurrently or singularly. Disorientation may be felt as all-encompassing or merely a part of a person's situation. In considering the socio-spatial-temporal orientation and disorientation of waiting bodies, I turn next to notions of phenomenology or rather the queered aspects of phenomenology via Sara Ahmed's, 'Queer Phenomenology' (2006a; 2006b). A queer phenomenology that accounts for the unevenness and instabilities of experience may open insight into a situation where bodies are attempting to (re)orientate within a disrupted space-time of being held outside the normal flows of

quotidian work life. In the next section, I outline Ahmed's queer phenomenology and also outline recent work in geography that also draws on Ahmed's conceptualisation of disorientation.

2.10 Orientation and Disorientation via Queer Phenomenology

Sara Ahmed's (2006b) queer phenomenology draws on the phenomenological work of Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and also Martin Heidegger and Franz Fanon. In particular she draws on their emphasis on 'lived experience' the body, the importance of proximities, the significance of recursive actions in the formation of bodies and worlds (ibid:544) and the argument that 'consciousness is always directed "toward" an object' (Ahmed 2006a:2). Ahmed's notion of queer phenomenology generatively encompasses the myriad of evocations of a waiting body explored earlier in this chapter. Ahmed (2006a:2) focusses on phenomenological renderings of orientation in order to build a conceptualisation of orientation as an emotional and spatial relation towards objects. This section draws to the fore some of the phenomenological ideas that Ahmed (2006a; 2006b) uses to establish her queer phenomenology, that perhaps share an affinity with tensions and acts of waiting.

Feeling orientated is part of the normal flow of quotidian life, 'When we are orientated, we might not even notice that we are orientated' (Ahmed 2006a:5). If within quotidian life we transverse multiple acts of waiting as I maintained earlier, then it is feasible that within quiet moments or 'inert' tensions of waiting, a waiting body may not feel aware of its orientation towards the end of multiple acts of waiting. The notion of feeling orientated can also attend to how much we 'feel at home' or feel comfortable inhabiting a space (ibid:7). Feeling at home may be instigated by a feeling of familiarity. Orientating oneself, can therefore involve making the once unfamiliar develop into something we can live within and be intimate with (ibid:11). This sense of feeling at home in a space, even an unfamiliar space, may be shaped by 'social form' (ibid:7). I earlier discussed how the comportment, behaviour and expectations of waiting bodies may be shaped by recursive social conditioning (Bourdieu 2000:141; Lefebvre 2004:39). A waiting body may, through repeated familiarity with a space or waiting practice, come to feel at home in that space or similar unfamiliar ones. As there can be a temporal element to developing

orientation, that feeling of orientation may be one which grows over time (ibid). Waiting involves multiple forms of orientation that Ahmed brings to the fore: orientation as a direction towards an object (ibid:27), orientations formed within the quotidian (ibid:28-29), and orientation as a feeling of socio-spatial inhabitation (ibid:184). For Ahmed, thinking with orientation is a device for foregrounding socio-spatial world making and how bodies align themselves with other bodies (ibid:1).

Ahmed's (2006b:566) point of departure is her queering of phenomenology or rather bringing to the fore queerness found within phenomenological ideas. For Ahmed a queer phenomenology attends to queer objects which do not conform and are 'out of line, on a slant, the odd and strange one' and have the potential to retreat. If phenomenology attends to the alignments of bodies in spaces, a queer phenomenology accounts for lived misalignments and in doing so opens the potential for alternative world views (2006a:172). For Ahmed (2006b:569) queering phenomenology is both a sexual politics and 'political' approach, and as such can account for bodies that find themselves outside the straight lines of normativity (ibid). I should point out that Ahmed's account is an exploration of how non-heterosexual and non-white bodies navigate white heteronormative spaces. However Ahmed (2006a:161; 2006b:565) does suggest that a queer phenomenology can also be mobilised to account for lives which find themselves 'oblique' or 'offline' or 'wonky'.

Feeling orientated is not necessarily something that a duration of time can enable, as a person can *feel* out of place in familiar spaces and equally feel at home in unfamiliar spaces (2006a:11). A queer phenomenological approach pays attention to this out of placeness. A body that is not orientated or falls out of orientation may come to feel disorientated (ibid:5-6). As an embodied feeling, disorientation 'can be unsettling, and it can shatter one's sense of confidence in the ground or one's belief that the ground on which we reside can support the actions that make a life feel liveable' (ibid:157). Disorientation can therefore make a person feel thrown, with implications for how that person feels in relation to self, to others and to their situation. That thrown feeling can result from an abrupt transition from perceiving the world in one way and then too rapidly having to perceive it another way (ibid). Disorientation may be felt violently (ibid:160) and suddenly as I have so far outlined, but it can also ebb and flow in intensity

and attention in the backdrop of everyday lives (ibid:157). As a loss of orientation, feeling disorientated can inhibit how bodies perceive and use space (ibid: 160), creating feelings of being 'out of place', 'oblique', 'odd' or 'disturbed' (ibid:170). These feelings of disorientation can be transmitted as affective intensities between objects (ibid). The transmission of disorientation happens when life worlds fail to cohere or hold together, affecting those in the proximity of the disruption (ibid). These disorientating affects may linger and become sticky (ibid:40). Affective stickiness manifests as the past lingering in the present, evidence of felt encounters with objects we have previously had (ibid).

For Ahmed (2006a:20), attention to orientation and disorientation is a way of thinking through everyday world-making, particularly how lives are 'directed' and felt by the conditions that surround them and the limits they encounter. Ahmed's rendering of orientation and disorientation through her conceptualisation of queer phenomenology becomes a mode of making sense of the contours of everyday living. Her work opens 'queer' beyond a sexual politics and therefore can support accounts of what happens when life does not follow expected trajectories or orientations. Ahmed (2006a:20), suggests that the loss of orientating relations as disorientation can be an affirmative feeling. When a person loses the orientating relation that makes them who they are, then a host of new possibilities for reorientation can open up (ibid). This is in part an articulation of her own experience of changing sexual orientation and becoming queer herself (ibid). And yet, Ahmed (ibid:159) also observes (via the work of Franz Fanon) that experiences of disorientation and their ensuing effects are not homogenous. Different bodies are affected by disorientation differently. Bodies that are made to feel their otherness, in her personal experience non-white and queer, may feel that difference exacerbated when feeling disoriented. Disorientation for some people, may not therefore feel so affirmative.

Ahmed's (2006a; 2006b) focus on the queer aspects of phenomenology supports accounts of the temporal, spatial, corporeal, and felt dimensions of waiting as lived, as arranged, as capacities and intensities of the body and feelings, I outlined earlier in the chapter. The temporal and spatial aspects of queer phenomenology as feelings of out of placeness or developing feelings of inhabitation, potentially support an analysis of the temporal and spatial aspects of waiting as lived and arranged. The previous discussion of

waiting tensions revealed that tensions orientate a body in certain ways and that these can imbricate and be held in differing temporalities and spaces. Queer phenomenology's elucidation of non-orientation or falling out of orientation, finds a connection with the tension inherent in waiting as a future orientation and how that may be felt when it is disrupted. Ahmed's articulation of how bodies and feelings are shaped through being orientated or disorientated, supports an exploration of the bodily comportments and feelings influenced by waiting durations. A queer phenomenology of disorientated affects that linger and further affect bodies and feelings, may have resonance within durations of waiting where intensity of feelings ebb and flow in and out or become pervasive.

Ahmed's queer phenomenology's embodied, and spatial dimensions have also influenced recent work in geography that attends to disorientation (Bissell and Gorman-Murray 2019; Dorignon and Nethercote 2021; Kinkaid 2020; Schmidt di Friedberg_2018; Simonsen 2013; Turnball et al 2022; Wilkinson and Ortega-Alcázar 2018; Wylie 2021). In her search for new ways for geographers to consider embodied experience, Kirsten Simonsen (2013:20) turned to Ahmed's conceptualisation of disorientation as a way of considering how bodily and emotional crises shift felt perceptions of a situation. In particular Simonsen (ibid) draws on how disorientated bodies are able to reorientate after a crisis and rethink their situation. However as bodies are not equally involved in the world, the possibility of instigating a reorientation may be enabled unevenly (ibid). Disorientating crises are not necessarily violent or dramatic and may even involve ambivalent orientations (Turnball and Platt 2022:1219). Born in Northern Ireland with entitlement to dual British and Irish citizenship, as a longstanding resident of England, John Wylie (2021:198) writes of waiting to feel reorientated within his not so new homeland, '… even if you are reading these lines many years from now. I doubt if I will have reorientated myself to life in England no matter how much time passes'. His lack of reorientation is not felt as a strain but inhabited as happy ambivalence until the vote in the UK in 2016 to leave the European Union (Brexit) (ibid). Brexit becomes a point of disorientation in relation to his sense of belonging, which catalyses him to orientate his citizenship back towards Ireland. Wylie's (2021:199) evocation of disorientation draws on Ahmed's (2006a:158) assertion that disoriented bodies are acting defensively when regrouping and reorientating themselves towards a stable position. Wylie's Irish

citizenship perhaps a return to a once stable position of comfort. Comfort for Ahmed (2006a:134) is an orientation of being at ease with the world.

The (dis)orientation of feeling at home or not at home (Ahmed 2006a:11) is echoed by David Bissell and Andrew Gorman-Murray's (2019) and Louise Dorignon and Megan Nethercote's (2020) work on people holding their domestic lives together. For Bissell and Gorman-Murray (2019:708) disorientation becomes a series of potential incapacities for 'knowing others, knowing how to proceed, and knowing how to hold a situation together'. Dorignon and Nethercott (2020) draw on this evocation of disorientation to extend the notion that our physical environment can intrinsically be or become disorientating. Both sets of work trace a line through Ami Harbin's (2016) 'Disorientation and Moral Life' to Ahmed's queer phenomenology. Harbin (2016: xiii-xiv) draws on Ahmed's evocation of disorientation and expands it to articulate her notion of leading a moral life as involving the ability to identify disorientation in other people towards giving support. Although disorientation can involve unsettling and problematic events, for Harbin (ibid:154) being disorientated involves a plurality of experiences both positive and negative like the events of falling in love, parenthood and growing older. Harbin's key acknowledgment via Ahmed is that disorientation can reorientate a person to be open to new opportunities and courses of action.

By thinking with Ahmed's (2006a; 2006b) queer phenomenology, waiting may be conceptualised as both a (dis)orientation and as a disorientating feeling. Acts of waiting are located both within and outside the flows of quotidian life. They are familiar and are commonly encountered and even when they are unexpected and unwelcome, they feel like part of the fabric of everyday life. And yet they detach a person from certain lines of orientation that may interrupt everyday rhythms. Ahmed (2006a: 5-6) conceptualises disorientation as movement away from a known orientation, or as a lack of orientation. To transpose that notion to waiting, a person may be in the flow of everyday life and orientated one way, but then be caught in an act of waiting (whether expected or not) that creates a new orientation. In other words a person waiting may be (dis)orientated into a new orientation. As a feeling, Ahmed's conceptualisation of disorientation accounts for the off kilter and disrupted felt positively, negatively or ambivalently in differing intensities, capacities, spatiality and temporalities. I make a move here towards

connecting Ahmed's conceptualisation of disorientation to the situation of waiting through furlough, which I have characterised as a space-time orientated towards its end.

2.11 Scenes

Waiting I have determined is enacted in a variety of space-times instigating a range of corporeal and felt intensities and tensions. I have argued that waiting creates certain detachments, orientations and disorientations. Through making the analytic move to separate the spatial, temporal, corporeal and felt dimensions of waiting I have explored some of the changes, arrangements, capacities and intensities surfaced through acts of waiting. Throughout those discussions I have suggested that acts of waiting take place in scenes. Thinking and writing acts of waiting as scenes is a way of accounting for how the spatial, temporal, corporeal and felt dimensions of a situation coalesce. For Kathleen Stewart (2007:4) 'scenes' are simply situations of experience.

Both Sara Ahmed and Kathleen Stewart pay attention to individual experiences as a barometer of wider conditions. They maintain that affects begin to mould a situation and individual bodies into certain shapes. For Stewart (2007:1-2) 'affects are the varied, surging capacities to affect and to be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergences'. For Stewart, affect contour and tone felt experience as an intensity both collectively and individually felt (ibid). Affect may become palpable as the felt dimension of a situation or remain in broad circulation (ibid). Sara Ahmed (2004:29) suggests that 'through the intensification of feeling that bodies and worlds materialize and take shape'. For Ahmed (2004:26) it is a growing force of affects that creates the shape of a scene or body, her approach is mindful of that which has formed and how it affects bodies. Kathleen Stewart (2014:119) on the other hand, considers that rather than fix a gathering formation of affect into a specific form, it is preferable to note that a gathering is happening. In other words, an affective subject should pay attention to the process of formation, not its potential form. Although Ahmed is more concerned with that which has emerged, she is cognisant of the changing nature of affects. Given the propensity for affect to change, the identification of a particular coalescence of affect happening at a specific moment in a scene, should be considered a temporary marker. In the same scene in the next moment the intensities of

affect and the affects themselves could change. This may lead one to wonder to what extent the furloughed were aware of the shifting affects and feelings that shaped their experiences and themselves.

For Stewart (ibid:194), noticing and registering affect is a move to account for emotions, sensations, materiality and bodily responses in felt experiences. This is a move away from forms of analysis she deems fixed in a certain form of modernist thought or a form of critical thinking that makes concrete 'abstracted categorical distinctions' between things and seeks to find solutions to problems. For Stewart (2007:3-4), affects are not analytic objects that can be dissected neatly through categories such as 'subject, concept, and world'. Evoking queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Stewart (2017:196) decries that form of analysis as a 'paranoid approach', one in which a world needs 'fixing' in both senses of the word.

For Stewart (2007:10) scenes have transpersonal affective qualities which infuse feelings and mobilise bodies in certain ways. Messily entangled affective subject-object relations can dynamically reveal and retract themselves in 'sharp or vague' intensities within scenes (ibid:4). Attention to affect in a scene therefore becomes a mode of thought (and writing) that accounts for the heterogeneity of experiences and their dynamic unfolding nature. Thinking with Stewart's rendering of scenes accounts for the ever-shifting wider conditions or structures of a situation, the flux nature of affects and the variable way people respond (or not) to the felt dimensions of their experiences. As an example, in the extract below Stewart and Lauren Berlant describe a scene between neighbours during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic. They are essentially describing a person within that scene, but the description reveals how the man's implicit nervous energy draws through some of the wider affective dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic and a simultaneous event, Black Lives Matter.

> 'The neighbor no one knew before can't stop mansplaining. He makes a show
> of introducing himself to Ted, who's black' (Berlant and Stewart, 2022:2).

The scene surfaces awkward affects, which are sensed and texture the scene. By paying attention to the minutiae of the situation, the unfamiliarity of the neighbour and his

nervous communication reveal how the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic opened new relations within communities (Maddrell 2020:110). This scene also reveals a self-conscious whiteness that is perhaps a result of the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement during the pandemic (ibid). In two lines the scene is revealed to be one of connection and disconnection, laden with multiple intersecting affects between those within and observing the scene.

Attention to scenes creates opportunities to analyse how affects coalesce with other relations, be they emotional, the sensory, the temporal and or the material. Everyday life consists of a series of scenes. During a day, scenes may sequence as: the bedroom, the bathroom, the kitchen, the walk, the bus stop, the bus, the workplace, the Zoom meeting, the lunch break, the conversation, the alleyway, the supermarket, the street, the car and so on. Each scene is a coalescence of differing affects and other relations which vary in intensity and pulse between background and foreground. At times affects are foregrounded like a heightened anticipation between people in a pub conversation, or a sense of discomfort created by another on a bus. Some affects hum in the background of scenes creating a texture that influences how situations are felt, like the quiet reserve of a museum or the lingering resonances in a club when the night ends and the lights go up.

For Stewart (2007:4), a scene is a fragment amidst wider conditions, and people in a scene are coalescent points for the affective dimensions of that scene. In the context of this study, I find Stewart's approach to scenes pertinent to the condition of being furloughed, waiting for work life to begin again within the confines of the COVID-19 pandemic and the situations of research encounters (more on which in the next chapter). Particularly evocative is Stewart's assertion that affects become questions in a scene. If affects swirl around and through situations and around and between people, what then were the multitude of felt questions in a scene of waiting through furlough?

2.12 The Dimensions of Waiting

This chapter has outlined some of the dimensions of waiting: its tensions, spatial arrangements, temporal changes, and its corporeal and felt capacities and intensities. Waiting has been conceptualised as a space-time of suspension or betweenness, so

underlying these sections has been an attention to the detachments and orientations inherent in waiting experiences. Attention to its tensions has surfaced how waiting can be superficial to or intrinsic to our sense of who we are. Tensions in waiting may be rapid and of no consequence, or part of our existential being or somewhere in between. The tensions of waiting contour the importance a person gives to waiting experiences. I then moved on to consider the three spatial arrangements of waiting: permanent, temporary and circumstantial. These arrangements demonstrated a connection between their sense of permanence and the depth of feeling that they may provoke. Furlough was waited out in the home, a permanent space of habitation, temporarily assigned a space of waiting. The home, as a waiting space, became a geo-political site. During the COVID-19 pandemic (the backdrop for the study) outside powers informed how the space of the home was used, people's proximity to others within it and even a home's bacterial content.

The accounts of the study participants were shared at the time of being furloughed and soon after. To account for the time period of furlough, I drew on Henri Bergson's notion of duration as time as lived in a dynamic present, and Michael Shum's concept of temporal landmarks to account for how a time period such as furlough might be remembered. Waiting time was typified by how it was lived, filled or lingered in. I accounted for the corporeal intensities of waiting by giving attention to how it comports bodies. The comportment of waiting bodies is conducted due to context, socially learnt behaviour or sensory responses. Attention to sensory intensities demonstrates how the senses can heighten emotional and corporeal responses to waiting and I argue, determine how people use space. In discussing the felt dimensions of waiting I discussed how feelings of power, care, control, resistance and acquiescence play out across a range of waiting experiences where there is a detached relation to an organisation making them wait. In doing so I situate the thesis with previous work in geography that attends to felt experiences.

As waiting involves a detached relation to a certain orientation to work life, I then made an extended discussion of orientation and disorientation. This discussion focussed on the relational nature of orientation and disorientation as felt spatially, temporally, corporeally. I then turned to Sara Ahmed's Queer Phenomenology to think through the orientations, disorientation and reorientation of waiting. In drawing on ideas of

phenomenology, a queer phenomenology has synchronicity with waiting as lived experience, a conditioning of bodies and subject orientation towards objects. Finally, the chapter has considered Kathleen Stewart's concepts of affect and scenes as a mode of thinking and writing about the felt within waiting experiences. This chapter has separated and explored the differing dimensions and tensions of waiting as way of thinking through waiting experience. The next chapter will outline the methods I worked with in order to enable the furloughed to share their experiences with me, and how I chose to record and represent those experiences.

~ Methodology & Methods ~

Sharing Experiences

3.1 Pause

It is the 24th of May 2021, via Zoom I am interviewing Leon[31] a 53-year-old stage manager about his period of furlough. He is one of thirty-five furloughed workers[32] I interviewed for this study. Leon is sitting in front of two floating wooden shelves filled with framed photographs of people who I deduce are his friends and family. The frames are all shapes and sizes - higgledy-piggledy, overlooking, overlapping each other. They give the impression of a life filled and connected with people. A smiling middle-aged man silhouetted by a blue sky looks out from a photograph over Leon's shoulder as we speak. I ask Leon,

> *"Are there any moments that typify the emotions of that period? Was there like a moment you'd say, "Oh, yeah, that's so furlough or a feeling that is so furlough"?".*

There is a six second pause and then Leon laughs uneasily. He looks away from the screen and to his left towards a window which illuminates his profile. He looks back at me and says "Umm… I suppose" and then breaks off, smiles nervously, and moves his head again to look out towards the window. In the moment, I assume his delay in answering my

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[31] All participants in the study are anonymised, Leon is a pseudonym. A list of anonymised participants can be found in Appendix 8.2

[32] The usual work of the participants was mostly hospitality, entertainment, charity, non-essential retail and also travel and agency education. These sectors were the ones most affected by the UK governmental restrictions instigated by the pandemic (ONS 2021a). Geographically the participants were based across the regions of England and Wales, with one based in Scotland and none from Northern Ireland despite a call out specifically targeting those nations. The participant's ages ranged between twenty-three and sixty-five, with an average age of forty-two. Six people identified as male and twenty-nine as female. The participants were mostly UK nationals with two identifying as non-UK nationals (two European). Further details of the participants can be found in the Appendix section 8.1.

question and his bubbling emotion is because he wants to express an extreme feeling through swearing and is worried about my reaction. He continues to smile uncomfortably and so I smile and say "It's ok" intending to reassure him that it was fine to say anything, but he interrupts me,

> *"I'm fine. I've got one word in my head, it's just on the tip of my tongue and I just want to spill it out and that's the word rejection".*

I affirm his answer with a neutral "Ok". I feel a responsibility not to linger on an evidently painful emotion. Leon becomes animated and words flow in quick succession as he elaborates on "rejection".

> *"Rejection was like because I've been rejected erm my marriage failed. Rejected, because, you know, I was like, not working in the job that I was doing. Rejected because I couldn't be around my family, my friends. It just felt like a strange sort of rejection, even though I knew I was connected all the time".*

Leon picks up his mobile phone and waves it.

> *"So, I didn't need to feel that way. But essentially, excuse me [coughs]. I did feel a lot of rejection in that respect. So that was the word I was struggling to get out. Because it's never easy to admit things that you don't necessarily think about or put into words basically".*

I cannot of course know what thoughts Leon was processing in the pause before he answered my question, but the nature of the pause suggested that he was wrestling with saying something that was powerful for him[33]. I thanked him for sharing this experience

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[33] A pause in an interview can provide a space for a participant to reflect on their experience and form their thoughts (Barron 2022:229; Brinkmann 2022:67) such as with Leon's pause. However it should be noted that pauses or silences in interviews are used for multiple reasons (Laurier 2010:140). A pause may be opened to sidestep a question that a participant is unable or unwilling to answer (Morison and Macloed 2014:696). Alternatively a polite silence may open for fear of causing offence (Mazzei 2003:364) which in my exchange with Leon was my initial (erroneous) understanding of why he paused. Liza Mazzei (2003:365) proposes a further form of silence in interviews, which she terms veiled silence. A veiled silence is not a pause or indeed silent but a misdirection whereby a participant responds to a question with an answer that avoids having to discuss a challenging subject matter like white privilege (ibid). During this study, attunement to pauses in

and as this interaction was evidently emotional for him, I changed track and asked him about something less emotive. In this exchange, which happened twenty-seven minutes into the interview, Leon holds his part of the interaction by answering my question no matter how uncomfortable it is for him. As a researcher my part of the interaction involved listening to Leon, allowing his response space to unfold, monitoring his emotion, affirming his response and then changing track so that the emotion that bubbled during his response could subside. My actions were part of the care that is integral to adopting a co-presence approach when researching with people, something that this chapter will elaborate on. The intimate nature of adopting co-presence opens attention to affects and feelings, which is pertinent to this study of lived experience.

In the previous chapter I discussed how paying attention to feelings and taking a queer phenomenological approach can open for analysis the potentially 'wonky' nature of human experience (Ahmed 2006:66). Queer phenomenology can account for the experiences of individuals who feel out of sync with those around them (ibid: 66-67). Any deviation from an expected life trajectory, like a pause in work life created by furlough, may make an individual feel incongruent in comparison with those around them. Potentially these are new feelings that an individual may not have given themselves space to consider and articulate, much like Leon in the exchange above. In a study focussed on the lived experience of furlough, the problem was to work with a research approach that could enable people to share and narrate their feelings on their own terms amidst the ongoing conditions of a pandemic[34].

This chapter explores modes of sharing experiences. It explores how participants shared experiences with me and how I am sharing their experiences with you the reader within

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interviews, enabled me to consider whether a pause was being used by a participant to create space to think about, to micro-challenge or to mask true feelings around questions.

[34] It is important to remind the reader that at the time of the fieldwork and writing this thesis, the participants and I shared the extraordinary situation of being within a global pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic was a pervasive non-human presence, colouring and informing all aspects of our daily lives from socialising, consuming, and travelling (see Cole and Dodds 2020; Jones 2022:3; Manzo and Minello 2020). The pandemic became part of the tangle of relations with affective resonances that formed throughout the study. The pandemic and practices of mitigating its threat created health and safety limitations within the research process and added a general feeling of uncertainty to the backdrop of my interactions with participants. As such my exchanges with participants was restricted by the Health and Safety requirements of Durham University, to online interaction.

this thesis. Initially I will outline how the research approach of co-presence was used to enable thirty-five furloughed interview[35] participants[36] to share their feelings about their period of furlough with me. The particular form of co-presence used in the study, specifically accounts for rapport building via mediating technologies (Beaulieu 2010; Howlett 2022; Weller 2017; Zhao & Elesh 2008). Through vignettes of encounters with the study participants, I will illustrate how co-presence created through mediating technologies, enabled intimate exchanges between furloughed workers and myself during online interviews via Zoom. I will outline how semi-structured interview exchanges enabled the participants and I to form narratives and share the experience of waiting through furlough. These narratives brought to the fore certain themes and feelings, and so finally I will discuss how and why the interview encounters were written as cases. The cases once formed, were intended as a mode of understanding and sharing experience with you the reader and the participants.

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[35] I conducted thirty-six semi-structured interviews in total between January – July 2021. Thirty-two interviews with those furloughed, three with those in receipt of SEISS grants and one interview with a representative of the GMB union. At the time of the interviews seventeen of the participants had returned to the job they had been furloughed from, and six had been made redundant. Those made redundant had all found a new job within their notice period in their usual sector except one who found work in a different sector. Two were on maternity leave, both moving from furlough to maternity leave. Nine were still on furlough. Of the nine still on furlough, most were experiencing one long period of furlough, although two chefs were in their third period of furlough. Those experiencing a furlough since the scheme's inception in March 2020 and still in furlough during the interview (January – June 2021) were predominantly from the theatre, travel or the hospitality sectors. On the 8th of April 2022 I emailed the participants for follow-up information. Fourteen replied and their responses are included in the thesis. It should therefore be noted that, the experiences presented in this thesis, are not a representative sample but taken as a whole, form a representation of the lived experience of furlough. Further details of the participants can be found in the Appendix section 8.1.

[36] Although the study has been primarily written through the accounts the furloughed gathered via semi-structured interviews, it has been underpinned by a raft of research methods including analysis of UK government policy documents, announcements and statistical data related to furlough some of which is cited in the thesis. More on the discourse analysis in section 8.4 of the Appendix. The study also benefits from access to the Mass Observation Archive's 'Summer Directive 2020 – Part 1 COVID-19 and Time' which includes a diary archive written by volunteers across the UK about their experience of furlough. It includes the insights of those furloughed and attitudes to the furloughed by those not furloughed. More details of the Mass Observation Archive and this study can be found in the Appendix section 8.3. The initial focus of the study was the new spaces of waiting that the COVID-19 pandemic and practices to mitigate its threat had created. In order to capture people's sensorial experiences of waiting for the pandemic to be over, I recruited participants to make a 'live diary' via Whats App (Kaufman & Piel, 2020:232). More details of the live diary and the participants in the Appendix section 8.5.

3.2 Researching Feelings

> 'Affect arises in the midst of in-between-ness: in the capacities to act and be acted upon… affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, and in the very passages or variations between these intensities and resonances themselves'
>
> (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010:1)

If one accepts as Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth suggest, that 'affect' are amorphous, impalpable relational resonances permeating all aspects of life, then thinking with 'affect' enables openness towards the potentiality of the forces of the felt, unknown and not yet. Researching and writing through the sensed and felt affords a mode of capturing the plurality of our world of ever-changing relations. The feelings that emerged for the participants in, around and through the interstice of furloughed life were not contained within that experience. Those affects as intensities seeped into or lingered in feelings around their home and work lives during and post furlough and in how they articulated them.

> *"I'm still haunted by how much I didn't enjoy the time and buried myself into doing anything I could to help other charities and use my skills, which was what I needed at the time. However, I'm not sure I've seen much benefit from doing it in the long term just yet. Also, the sense of not knowing what to do with myself – it took a long time to get over that sense of just being able to go back out to the shops or go for a stroll".*
>
> Jodie, 29-year-old, charity worker, via email 12th April 2022.

Jodie outlines the feelings that linger from her time in furlough and at the time of her email, still present. The capacity for affects to be relational and encounterable through bodies, practices and materials (Anderson 2009:80; Lorimer, 2008:552; Sedgwick, 2003:19), meant that they were present in my interactions with the participants as per the email from Jodie. I had interviewed Jodie on the 5th of May 2021, eleven months earlier. In that interview she discussed how she filled her time in furlough with voluntary work that followed the patterns of her normal work life. Aside from voluntary work, she

had found it difficult to fill her time during furlough. A year later, Jodie is working at a new job but the feelings she experienced in furlough still resonate particularly her insight of feeling '*haunted*' by her non-enjoyment of furlough through her need to maintain the rhythms of her usual work life. Jodie also writes about lingering feelings of indecision felt in her period of furlough and informing her adjustment to a non-restricted life. In receiving her email, I am reminded of the affective atmospheres of resignation, confusion and hope in our interview together, which come to the fore as I read it. My exchanges with Jodie are examples of how the research process was laden with affects and feelings that resonated in the accounts of the participants and inside and outside my direct interactions with them. It could be contended that affects would have been present no matter what research approach I took during the study. In the following section I argue that the relational nature of taking a 'co-presence' approach, enables attention to affect and feelings.

3.3 Creating Co-presence

Co-presence is a position. Erving Goffman (1963:17) coined the term 'co-presence' as two people who make themselves socially available to each other and give mutual attention when in physical proximity. Developing Goffman's work, Anthony Giddens (1984: xxiv) shifted the emphasis from co-presence as physical presence towards co-presence as a spatio-temporal strategy with the people involved mutually agreeing to share space and time. Giddens (ibid:68) opened mediating technologies such as the telephone as conduits for creating co-presence, as they can enable intimacy between people. Subsequently, further mediating technologies such as email, social media and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) have been used in research studies working with a co-presence approach (Beaulieu 2004; 2010:458; Bluteau 2021:271; Campos-Castillo and Hitlin 2013:175). Co-presence may be considered a distinct epistemological move, that 'foregrounds the relationship between self and other and interaction that achieves presence in a setting' (Beaulieu 2010:457). This form of co-presence positions the field as constructed through social interaction and mutual attention (ibid; Campos-Castillo and Hitlin 2013:169; Grabher et al 2018; Zhao and Elesh 2008:570). The technology mediated context of this form of co-presence, means that the researcher and the researched can decide to be co-present or not. Co-presence is therefore a strategy where researched and researcher

exchange experience on their own terms. A co-presence approach can enable dynamic interactions in which both the researched and researcher look for emotional cues from each other (Howlett 2022:390; Weller 2017:623; Zhao 2003:451). However, interaction can easily be stopped by either as the exchange is being mediated through technology which can be turned off or ignored.

The study was made in the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic where physical proximity and travel was discouraged by government measures (Koch and Miles 2021:1380). A consequence of the pandemic was that screen-based communication had become ubiquitous in everyday interactions due to its capacity to enable real-time interaction remotely (Osler and Zahavi 2022). It was therefore pragmatic to conduct the semi-structured interviews (detailed later in the chapter) with participants using Zoom[37] as it enabled interpersonal interaction in a manner that was already being widely used. The use of Zoom as a research tool[38], meant that the potential intrusions in the research space of recording equipment, notetaking and pages of questions were hidden, making the interviews more akin to conversational exchanges. This was important towards making people feel comfortable talking about personal experiences and feelings.

In a study where I was asking people to discuss personal experiences, it would have felt disingenuous to not be equally open about myself. For Science and Technology studies scholar Anne Beaulieu (2010:460) taking a co-presence position extends the professional into the personal, requiring openness and availability. This is an ethical strategy which positions 'accountability' over 'anonymity'. During the study, I variously shared personal

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[37] The interviews were recorded via Zoom as both film and audio files. I also recorded the interviews on a separate laptop using audio software Audacity with a lavalier microphone attached to the screen above the audio output of laptop I was conducting the interviews on. I therefore treble recorded the interviews. This proved a useful strategy when I did not follow Grey et al's (2020:1296) advice to have a visual reminder to cue recording and twice forgot to press record at the beginning of Zoom recordings. I did not remember until five minutes into the interviews but luckily the Audacity recordings captured what I had missed via Zoom.

[38] For the past two decades there has been mounting use of online video conferencing (VoIP) within academic research as a method to conduct remote real time interviews (Bayles 2012; Deaken and Wakefield 2014; Hanna 2012; Lo Iacono et al, 2016; Seitz 2016; Weller 2017). As technology constantly changes and is refined, the usefulness of earlier academic discussion around VoIP for research purposes is limited. Some of the current functionality of VoIP such as the ability to record visually and with audio were not available to earlier researchers. Contemporary fidelity of internet connection also makes using VoIP a more stable research method of connection than it was for earlier researchers.

information about my family, work history and feelings about lockdown when asked by participants. If participants related difficult emotions or experiences that I had also experienced, I shared my past as a move to reassure and acknowledge that in a research space there is potential for power imbalances (Valentine 2005:113). I had initially posted call outs to recruit[39] participants for the study on my existing social media profiles. I kept my social media open so that participants could look at other non-research aspects of my life and interests. Participants have subsequently followed and interacted with my profiles on Twitter, Linkedin and Instagram, which might be an indicator of mutual interest.

However my position within the study is as a researcher asking others about their experiences means that there are intrinsic differences in our positions in relation to the study. Lee Ann Fujii (2018:19) advocates that the position of a researcher and the researched within a study are mutable and change as understandings and contexts change. Participants may feel like outsiders to a study and then having participated, begin to feel part of it (ibid). In this study, after the interviews and after the follow-up email a year later many participants expressed that they were curious about reading the thesis and some offered additional support such as a further interview. I suggest in doing this they were not just being helpful but had come to feel connected to the study. For my part I have not been furloughed but I share an insider view (Harris 1976:331, Crang & Cook 1995:81) of the experience of feeling the threat of redundancy having been made redundant by a past employer. As such, I shared an insider view of feelings around redundancy when they were exchanged with me. However within the study I had multiple positions (McDowell 1992:413; Rose 1997; Simandan 2019:141). Beyond

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[39] Thirty-five people furloughed or in receipt of SEISS grants were recruited into the study. Participants were self-selecting, recruited via call outs across social media platforms Blogger, Facebook (furlough groups), LinkedIn, Twitter, WhatsApp and YouTube. Details of the study were sent to twenty-five trade unions, six of which sent details of the study out via their newsletters: The Stage Managers Association, Equity, The GMB, Bakers Food and Allied Workers Union and The National Union of Journalists. Recruitment became an ongoing process, no single recruitment method was more successful than others, a small number of people came forward from each call out. Over a six-month period (January – June 2021) the callouts were periodically reposted when the momentum of willing participants coming forward halted. The number of potential participants contacting me peaked and troughed, so at times I had several people come forward and at other times none. Towards the end of the interview period (July 2021) the call outs had gathered momentum, but I made the decision to stop recruiting. At that point I had conducted thirty-five in depth interviews with people from a range of sectors and experiences and felt that I had gathered enough analysable data to explore the lines of inquiry.

researcher and person previously made redundant who can empathise with that situation, my experiences as a white, middle aged, educated, mother, cis-woman (amongst other positions) cannot but inform how I understood the participant's accounts of waiting through furlough. The participants also had a set of positions which informed our interactions. The overlaying of our two sets of experiences in the interview 'encounters' therefore created particular sets of space-time idiosyncratic to each research encounter (Simandan 2019:136; Wilson 2017: 462-463). In the next section I will explore how the online platform Zoom became a conduit for those encounters between myself and the research participants.

3.4 Sharing Experience

> *"I guess in some ways, I just feel like... that sometimes it's easier to say something that's not very comfortable to a stranger than it is to someone who is close... it's easier to divulge your deepest, darkest secrets, to somebody you don't know and never going to see again".*
>
> Jade, 34-year-old stage manager in an interview via Zoom on 15th May 2021.

Jade was commenting on her attitude to exchanges on Zoom and how she could choose to share her vulnerabilities or not because we are not in the same physical space[40]. In this instance Jade has decided to share her intimate thoughts with me. Intimacy may be created by having a 'shared world' with another which has a mutuality of 'concerns' (Maclaren 2014:60). In this instance Jade and I have a shared interest in her feelings around her period of furlough. The intimacies I shared in this study through co-presence on Zoom, were made between myself and people who were strangers.

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[40] The idea of communication mediated by a screen is not new. In a 1909 essay by E. M. Forster 'The Machine Stops', the primary mode of communication by the characters is via a screen not too dissimilar to current VoIP technologies. Two characters discuss communication mediated through a screen, with one finding it acceptable and the other decrying that its lack of tactility made it an inadequate form of interaction. The screen in the essay is of course fictional, but the discussion between the characters around the fidelity of experience when communicating via screens was one mirrored by the interviewees in the study.

For Regan Koch and Sam Miles (2021:1389) encounters between strangers on digital platforms are a form of 'stranger intimacy'. This is an intimacy marked by a willingness to be open and trusting with those we are not previously acquainted with (ibid).

> *"I think, with Zoom, because you've got the screen there, there's a like a barrier, like a protective barrier. And ... you can choose to show your vulnerability or not, in a way that I think you don't get that choice in person".*
> Jade, 15th May 2021

I asked Jade to elaborate on her point about the screen creating a "*protective barrier*"[41] between people. Leaning into the screen, Jade talked about how communication via screen can help you mask emotion from those close to you and that unlike in person you can easily end communication.

> *"Yeah... even with your best friend, that screen there seems to give that little bit of protectiveness of like, oh well, if I'm uncomfortable, I can just switch it off. Whereas if you're in a room with that person, you can't just switch it off. And you can walk out the room, but they can follow you, but you can't do that on Zoom".*

Jade's comments bring to the fore one of the potential issues of interviewing strangers about their feelings over Zoom. It was possible that interview participants could turn off the screen or mask their emotions. It was apparent that some participants did not fully share their emotions in some of the exchanges, something I will discuss later in the section. And yet as the encounters with Jade and Leon demonstrate, Zoom also gave the potential to form a space where feelings could be divulged. Jade intimated that she shared her emotions with me because I was a "*stranger*". Intimacy formed in a 'brief encounter' with a stranger, can be a meaningful exchange because there is not a shared past between the people (Maclaren 2014:60). With a focus in the present, this form of encounter has

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[41] Jade's evocation of *"protective barrier"* chimes with Erving Goffman's (1963:41) notion of 'involvement shields' as barriers employed by people who do not want social interaction but do not want to be seen to be obstructing contact. 'Involvement shields' can be physical like a locked bathroom door (ibid) or hiding behind a newspaper (ibid:40). They can be other people such as secretaries acting as 'gatekeepers' to potential involvement (Zhao and Elesh 2008:576). Or they could be a behaviour strategy like closing one's eyes (Goffman 1963:40). For those like Jade, interaction through a screen could have provided one such 'involvement shield' (Zhao and Elesh 2008:576).

the potential to create 'an openness to the otherness or individuality of the other' because there are no histories or expectations (ibid). People we are already intimate with, have the capacity to 'inhibit' us because we share a past with them (ibid:62). In the context of a life, the scene of a research interview (no matter how long) is a brief encounter. The divergence in Jade's differing attitudes around sharing feelings and the screen, perhaps informed by her lack of attachment to me and having long-term emotional investments in her friends. Jade had discussed Zoom meetings with friends where she had "*painted on a smile*" unwilling to share her real emotions with them. Perhaps Jade and I shared intimacy because it was a brief exchange, her sometimes not sharing of intimacy with her friends perhaps because there could be lingering consequences beyond her immediate sharing of emotion with them. That Jade and I were strangers meeting on Zoom may also have added to Jade's willingness to share her experiences with me.

I have maintained that co-presence as a research approach was used to effectively establish intimacy with participants in this study. It is important to acknowledge that creating intimacy within research encounters is uncomfortable for some people and the opening scene with Leon could be viewed as exploitative. Exploitative in that as I began to realise Leon was sharing something deeply personal, I let it play out. And exploitative because now I am using that moment as an example of the level of intimacy that formed during the interviews. This was an ethical dilemma that I had to negotiate during the study when people shared deeply held emotions. I agree with Sara Ahmed's (2021:14) assertion that a researcher has a responsibility to continually (re)consider the ethical implications of their actions during a research study. During my interactions with participants, I kept in mind their needs and the ethical parameters set for this study[42], over the necessity to seek and generate information to further the research. I was quite prepared for participants to leave interviews and withdraw consent[43], as for some,

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[42] As an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded researcher I am bound by that organisation's code of ethics https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics-guidance/framework-for-research-ethics/our-core-principles/. The code broadly addresses: that participation is voluntary, risk is assessed, the research purpose is shared, data is kept confidential, that the research is conducted within quality standards and has no conflict of interest. These are useful tenets of good practice for research encounters whether bound by them or not. Ethical and Health and Safety approval for this study was assessed and passed by the ethics committee in the Geography Department of Durham University.

[43] Participants were made aware that they could withdraw consent at any time in the study through an information sheet (which included how their data would be stored) sent to them before the interviews,

furlough may well have been an emotive or even traumatic experience. As I was asking the participants about potentially deeply personal feelings, I was prepared and open to share my own feelings when participants asked me about them. For the most part, as with the encounter with Leon, I gave space and time for the emotions of participants to play out and did not intervene and stop participants sharing their feelings no matter how raw they seemed. Leon was in control of sharing his feelings of rejection with me and signalled that he understood he could stop. I have included the opening scene with Leon because he chose to continue.

That is not to say that all of the interviews shared the same intensity of intimacy as the exchanges with Leon and Jade. Intimacy was not always instant with some participants, rapport developed as the interview progressed or not at all. Jasmine, a 26-year-old stage manager, gave pragmatic responses to my questions until midway in the exchange whereby she started to talk about the loneliness of her ongoing furlough and her feelings of disconnection having been furloughed for over a year. In that interview, I sensed that the initial part of our interaction had been for her about building trust with me. There was another interview where I felt the participant (Adrian) was holding his feelings back, creating a distance between us. Although I was not explicitly asking the participants to be intimate with me, the nature of the questions indicated a sharing of feelings. Adrian did answer my questions but avoided sharing intimate details with me. Jade stated that the screen could act as a "*protective barrier*" enabling a masking of emotion. It is conceivable that in this instance the screen was not an obstacle, Adrian possibly was not willing to share his intimate feelings with me. The less forthcoming interview felt flat, whereas when emotions were shared the interviews flowed and had momentum. This brings to the fore that a co-presence approach can create the conditions to instigate intimacy between researcher and researched but intimacy is not always established or maintained. My comments about the interviews with Adrian and Jasmine also highlight my own expectations, which grew over the study, that participants *would* share their feelings with me.

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verbally at the start of each interview and in a debrief sheet sent after the interviews.

Russell Hitchings (2012:65) advises that not all people are comfortable talking about all subjects, but even in a person's refusal to talk about certain subjects there is research merit (ibid:66). No one refused to answer any questions, although there were certain interactions where the intimacy that had been built between us encouraged participants to share feelings that I did not have the emotional capacity to listen to. Two of the participants had experienced bereavements pre-pandemic and before being furloughed. I sensed in the interview space that they wanted to talk more about their bereavements but did not have the capacity that day to give those thoughts space in our exchange. When the issue of grief emerged, I changed the direction of questions so that the participant was diverted into a different train of thought. In this instance grief may have paid a large part in the experience of those furloughed, but I chose not to open those feelings. Although their grief was something momentarily touched on, my diversion caused the subject to be subsumed by other thoughts. The strategy of co-presence through the semi-structured interview, had opened for the participants the opportunity to share something deeply personal. As a researcher I was aware of this but did not uphold my part of the equation. In my non-action, I touch perhaps on a limitation of taking a co-presence position and the intimacy it potentially unfolds, which may open the researcher to feelings that they do not want to dwell on.

The online interviews enabled not just an opportunity to share emotions but had the capacity for the researcher and researched to show the intimate physical environments in which they are having their interaction (Eggling 2022:11). Just as a participant could investigate and search for my online profiles, the participants could see into my home and have some insight of my home life. Through the confines of the screen, we had a limited window into each other's home worlds. When I interviewed Jayne, a 37-year-old pastry chef, she not only had a baby in a carrier strapped to her front, but she also moved about her kitchen tidying. During the interview she talked to me about how she set up a traditional pie making business during her period of furlough whilst also pregnant and home schooling her daughter. Her account of her time during furlough, gave the impression of a person who likes to keep busy and fill her time. Later in the interview she talked about how she did too much during furlough and began to feel burnt out. The footage of the interview demonstrated what she was saying. With the sound off, not knowing what she was talking about, a viewer of her interview could quickly deduce that

Jayne with her moving about is a person who likes to keep busy. Screen mediated interactions (and their recording) therefore have the capacity to capture how people behave in the intimate space of home on their own terms.

I had an insight of Jayne's home life, but this was not an equal exchange. At my end of the interaction, I sat in the corner of a room lit by photographic lights. A participant could see no more than me and the white wall behind me. Or so I thought. When I look back at the filmed footage, various objects do come into view in different interviews: a white board, a pile of books and some paintings further along the wall.

The scenes of the interview encounters were various. The participants talked to me in bedrooms, in home offices and in kitchens but mostly in living rooms on sofas. Some moved between rooms during the interviews, so I gained views into other spaces in their homes. Some home spaces were mentioned or described in the interviews, but I did not see them. The living room became a significant presence in one interview, the participant spoke of spending most of their furlough time there, but the scene of our exchange was her bedroom. My sense of her living room entirely formed through her description of it in the interview. Many participants spoke about their gardens and yet not one interview was conducted outside let alone in a garden. I suspect that the participants conducted the interviews indoors, to ensure stable Wi-Fi connectivity. Paul Hanna (2012:241) proposes that VoIP technology enables a researcher and a participant to remain in their own spaces and not impose themselves on each other's 'personal space'. And yet in some ways we were in each other's space, through being a presence on a screen and through the sound emanating from our computers, smart phone, or tablet. Although the viewpoints into our respective homes was to some extent managed, I suggest that having the interviews being conducted in our respective homes, helped to support a sense of mutuality within our interactions.

3.5 Conducting Interviews

Following Liz Bondi's (2014:44) assertion that 'There is no better source of knowledge about people's feelings than the people concerned', within the study I set out to ask people about their feelings about waiting through furlough. However the practice of

social distance necessitated by government requirements meant that during the data collation phase of the study interaction between the research participants and I could only happen at a distance through technology. The process of communicating online potentially created further complications in exchanges between myself and the participants, in the form of Zoom fatigue. Zoom fatigue is a mental exhaustion driven by prolonged use of video conferencing online (Anh et al 2022). People became Zoom fatigued during the COVID-19 pandemic when social interaction became most prevalent online (Ngien and Hogan 2022:2). There was potential therefore for the study participants and I to have been experiencing Zoom fatigue during our interactions[44]. I have already outlined co-presence as a mode of attuning to participants and so mindful of the potential to create or exacerbate Zoom fatigue, I endeavoured to create interview encounters within a specified time frame and to keep exchanges purposeful through semi-structured interviews.

In line with taking a relational theoretical approach through working with queer phenomenology and notions of affect, I took a relational approach to the interview process. Relational interviews are not determined by their 'form or structure' but by the intention of the researcher (Fujii 2018:8). That is to say that a relational interview may be semi-structured or unstructured, but the exchange is a dialogue between the researcher and researched, not a process of inquisitorial extraction by the researcher (ibid). A relational interview should feel mutual (ibid:9). Taking the position of co-presence in the study was a tactic towards creating mutuality. Using semi-structured interviews was a move towards creating a conversational style of exchange (Brinkman, 2018:579; Valentine 2005:111) in line with taking a relational interview approach (Fujii 2018). Semi-structured interviews gave a momentum to the exchanges and enabled me to be live to further lines of inquiry as they emerged from the participant responses (Brinkman 2020:65). Through building on the previous replies of the participants the exchange felt (for me) like a conversation. In the context of wanting to enable the participants to be open about their experiences of a potentially emotive subject, it seemed appropriate to make the research encounter feel more conversational and natural. Initial

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[44] No participant discussed Zoom fatigue directly, although I did experience it myself during the study as a form of information overload and physical eye burn after being on multiple screens (laptops and mobile phone) for protracted time periods.

questions focussed on people's attitudes to waiting to allow the participant to just speak about something familiar and become comfortable in the interview space. Participants were then asked about their attitudes to work and their pre-furlough job in order to determine their attachment to work life and how this manifested. I was exploring how a level of attachment to work may have had a relation with how the furloughed experienced their period of detachment from work life. Subsequent questions[45] were framed around the emotions, bodily responses, temporalities and materiality involved in waiting through furlough.

Having the questions open on my screen, unseen by the participants enabled our interactions to have the flow of a natural conversation. This was despite my constantly toggling back and forth through thematic clusters of questions looking for relevant follow-up questions. The questions were thematically clustered as: affect, feelings, materiality, control, sensation, time and waiting. The advantage of a screen mediated interview is that the interview questions and recording facility are 'hidden' and are not distractions. The ability to maintain eye contact with the participants through the screen and not looking through notes or checking recording equipment, maintained the flow of our interaction. A glitch did happen in two interviews when I forgot to press record on Zoom during the first five minutes. One participant spotted this, which momentarily halted the flow of our interaction. I sensed some anxiety from her that the first five minutes of the interview had not been captured, not for practical reasons but that I had not taken enough care. I reassured her that I was double recording, with a separate audio recording. The incident happened in the nineteenth interview. By that point I had become used to a certain flow of interaction. The halt in that interview, brought to the fore the atmospheres that Zoom had enabled up to that point, and how easily they could be disturbed. Indeed when I look back on the interview films of the exchanges, although they were intended to flow conversationally, they sometimes jolted. This happened when I

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[45] Examples of the questions I asked participants were: How did it feel to be furloughed? What was the atmosphere like in the house? Are there any sensations that remind you of waiting in furlough? How much control did you feel about your situation? What did time feel like? Were you conscious of time? Participants were also asked about how they filled their time during furlough. And what it felt like to be in or to leave and return to their site of waiting (the home).

stopped a particular flow of exchange and changed direction by asking the participant about a different topic.

The films of the interviews provided crucial support to my analysis. The films enabled me to revisit not just what people said but how they said it. The interviews were transcribed[46] and time coded so I could easily toggle between the written transcription and the film footage. The capability to do this proved at points crucial to my understanding of what and how people recalled certain experiences[47]. A vivid example of this is when one of the participants discussed her experience of furlough, and she said it was like leading a "*shadow life*". This phrase reads on the page quite differently from how it was said in the filmed footage. On the page her recollection reads as downbeat and dejected, but the film footage revealed that she spoke about this in a confident and matter-of-fact manner. This in turn gave the phrase "*shadow life*" a specific resonance.

The film footage enabled me to examine the minutiae of the interview exchanges repeatedly. In doing so I was able to pick up on non-verbal gestures and the atmospheres of pauses that I would have missed if I had just worked with the written transcriptions. The opening scene of this chapter with Leon demonstrates how paying attention to the non-verbal and affective dimensions of an interview encounter importantly changes how that encounter may be analysed. Liz Bondi (2014:48) discusses that within the scene of an interview 'non-verbal', 'unconscious "messages"' are transmitted and received between researched and researcher. These messages 'saturated' with unspoken meaning are carried through a person's way of being or their tone of voice (ibid). The pause Leon made, his nervous laugh, his smile, his look away, the flush of his cheeks, his hesitation, his looking down, the atmosphere of anticipation his pause created are imbued with a

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[46] The Zoom audio recordings were transcribed with the Otter platform www.otter.ai. Otter can automatically time code transcriptions but is not completely accurate, so the transcriptions were manually checked.

[47] The interview material was transcribed 'verbatim', making note of non-verbal cues such as 'um-ahs' and 'pauses' (MacLean 2004:116). This allowed me to make note of the structure, syntax and forms of speech the participants used when retelling an experience, these provided some insight of how an experience was constructed by the teller (Labov 2013:17). Verbatim transcription was necessary as I wanted to have a close understanding of how the experiences were being communicated within the interviews (see Halcomb and Davidson 2006). However as I have related, I worked closely with the film footage alongside the written transcription.

meaning yet to unfold in words. Before he said "*rejected*" he was already transmitting that he was processing something deeply felt.

However, it should be noted that the transcription of semi structured interviews is a 'theoretical, selective, interpretive, and representational' undertaking (Davidson 2009:37). During the transcription and analysis process I elected to bring some experiences to the fore through how I chose to code them (or not), whilst other experiences were backgrounded or omitted in the coding and analysis process. Johanna Waters (2023:199) reminds us that how we transcribe and analyse research material is reflective of who and 'where we are in our lives at the given moment'. At the point of transcription (May – September 2021) my situation was of movement in and out of lockdowns. In my confinement, my situation in some ways ran parallel with the participant's experiences, but my transcription and understanding of a participant's story could only be a translation of our encounter (see Bradley and Puri 2016). How the participants I have mentioned in this chapter interpreted our exchange may well be very different from how I have presented our encounter. My interpretation of what was said informed how hierarchies of significance were made within my analysis. As interpretation of qualitative research material is subjective, another researcher looking at the same material may have hierarchised the material differently (see O'Connor and Joffe 2020).

So far, I have discussed the scenes of the interview encounters and the process of conducting them. And yet it is the telling of an experience that gives it form and coherence (Bauman 1986:5). So what happens when we solidify something in narrative and experience becomes words? Within this chapter I have been relating my story of the research encounters and coalescing those encounters into words. I have alluded to the interview encounters as opportunities for the furloughed to share their experiences with me through a dialogue between us. This containment of experience through the spoken word was made for 'practical' reasons, as a means to organise events and their context (Carr 1986:71) for both the participants and me. Indeed in order to share the recollections of the participants and my understandings of the research encounters, for the purposes of a thesis those differing accounts are required to be rendered into words and a written account. I am curious about how the participants held together their

experiences of waiting through furlough through narrative and chose to narrate them. Before I discuss how and why I developed cases from those interviews, I want to examine more closely the mechanisms of narration as it has relevance to both the content of the interviews and the cases I make from them.

Through narrative a person can gather and hold experiences and in doing so organise that which may be fragmented (Rapport 1999:74). The opening scene between Leon and I is an example of this. Leon narrated his experience of feeling rejected in a fragmentary way. Not just because he left a pause before he started to discuss his feelings of rejection but because in the telling he was drawing together different experiences of feeling rejected into that one moment of narration. He was narrating one feeling that spanned several experiences. The scene between us unfolded in a fragmentary way which I have given a linear coherence to in my retelling of it. In the moment, as per my account, I did not know what Leon was going to say or its significance until he had fully said his piece. His account holds several strands of experience together through his words. My narration of the scene holds his words plus my own words, feelings and thoughts into one coherent account.

Richard Bauman (1986:5-6) however cautions that the coherence formed by narrative may be open to question as the narrative being told may obscure or blur what actually happened. There is a suggestion here of potential disparity between an event and its telling. In a research study collating individual interviews around a situation (furlough), it may be useful to view participant recollections as approximations of the event that the teller is recalling. Some of those interviewed for the study were still furloughed so for them the situation was dynamic and liable to change. For others no longer furloughed, their recollection and feelings towards their experience was recent and in the context of hindsight had the potential for reassessment.

The way someone shares their life experiences can shape how a life is lived, 'in the end we *become* the autobiographical narratives by which we "tell about" our lives' (Bruner 1987:15). Life and story fold into each other. On a wider scale, how an individual tells stories about their life is influenced by the culture in which they are told and conversely shape that culture. So for Jerome Bruner (ibid) there is a symbiotic relationship between

the teller, their life, its context and the story they tell. The stories that the furloughed share within the study, were made in the context of an academic study of waiting, around an experience of being furloughed at home during a pandemic, within their wider life story and mine. If a person's story is closely connected to their identity, then it becomes difficult to challenge the tone or content of a story, as in doing so the challenge will be to the story teller's sense of self (see Bruner 1987 and Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk 2007). The participants in this study are individuals who experienced the extraordinary situation of furlough. It is assumed that the 'story' of their experience is folded into their sense of self, and they are (in part) that 'story'. As such, I am also a story. My experience of listening, recording and analysing the experiences of the participants, folds into my story as a researcher who studied people who waited through furlough.

3.6 Making Cases

The thematic gatherings which became cases, are centred on the participant's own words which I present both through quotes and through my narration of our exchanges (c.f. Bissell 2023). I acknowledge that this mode of representation is as selective as the coding I used to bring the themes to the fore. However I have endeavoured to give context to the exchange and the participant so that quotes, as I present them, are not detached from the exchange. I am mindful that uncontextualized quotes from participants are open to reinterpretation (see Laurier 2010 for a discussion of this). As I previously outlined, the sharing of experience through interviews involved a combination of mutual attention and story sharing between myself and the participants. I discussed that the coding and transcription of the interview encounters were subject to my interpretation of them, amidst a particular set of conditions created through the COVID-19 pandemic. The representation of the interviews through narrative cases which I have selected as a mode of representation, should also be treated as my interpretation of the exchanges. However, by providing some context of the interviews and participants, the hope is that there is space for the reader to create their own interpretations of the experiences I present.

The experiences of waiting through furlough are represented in this thesis within three cases. In a qualitative research study such as this one, what is a case? A case may be formed about an instance or entity, an individual, a collective, a circumstance or a site

(Schwandt & Gates, 2018:341). A case therefore is made around an existing object already evident in the world, like the situation of waiting through furlough. Alternatively, a case can be a theoretical construct created through the research process (ibid), like the differing forms of disorientation encountered during furlough and presented in the next three chapters. Essentially cases can be 'found' or 'made', be an 'object' or become a 'convention' (ibid:342). Lauren Berlant (2007:664-665) asserts that cases made by experts are 'always pedagogical'. Here expertise may be cursory or trained, either way the motivation in creating a case is to share knowledge (ibid). My motivation in creating cases is to gather the themes that emerged through the empirical data and explore them through the lenses of space, time, the corporeal and the felt. Doing so enables me (and potentially others) a space to reflect on what each thematic gathering in the study is a case of, towards a fuller understanding of the circumstance of waiting through furlough.

Cases may be not as discrete as my description so far has afforded. For Andrew Abbott (1992:64) a case is a collection of dynamic relations able to transgress the 'fuzzy boundaries' of the whole (study). Cases are in constant relation with heterogenous, entangled and relational 'events' inside and outside the researched context (ibid:65). Contemplating cases as not being a confinement of relations, opens spaces of reflexivity and interconnection within and without them. A case is therefore a discovered object and a mess of relations realised through the research process, that are always fluid with the potential to create new connections inside and outside the research space.

 I agree with Howard Becker's (via Ragin, 1992:6) suggestion that a researcher should not know how cases will form until the end of the research study. For my part my preconceptions about what might emerge from the data changed after I wrote a reflective piece after the first ten interviews. At that point patterns of response or themes were emerging beyond those I had initially envisaged, and it became sensible to wait and see what would finally unfold before making any further assumptions. Ragin (ibid) advises that 'better research' develops if a researcher continually questions what they are making a case of (within a research process) and adopts a position of being open about how it could finally be. For Becker (via Ragin, ibid) what a research study is a case of, gathers slowly over its course, 'the final realization of the case's nature may be the most important part of the interaction between ideas and evidence'. Becker (ibid) also

recognises that there can be events that 'catalyse' a sudden realisation of the case that is unfolding in a research study. During the twelfth interview, the study participant described their experience in such a way that I recognised that an overarching theme of 'disorientation' was gathering within the interviews. Nonetheless, I remained open to the potential that other themes could gain more traction during the life span of the study.

Within the thesis 'cases' are arranged within discreet chapters as a strategy of thematically creating order (Abbott 2001:129). It should however be noted that the same empirical material could be used to create multiple 'substantive cases' (Ragin 1992:2). In this thesis I am presenting themes as cases that I considered significant within the data, but I am fully aware that within the empirical material there are possibly other potential cases that I have not presented. The other narratives and cases could be analysed and retold at another time outside the confines of this thesis. It also should be noted that as I am taking a fuzzy approach to cases, certain strands or rhythms of the research extends across the cases, beyond, into and through the data that is not presented in this thesis.

Enveloped by overarching themes of detachment and disorientation, the findings of this study are presented through cases that are framed by the corporeal, emotional, temporal and spatial dimensions of waiting (that I outlined in Chapter 02). Each chapter investigates a sub-theme (proximity, rhythms, suspension) which is explored through the four dimensions of waiting as cases. The experiences outlined through the cases are not discreet and inform other cases and weave across the sub-themes. The cases have fuzzy boundaries with people, experiences, ideas, notions intersecting some or all of the cases. The cases that I have woven out of the first-hand experiences of the furloughed, are those experiences I deem to be the most dominant narratives within the study. The lines of inquiry[48] are addressed across the chapters and through the cases. However a case may be a mechanism for transmitting an account of a circumstance, but there is no way of controlling how that form of representation will be received and understood (Berlant 2007:665). Kathleen Stewart (1996:50) suggests that research texts are not

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[48] A reminder that the lines of inquiry explore 1. What embodied feelings did the space-time of waiting through furlough instigate? 2. How is a suspended relation from an organisation (workplace) lived and felt by furloughed individuals? 3.How do people held waiting in unknown durations narrate their experience?

just signifiers of experience but can also have their own agency as potential 'acts of negation and excess'.

3.7 In Action

The first chapter mobilised the emerging cultural object of furlough as a form of waiting. The second chapter opened the tensions of waiting, four of its dimensions (the spatial, temporal, corporeal and felt) queer phenomenology and affect via scenes, as a possible routes to analysis of waiting experiences. That chapter also considered scenes as a way of holding experience in writing. This chapter has considered co-presence as an approach for the sharing of experience between a researcher and the researched. It has discussed the advantages and limitations of conducting interviews online, discussed the organisation of experience through narrative and made a case for organising the empirical material as cases. I previously argued that furlough opened an important opportunity to study people during a protracted duration of waiting, detached from a central quotidian focus in their lives, and within financially secure circumstances. The next three chapters will explore how furloughed workers experienced their detachment from work life. These empirically driven chapters are organised by three forms of waiting enacted by the furlough; 'Leading a "*Shadow Life*"' or waiting as a spatial disorientation; 'Out of "*Work Rhythms*"' or waiting as a temporal disorientation and '" *Hanging in Space, in Time*"' or waiting as a tensive disorientation. The approach to analysing waiting in this thesis is through its arrangements, temporalities, corporeality and feelings, and through relational and embodied concepts of feelings. As such, the intention was to open the differing dimensions of waiting I outlined in Chapter 02 as a mode of thinking through organisations of waiting within and outside this thesis.

~ Losing Orientation ~

Leading a "*Shadow life*"

4.1 Shadow Life

It is 14:51 hours on the 11th of February 2021. I am interviewing Chloe, a 23-year-old waitress based in London, about her feelings around being furloughed. The sun shines through her blond hair from a window behind her to the left. Chloe self-assuredly looks down into the camera as she talks to me on Zoom. As she speaks, she uses her hands for emphasis and occasionally moves her fringe out of her eyes. We discuss what it feels like to share her days on furlough with her partner whilst he works from home.

> "... the entire experience of being in... furlough... it's definitely felt like... a shadow
> life, like kind of being in other people's spaces or dipping into, for example, spaces
> that I wouldn't usually see my partner behaving or acting in. And it's almost like
> being... a ghost".
>
> 11th February 2021.

Chloe's evocation of leading a "*shadow life*", refers to her orientation towards and navigation around her partner's work life in lieu of her own work life, which had been suspended through furlough. David Bissell and Andrew Gorman-Murray (2019:708) propose that when people (such as Chloe)" lose their orienting relations to other bodies, to actions or to situations" they become disorientated. Disorientation involves a detachment from and unravelling of relations (ibid:708). In Chloe's instance she had been disconnected not just from the rhythms of work, but from colleagues with whom she had formed a close affinity. Chloe's "*shadow life*" referred to how in her detachment from work life she formed a new orientation towards her partner and his continuing working life. For Chloe and others furloughed, the movement from quotidian life to the new social world of lockdown and furlough was abrupt. Disorientation can occur when there is a

rapid transition between two differing positions of orientation (Ahmed 2006a:157-158). In this instance, the pandemic necessitated a rapid change of situation for some, from the pace of a busy work life to being furloughed and held waiting for work life to restart.

Disorientation can be understood as a series of incapacities around how to relate to others and carry on within an unfamiliar situation (Ahmed 2006a:157; Bissell and Gorman-Murray 2019:716; Harbin 2016:3). These incapacities felt bodily and emotionally (Ahmed 2006a:20; Harbin 2016:33) resonate with how some of the participants of the study reported their experiences in relation to the suspension of their work life. As the chapter (and thesis) unfolds, I will argue that the disorientation experienced whilst waiting through furlough, was nuanced and involved feelings of attachment and detachment. Chloe's phrase "*shadow life*" becomes a term used in this chapter to describe how some of the furloughed's disorientation caused them to navigate around others spatially, temporally and emotionally.

> "*It felt very surreal, to be honest, like, on this, on the side of like not being at work… It's just very odd. It's not something I'm used to… I think probably the financial side of it is odd as well… It feels very strange to be given money for not doing anything. That's a quite a weird moral. I don't know. Like, it undeserved, although obviously, you're like, there's nothing else you can do, because you're not supposed to go out and do something else. You're supposed to stay at home and stay away from people. But yes, it feels really odd and it still does feel odd to be honest. Obviously, it's not like it feels less weird, because I'm kind of used to it. But it does still feel strange to be given… like what is quite a lot of money for just sitting in your house*",*
> Abigail, 32, fine dining chef, 14th January 2021.

Abigail's articulation of disorientated feelings around being paid not to work, is typical of the furloughed people I interviewed. Ami Harbin (2012:266) proposes that when an individual *feels* disorientation they do not necessarily *say* that they are "disorientated". In using words such as "strange"," odd", "weird", "lost", and "uncertain" the participants such as Abigail, perhaps articulated feelings of disorientation without speaking the word. The words the participants used to describe their experiences have amorphous edges, are imprecise and fuzzy. As a listener I instinctively felt that their description of feelings

held more emotional resonance than their surface articulation. As discussed in the previous chapter, I acknowledge that my translation of their experiences may not be the full picture of their situations. My sensing of an intended meaning and the resonances I ascribe to certain words, scenes or encounters may have been felt differently by the participants than in my interpretation of them. I highlight this as the proceeding three chapters hinge on how the period of furlough was articulated by those furloughed and how I chose to interpret and write those articulations as manifestations of disorientation.

This chapter develops a conceptualisation of disorientation as a feeling of detachment from a situation and from others. Detachment is explored as an involuntary action by some and as intentionally engaged in by others. Their disorientation manifests as a spatial navigation around a proximate or absent other. In this navigation, the other becomes a relational marker for those furloughed. I use Chloe's phrase "*shadow life*" as a term to describe this form of relational navigation. The chapter outlines the experiences of those furloughed who said that they had a positive relation to their usual work and struggled to come to terms with being disconnected from it. I will outline four conceptualisations of disorientation or shadow life. The first form of shadow life focuses on how the furloughed kept themselves in relation to a productive other, navigating around them within *spatial disorientation*. The second form contours how the furloughed kept in relation and proximate with another whose heightened emotional state caused them to withdraw in order not to feel *emotional disorientation.* The third form details a *temporal disorientation* whereby the furloughed found deciding how to fill time problematic and felt unproductive. In the fourth form, the furloughed experienced *sensorial disorientation* activated by an absent other. Shadow lives changed as lives reshaped and relations were reformed. The furloughed people I interviewed experienced multiple versions of the shadow lives I will outline. In some instances these shadow lives overlapped, in others the different shadow lives were formed within a sequence of discrete changes in a person's circumstance.

4.2 Circumnavigation

The first shadow life involves people who had a positive attachment to their job, expressed guilt about being paid not to work and shared their living space with another

working from home. The furloughed person adopted the same temporal rhythms but circumnavigated spatially around the 'other' feeling distant from them even though in some cases they were in close physical proximity. How we orientate in relation to an object (in this case the activity of a homeworker) can inform how we understand, occupy and share space (Ahmed 2006:2). In a state of detachment from their usual work life, the furloughed person orientated towards and kept the productive other in spatial and temporal relation.

The husband of Abigail, a 32-year-old chef, changed from working out of the house to studying at home a few months into Abigail's period of furlough. Living in a remote cottage in mid Wales, she moved from feeling lonely during the days when he worked outside the house, to having to minimise her activity to fit with him and feeling conscious of his presence when he worked from home. Abigail speaks to me from a room with newly whitewashed stone walls. Fronds of a large house plant poke out behind her. Her dark hair tied back; she is partly lit by an electric light to her left but is mostly bathed in the grey blue light of dusk pouring through the window to her right.

> *"Yeah, feeling quite isolated I know I do… recently, he actually started an MA… So he has his… which we finished yesterday… new home office. He was on the landing before, which was really problematic when he was trying to do uni work online… so he would be… Monday to Friday, nine to five at his desk and probably about slightly less than half of that would be on Zoom calls. So I have to, like make sure that I don't need to go past him when he's on a Zoom call, or like, he finds my playing radio, like talk radio very distracting. So I do have to kind of… it's gone from like, feeling like really lonely and like, I wish there was someone else here… to like, thinking like, Oh, I need to think about whether I'm making too much noise or like, I can't do that, or I can't like, use a power tool because he's trying to do an essay".*
> 14th January 2021.

Abigail's period of furlough created a disorientation through the suspension of focussing on her own work life which in pre-pandemic times had been a central concern for her, towards attention on her husband's proximity and work life. Sara Ahmed (2004:31) ventures that 'Feelings… take the 'shape' of the contact we have with objects'. In this

instance the object was the work life of Abigail's partner. When Abigail's partner worked outside the home and not proximate, she felt his absence, but when her partner worked from home his presence impressed itself on her in a manner that meant she felt she should navigate around him. She timed her movements around the home in line with his working day trying to avoid being in his proximity. Abigail sweeps her arm to her left and gestures[49] away from her body as she talks about trying not to walk past her husband as he works. Abigail's gesture is part of her articulation of the physical distance she shaped between herself and her partner.

Chloe a 23-year-old waitress, lived in a sublet flat in South London with her boyfriend during her periods of furlough. As her partner worked from home, Chloe found orientating within the new social world of furlough difficult.

> "... everything was centred around this living room. It was kind of the, I guess, the focus of the space... erm that's where my boyfriend would work as well. So he does calls and stuff, he works for a business school. So he's talking to people a lot of the time... erm I felt very like in the background to that and very mindful of his work... I never used to have to consider his work or think about him, and his like, work self. And then bringing that into what's meant to be a living space is really weird erm suddenly you feel like you're in a call centre or something. But yeah, I've always felt really kind of quiet in that space and more reserved than I'd usually be...".
> 11th February 2021.

Chloe's partner's work became the locus of their shared living space. Unlike Abigail and her husband, Chloe and her partner were in close physical proximity in the same room during her partner's working day. This prompted Chloe to foreground her partner and his work whilst relegating herself as a bystander of the scene. Such a consignment to the background may be made by an individual 'in order to sustain a certain direction' or collective 'orientation' towards an object (Ahmed 2006a:31). In this instance, the orientation was towards the productivity of Chloe's partner.

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[49] Gestures made by a speaker that are 'analogous' to the circumstance being discussed, are termed by David McNeill (2005:24) as 'iconic'. Speech and iconic gestures may not be exactly the same but are 'co-expressive', symbolically articulating a particular idea in differing ways (ibid:39).

"I think it's strange, in terms of usually if someone's annoying you or maybe getting on with something without you, it's very normal to be able to leave that room and go and do your own thing. But in this situation again, in the furlough, I would opt to do hobbies that I could do while I was on the sofa in the same room as him, instead of going to the other room and maybe like playing guitar or something, which I could do very separately. And I think it was just getting really used to being in the same room and I'd like had a weird attachment to that".
11th February 2021.

Chloe intimates in some of her reflections that she was not behaving as she usually would, commenting that she was "*more reserved than I'd usually be*" and that she formed a "*weird attachment*" to being in the same room as her partner. Chloe discussed limiting her choice of activity so that she could stay in close proximity to her boyfriend. I wonder if Chloe's decision to stay close to her partner whilst feeling peripheral to his activity (as per her shadow life comment) is an attempt to stay close to a semblance of her normal work rhythms. The emotional 'attachment [of bodies] takes place through being moved by the proximity of others' in other words bodies can affect bodies (Ahmed 2004:27). Chloe's physical proximity to her boyfriend is perhaps her attempt to *feel* aligned to work rhythms even though they are not the same as her pre-furlough ones. Her quietened body, refusal to separate herself from her partner's activity whilst feeling distant from it, are outward manifestations of a curtailing of self, which (I conjecture) have been created through feelings of disorientation instigated by being furloughed.

This capacity to be affected by and orientated by the work life of the 'other' is echoed by Jacqueline, 54-year-old stage manager in receipt of SEISS grants. Sitting relaxed on a winged brown leather armchair in her living room, she discussed how she navigated her time and spatial use around her husband's home working schedule. She was aware of his working day and physical needs like eating, in a way she wasn't when she was working.

"I knew his schedule, like what time he had what meeting in a way that I wouldn't. Because there might be like, Oh, so do you need lunch before that meeting or after that meeting? Or you know, silly stuff like that. I would try. And I still do it actually,

although not this morning, to get up kind of when he goes to work kind of thing.
Again, I guess, using his structure to give me a structure".
6th May 2021.

Unlike Chloe she did not stay in close physical proximity with her partner but did share some of her husband's working day by occasionally joining him when he was on Zoom meetings with colleagues. Jacqueline's adoption of her husband's daily schedule and navigation outside and within his home office is perhaps an orientation strategy of finding a way of feeling 'at home'. Feeling at home is a process of becoming orientated within unfamiliar circumstances (Ahmed 2006a:7). Although Jacqueline is in the familiar space of home, it is not one she had spent protracted amounts of time in. Her stage management work regularly took her away from home. The non-work life of furlough was a new circumstance for Jacqueline whose work life was where she was "*used to being busy*". Feeling at home for Jacqueline was about easing into the new circumstance of non-work life, in a physical space she had previously spent limited time in.

If waiting involves space as a dimension of arrangement, then perhaps the spatial navigations of Abigail, Jacqueline and Chloe are a manifestation of them finding their way and adjusting to new relationships with self, others and their living space. They are making that adjustment whilst also feeling the detachment from the busyness of work life. The space of the home is frequently a space of circumstantial waiting which is relational to short term activity such waiting for a kettle to boil, people to arrive, for paint to dry. During furlough the space of the home became (through the government requirement to stay at home) a designated waiting space creating new relations to its spatial arrangement. Abigail, Jacqueline and Chloe may be feeling a 'maladjustment' between what has been and their current circumstance, feeling confused about the situation of finding themselves in an in-between state (Schmidt di Friedberg 2018:80). The three of them in different ways expressed that they were not quite being their usual selves. Chloe by needing to be in physical proximity with her partner, Abigail by being aware of her partner's proximity and feeling a need to create distance and Jacqueline by focussing on her partner's routine. For Sara Ahmed (2006a:20) 'disorientation is a way of describing the feelings that gather when we lose our sense of who it is that we are'. For differing reasons work had become central to the lives of Abigail, Jacqueline and Chloe.

Abigail and Jacqueline had discussed that work was part of who they were. Abigail said it was because her job allowed her to be "*creative*" and Jacqueline because she got to make *"joyful things for people"*. For Chloe her work life had brought her a community of like-minded people at a similar stage of life whose company she valued. Work life had become integral to their lives beyond earning a wage. Their maladjustment to furlough was perhaps a loss of how they defined themselves through work. Through the process of navigating around the other by minimising the space they used, the noise they made and through navigating their days around the spatial use and timetable of another, Abigail, Jacqueline and Chloe are perhaps tracing ways to orientate themselves and find their way amidst their sudden feelings of disorientation.

4.3 Periphery

This next section outlines disorientation felt by furloughed people who felt positively about their work life and negatively about not working. Amidst their changed working circumstances, this group of the furloughed were living with another whose *emotions* were foregrounded and prioritised over their own. Whereas in the first version of shadow life where the spatial needs of another became a locus for the furloughed, the heightened emotions of the other are brought to the fore due to an implicit understanding that another person's emotional life takes precedence. In order to manage their own response and not be affected by the other's heightened emotions, the furloughed chose not to react to the other and navigated around the scenes of heightened emotion staying on the periphery of the other's emotions. In this section I draw on three concepts in order to analyse the furloughed responses: under performativity (Berlant 2015) the non-performance of expected emotion, disaffection (Yao 2021) the detachment of feeling from another's emotion and 'matte' (Jones 2022) the surface of a scene where there is a non-display of emotion. The detachment from the other through the non-response to their emotion becomes part of the furloughed's own disorientation. This section moves from disorientation as a spatial navigation in the last section, to understanding waiting through furlough in a disorientation of emotional detachment.

Jenny, a 27-year-old West End stage manager, shared a flat with a performer colleague also in receipt of SEISS grants for six months. Sitting on her bed, back against the wall,

headphones across her head, she talks about how the emotional state of her flatmate influenced how she navigated their flat.

> *"I would wake up… a couple of hours before she would so that I could spend some time in our communal area without her being there. So the first thing that I wouldn't hear in the morning would be "oh no I've not heard anything from the producers" and that" this is really bad" and that sort of constant stream of negativity. I would have a few hours in the morning where she wouldn't do that… And as the months passed, I ended up just avoiding her completely because it was just… it was never seeming to lift, it was just constantly sad and down and then what would happen was because she was already in that state, things would get even worse and she'd find other things to be sad and upset about."*

> *"…we had a two-bedroom apartment, but we didn't have a garden… we had a communal area which was our living room and our kitchen… So whenever she would sit and watch television at night time, which would be every single evening until 11 o'clock, she would be in the kitchen. So I would come in to try and make some dinner just you know, really quietly. And then a discussion would open up about the things which weren't going so well for her",*
> 17th May 2021.

Jenny also talked about skipping meals so she wouldn't have to go in the kitchen and taking long walks out of the flat. Jenny's own life wasn't without its own issues, mostly financial, but she said that she kept her own emotions in check as a response to the emotional state of her flatmate. Jenny's navigation extended beyond the spatial to a navigation of her flatmate's feelings. When I asked Jenny if her flatmate was aware of the impact of her behaviour on her, Jenny said "*no*".

Jenny took herself on extended walks out of the flat to allow herself some disconnection from the intense emotion of her flatmate. Jenny was avoiding experiencing the feelings generated by her flatmate, which she deemed had the capacity to create certain feelings within herself.

> *"It was also to have some detachment so that I wouldn't get involved in that panic and worry. And not be sucked into that negative way of thinking. I had to detach, and I had to spend hours walking around and had to spend time in my own head. Otherwise, I would start listening to what she was saying"*.
> 17th May 2021.

Jenny did however allow herself to express her own distress in telephone calls to her mother and accountant within the privacy of her room. Her shrinkage from her flatmate's emotional turmoil and stifling of her own emotion, is what Berlant (2015:193) terms 'underperformativity'. When someone enacts 'underperformativity' they flatten or minimise expected emotion so on the surface nothing much happens (ibid:195). Berlant uses the concept in relation to the non-expression of emotion within an event of emotional suffering. In Berlant's (ibid:193) underperformance of emotion, a person hides their own distress in a situation where they are expected to show it. In Jenny's experience she hid her own pain whilst also detaching from her flatmate's emotions.

> *"When somebody that you are around is so panicked and so stressed, it kind of puts you in a state of it's fine, like, I have to support you, because you are so unstable right now. So I didn't really allow myself to feel panicked or overwhelmed"*.
> 17th May 2021.

Jenny was also choosing not to react to her flatmate's distress. Xine Yao (2021:11) terms not allowing oneself or preventing oneself from feeling another's emotion as 'disaffection' (ibid:2). Yao suggests that to be disaffected is to resist the other's emotion and withdraw the capacity to be affected and be in relation (ibid:11). Yao's disaffection is drawn within a 'racialized, queered, and gendered' position of creating distance from the affects of white sentimentality which is not the case here. Nonetheless the withdrawal of the capacity to be affected by another is relevant to Jenny's non-response. In Berlant's 'underperformativity', although feeling distress, an individual elects not to outwardly display their own emotion in the presence of the other. In Yao's 'disaffection', an individual is faced with the suffering of the other and chooses not to react to it. Jenny simultaneously enacted both under-performed emotion and the non-capacity of disaffection. Elsewhere (Jones 2022:546) I have described this form of non-display of

emotion on the surface of a scene, as 'matte'[50]. Matte manifests bodily and affectively as impassiveness (ibid). In this case, matte became apparent through Jenny's non-expression of her own feelings and non-reaction to her flatmate's emotional displays. I suggest that in not performing the expected norm of sympathy in the face of another's suffering, the detachment of disaffection and underperformativity create forms of disorientation. Disorientating for the person resisting the emotion, and perhaps disorientating for the person whose emotions are being resisted.

The disaffected feeling of stifling or minimising one's own feelings in the light of someone expressing heightened or overwhelming feelings was echoed by another stage manager Louise, 31. Louise lived with a colleague and his partner during her period of furlough. Louise looks down into the camera and in a soft voice compassionately discusses her colleague's partner's episodes of heightened emotion which dominated the atmosphere within their flat during furlough.

> *"As the reality of the mental health situation sort of settled in, it got hard. We had to speak about things that normally we never, we never would have. I had to instigate and take part in conversations about my flatmate's relationship, which in a normal circumstance, I never would have done".*
> 24th May 2021.

Whereas Jenny's navigation of her flatmate's emotional state was performed as avoidance and withdrawal, Louise did at times confront and participate in unfolding emotional situations. At other times like Jenny, she chose to withdraw.

> *"There were times where I had to bluntly state that I needed some time that I couldn't do dinner and film with them because I just I just needed to sit in my room and be my own company".*

> *"I felt less able to say when I was feeling upset, or I was struggling with something because I felt that... what I was struggling with wasn't as difficult or important as*

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[50] In my (Jones 2022:546) evocation of 'matte' which I used to articulate the atmospheres during shopping queues in the first UK COVID-19 lockdown, I drew on and extended Roland Barthes' (1975: 25, 43, 109; 2002;38) use of the term. Barthes employs 'matte' to describe when emotions or sensations are ostensibly downplayed or minimised in the context of interactions with others.

what she was dealing with. Because I felt more resilient in myself to be able to deal with that emotion myself".
24th May 2021.

Nonetheless, Louise did navigate spatially around the emotions of the flatmate. Unlike Jenny who mostly attempted to avoid atmospheres and emotions in her flat that she found problematic, Louise acknowledged the presence of awkward atmospheres and was open about what she chose to detach from or not.

"I think I was more aware than usual of where everybody else was in the flat and very aware of just taking a moment to listen I think before I came into a room. Because in listening, I could usually figure out what was going on. Was I walking into a dissociative episode? or were they... was everyone fine and just hanging out watching TV, and just... not feeling unwelcome in my own flat. but I think just taking more care in shared spaces".

"Erm recognising that there might be another energy sounds a bit odd, but there might be another energy present in that space that I needed to be mindful of".
24th May 2021.

Louise felt able to share her own emotions with her flatmates but in common with Jenny mostly kept them to herself.

"Occasionally, I would say "I'm feeling very sad today, please, can we do this or that" but mostly I dealt with it, I internalised it and dealt with it myself because it didn't feel helpful to bring my struggles into the room when we already had so much to deal with".
24th May 2021.

Amidst Jenny and Louise's own feelings of disorientation at not working and claiming SEISS grants, they were also attempting to navigate around and not be affected by the disorientation of another. Although at differing intensities, both attempted to underperform (Berlant 2015:193) the emotions they felt by not sharing their own

feelings with the other. They both enacted disaffection (Yao 2021:6) towards the heightened emotions that they witnessed and chose not to react to them. Jenny and Louise described their navigation around the emotions of the other as self-care. They acknowledged the disorientation they already felt through the suspension of their work life, and both discussed avoiding the other's heightened emotions so they could not be affected by them. Staying on the periphery of the other's emotion perhaps prevented them experiencing further intensities of disorientation.

Looking comfortable and relaxed on her sofa, Claire a 47-year-old training manager in a manufacturing business, relates feelings of friction with her 15-year-old daughter who during her period of furlough resisted schoolwork.

> *"We were fighting all the time. I don't want her to have this mum who just constantly nags at her because that's not, not the relationship I want".*

> *"Through the early days of furlough, the pastoral teacher always kept in touch. And I would tell them, you know, difficult, she just seemed to ring up at the perfect time I'd be out walking the dog on my own, you know, I just got those five minutes of, you know, I could pour my heart out to the teacher and say, you know, I'm really struggling".*
> 11th February 2021.

Whilst out of the house walking her dog, Claire took calls from her daughter's teachers and was able to share her worry about her daughter's education with them. The walks out of the house and the conversations with her daughter's teachers created 'affective distance' between Claire and her daughter's emotions (Berlant 2022:26). This strategy of creating distance, made her relationship with her daughter tolerable in the face of extreme heightened emotion. Although feeling uneasy that her period of furlough might lead to redundancy, in the face of her daughter's heightened emotion and defiance, single mother Claire did not share her own emotions with her daughter and 18-year-old son also living with her.

> *"Be supportive to my kids. Be this person that isn't falling apart in front of them, because, you know, is probably not what they need to see is that the one constant in their life to just be falling apart at the seams".*
> 11th February 2021.

In order to create mutual distance between herself and her daughter's emotions, at one point Claire's daughter went to stay with her father for a week. Claire had felt exhausted by her daughter's emotions and articulated that the break was a space in which she wanted her daughter to reflect on her own behaviour.

> *"So I said, "You know, I can't deal with this. You know, you need some time away to realise just what we've got here", kind of thing".*
> 11th February 2021.

Claire's situation is different from Jenny and Louise as they were both living with work colleagues and had a lesser emotional investment in those relationships than Claire did with her daughter. Claire explained some of the conflict with her daughter as normal mum daughter "*battling*", but in the context of furlough this had become heightened. Although at times Claire did react to her daughter's emotions, she chose not to share her own distress so underperformed her own emotion. Claire also withdrew herself by undertaking creative projects such upcycling furniture and painting pebbles which she said felt "*calming*" and gave her "*peace*".

In common with Jenny and Louise, Claire demonstrated a strategy of emotional withdrawal in the face of heightened emotions. Claire enacted detachment in order to not be further disoriented by her daughter's emotion and keep herself together. Claire's detachment had also opened a new way of feeling less disoriented. Disorientation may be an opportunity to build acceptance of one's own position and a potential opening for new orientations (Harbin 2012:271). Jenny and Louise both discussed how stepping back from and reviewing the emotions of the other had enabled them space to positively reflect on their own emotional resilience.

"Having observed somebody else really struggling with mental health... I came to really value the fact that I was more resilient than I thought. Which sounds really bad, but I sort of came out of the pandemic realising that having seen somebody have not quite a breakdown, but something very close".
24th May 2021, Louise, 31, stage manager.

Although experiencing disorientated feelings, Jenny, Louise and Claire chose not to display emotion whilst navigating the feelings of another. They articulated that they did this in order to not feel further disorientation and to have some control over their situation. By staying on the periphery of the other's emotions and making a 'break from affectability' by presenting 'themselves as unaffected' by the feelings of the other (Yao 2021:11) they were enacting detachment. Jenny, Louise and Claire articulated that detaching from the other's emotions was an act of self-care. For Jenny and Louise, it had led them to the opportunity to reflect on their own emotional resilience. Claire, on the other hand, had found creative expression as a new means of coping with difficult emotions. Navigating and staying on the periphery of the heightened emotion of the other whilst not sharing one's own emotion, although disorientating, had created some benefits for Jenny, Louise and Claire. Underperforming their own emotion and enacting disaffection had given Jenny, Louise and Claire the space to consider their own emotional strength.

4.4 Vacillation

The disorientated feelings of loss, adjustment, distance and non-participation expressed in the previous two sections, were shared by furloughed people whose experience I will outline in this section. This group of furloughed people expressed feelings of guilt about being paid not to work, were positively attached to their job and found navigating time problematic. For this group of people, shadow life manifested as a *temporal disorientation,* a feeling of what one of the interviewees deemed having "*too much time*". Disorientation can manifest as the inability to conduct everyday tasks (Adey 2009). This group of the furloughed detached from decision making and vacillated between indecision and decision, suspended between states of inactivity and activity. This indecisiveness was framed against a productive other who either had a presence in their

household or was absent but whose productivity was felt by the furloughed. In this section I move from disorientation as a spatial or emotional detachment, to disorientation as an inability to enact a productive present. In doing so I seek to understand the furloughed feelings towards being given free time, amidst the new space-time of furlough.

Wearing snazzy fifties style spectacles, Alexandra a 40-year-old optometrist, talks to me about her period of furlough. She is sitting on her sofa; teal cushions support her head, the only part of her body visible on screen. Behind her, a dark blue painted wall populated with framed photographs of her children. I ask Alexandra how time felt during her period of furlough.

> *"On the mornings when my husband went to work, I just sat on my own doing nothing [emphasis]. Yeah, so it felt very [emphasis] long. And then when he came home, then I'd start doing stuff".*

> *"I just kind of sat… I can't read a book very much now either. Like before I used to read books, loads, and now I just can't get into it. But I can play crap on my phone. I can watch crap videos on my phone and on TV, but I just can't get into things. It's really weird… And yeah, funny".*
> 15th January 2021.

I ask Alexandra why she couldn't decide what to do to fill her time. Initially she says that she doesn't know, but then says "*I think because there's so much of it now. So much time*". I ask if in her pre-furlough life she ever feels like she doesn't have enough time and she say "*no… not really… no*". Although working fulltime and a mother of two children, Alexandra expressed joy at working and did not feel work life and motherhood as a strain.

From our exchanges I sense that Alexandra felt disorientated by the free time of furlough, finding it vast. She expressed a tension where she felt that she "*should" be* doing something and feeling unfocussed for not doing anything. Her indecisiveness and self-perceived lack of meaningful activity in the present, brought into sharp focus her wider anxiety over being out of her former productive work life. She was operating within dual

suspended states: from work life and in the present suspended from being able to create what she perceived as meaningful activity. And yet she *is doing* things. Her time is filled with micro-activity such as playing with a mobile phone or watching television.

Lydia, a 31-year-old non-essential retail worker, talks to me from her living room, a packed bookcase behind her and a string of fairy lights suspended across the ceiling. Lydia animatedly discusses her time during furlough spent unable to make decisions about how to fill her time.

> *"I think in a way, there's too many options… like I could read, I could watch TV, I could go out for a walk… I've got all of the things that I could do that don't require, like other people, or socially or anything like that. I've got loads of options. It was just that it was literally just like noise of just like, I don't know, fancy any of it".*
> 7th July 2021.

Lydia's evocation of the possibilities of how she could fill her time[51] as "*noise*" is an interesting one. Noise intimates something ill-defined or inconsequential or irritating. In her inability to make decisions all the possibilities had become impossibilities. Furlough had been a stark contrast to Lydia's former life as a full-time shop assistant and part-time student where she struggled to find the time to fit in all that she needed to do. She worked long hours and felt that she didn't have enough sleep. With work suspended and her studies completed, filling her time had become difficult.

> *"Lydia:*   *There was definitely points where I'd just be stood there and going like, what do I do now?*
>
> *Victoria:*   *How long would that indecision last?*
>
> *Lydia:*   *It depends, I would say maybe. I think I would sort of potter about for like an hour or two before settling on one sort of bigger thing to*

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[51] Lydia's indecision making finds echo in C. S. Lewis (2009:33) evocation of not being able to fill time whilst in mourning 'It doesn't seem worth starting anything. I can't settle down. I yawn, I fidget, I smoke too much. Up till this I always had too little time. Now there is nothing but time'. Lewis (ibid) equates grief as a feeling of waiting so perhaps Lydia's detachment from work is also being felt as a form of grief.

do. But normally, the biggest things to do were literally just like sitting down and picking up wool. Like there was nothing like crazy. It was just like, I don't know what to do, I'll just do this".
7th July 2021.

Lydia discusses her indecision around how to fill her time and in doing so reveals that she is actually doing things through her comment about pottering. The micro-activity of pottering is filling her time until she settles on doing something she deems more significant. Lydia also discussed feeling guilty about being paid not to work during furlough. She intimated that it was her guilt about being furloughed that may have created her inability to decide how to fill her time.

"So it was like, I think it was a guilt thing as well of indecision. And then I think I have to sort of sort of talk myself down a little bit like you're allowed have a day off, you can sit down, it's fine".
7th July 2021.

Abigail, a 32-year-old fine dining chef, configured her activity to fit with the patterns of her partner's working day. She expressed embarrassment at her partner knowing that she was not filling her time productively. She did things such as cooking and walking but stopped herself from doing things she deemed trivial such as watching television. In common with Alexandra, Abigail waited for her partner to have finished his working day and be in his proximity before starting activity.

"I do feel like seen in doing not doing anything. Do you know, I mean, not that he would... be like mad, but just that I know that he knows that I'm watching TV or cooking or whatever. It feels more like validated by his presence, by him noticing it... So I can sort of think, I've just got until five o'clock, when Dan gets home and when he got home it would change quite a lot. So I'd find that... I'd sort of finished what I was doing about four I like wouldn't start anything, and then I'd sort of be waiting for him to come back and then he might not come back for like two hours... And you'd be like, sort of on edge because you don't want to start anything because then he's going to get back and that starts like a new part of the day. But then you

don't know exactly what's gonna happen".
14th January 2021.

For Alexandra and Abigail their indecisiveness ended when their partners finished work for the day and were once more in their proximity, the presence of their partners activated them to decide what to do. The shadow cast by the productivity of the other faded as their working day ceased and both were in a pre-furlough habituated time of leisure. In other words, in a time of the day where pre-furlough there had been no expectation to be productive. Sharing a home with a partner also furloughed, Lydia's indecisiveness during furlough only ended when her period of furlough ended.

Within this form of temporal disorientation, the furloughed people articulated that they should be doing something productive but struggled to decide what to do. They are however undertaking small activities that for whatever reason they deem unimportant. The tension expressed between being *seen* to be doing something significant and trivial time-wasting activity, has parallels with the phenomena of 'waithood'. 'Waithood' describes the global phenomenon of educated young people marooned in an in-between state of post-childhood and pre-adulthood and waiting for employment that tallies with their educational attainment (Singerman 2007:6). They hold themselves in a suspended state of waiting, orientated towards an imagined fully productive future life (Morán & Fernández 2017). And yet the young people do fill their time with small activities like exchanging money or making tea, even though they deem this as unimportant (Jeffrey 2010:4; Thieme 2017). The parallel is in the orientation towards a particular mode of imagined productive life and the failure to recognise activity undertaken in the present as valid. Alexandra articulates her activity as "*doing nothing*", Abigail "*not doing anything*" and Lydia as pottering. Abigail remarks that she feels "*seen*" by her partner when doing activity she deems trivial, which implies that her embarrassment at her unproductivity is in relation to his productive time.

Time within acts of waiting is a lived dimension, that is to say that the present is moving a person towards a future event (Bergson 2002:216). For Alexandra, Abigail and Lydia their perceived inability to orientate to activity in the present is perhaps linked to not fully detaching from a past work-filled-life and feeling an orientation to future work life.

Berlant (2011a:10) proposes that when an individual finds themselves in a state of impasse amidst crisis, 'being treads water'. For Berlant (ibid) a crisis is a process of adaptation within 'unfolding change'. As such, an impasse within a process of change such as stopping working and being furloughed, creates a new space which requires time to adapt to. The unfolding process of adaptation may be felt as treading water, but as Berlant (ibid) observes, although 'being treads water; mainly, it does not drown'. The duration of waiting in furlough may be felt as a disorientating impasse of indecision making by those experiencing it, but the acts of micro-activity are acts of micro-decision making. This is something that the furloughed are not acknowledging perhaps because of their orientation towards work life which they are articulating as more significant than pottering or doom scrolling.

4.5 Intrusion

The fourth evocation of shadow life involves the furloughed navigating around perceived sensory invasions by a human or non-human other which took the form of landlords, builders, dust and smells. Although (mostly) not physically visible, the other became a presence in the home rupturing the flows of domestic life by generating a form of *sensory disorientation*. This disorientation disrupted the process of re/orientation whereby rhythms of quotidian life were helping a person to feel orientated anew in their home (Ahmed, 2006a:11) which had become a space of waiting. When a process of orientation stalls or is interrupted, a sense of 'disorientation' can be triggered by the felt presence of others who may be present and proximate, or absent (ibid).

Caroline, a 49-year charity worker, rented a house from a family friend during her time being furloughed. She related feelings of intrusion when her landlord occasionally visited unannounced. Amidst the conditions of the COVID-19 the pandemic, when he entered the property, he did not adhere to social distancing and refused to wear a mask which made Caroline feel uneasy. Caroline was both under a continued threat of intrusion and subject to events of invasion.

> *"So within the house, I... was knowing that they would come back at a moment's notice, or two hours' notice".*

"So I felt really badly, as if the landlord whose house it was, was invading my space, knowing that one of the things he was going to do was go into the room that I rented from him and collect all his summer clothes out of the storage area, in that room. I hadn't quite realised when I rented the room that, that he retained the right to go and get all this stuff out of storage. So it was a very, so you know, I hadn't seen anybody. And it was a very peculiar feeling for him to be in the house. It was a very, very peculiar feeling to have him in the house".
20th February 2021.

Caroline's articulation of having a "*very peculiar feeling*" in relation to her landlord returning to his property, might be revealing of multiple disorientations. Having gone through a recent divorce, Caroline was between homes hence she was living in another's space. The landlord's visits were a reminder that she was not in her own home. As Caroline was also feeling detached from work life, in some senses she was experiencing multiple 'not at home' feelings. Disorientation 'can shatter one's sense of confidence in the ground or one's belief that the ground on which we reside can support the actions that make a life feel liveable' (Ahmed 2006a:156). Which may be why amidst multiple feelings of detachment, the landlord's occasional and unexpected visits instigated feelings of emotional and physical intrusion for Caroline.

"So the work bit was very out of control. And the house bit which I had controlled, became out of control when my landlord decided to come back and collect stuff. So in terms of the landlord coming into the house, and that feeling inappropriate and not what you would have wanted, so out of your control".

"I got very good at cleaning very fast. You know, I've been cleaning touch points the door and the letterbox and the handles of the door. And I chose not to be in the house very much when they were in the house because I didn't want to see how they were or weren't keeping to the lockdown recommendations",
 20th February 2021.

Bodily 'exfoliation' through touch connects a body to a space (Manning 2007:59). Caroline's landlord's touching of objects in her living space such as the door handles created an unseeable residue of his intrusion. Her perception of contamination of her home by the landlord, created for Caroline a form of anxiety that fuelled and exacerbated her desire to clean after him. Sara Ahmed (2006a:65-66) proposes that after a disorientation, a reorientation can occur through activity that resets that which has been disrupted. Caroline's cleaning of unseen contamination from her landlord's visits was an attempt at resetting the space physically and reorientating herself emotionally. In this example, the *threat* of the other coming to the house is perhaps a *pervasive disorientation* informing the background of Caroline's furlough time. The landlord's act of entering and touching things, resulted in acute events of sensory disorientation.

An intrusion is not necessarily implemented by a person's actual presence or threat of their presence. Material atmospheres created by another, can be an intrusion with the potential to create subsequent disorientation. Spending her furlough with a husband who was shielding[52] due to a pre-existing health condition, Amanda, a 48-year-old furloughed from a marketing role in a theatre, described how she navigated her day around the building work being undertaken in the house next door. Aya Nassar's (2021:3) assertion that dust is 'the materiality of noise' was born out by the loud machinery used by the neighbours, which in turn created a "*dusty*" intrusive atmosphere in Amanda's home. The builders worked long hours from very early in the morning until the evening, casting a shadow on her domestic life. She outlined how she would structure her day around when the builders finished their work, timing walks out of the house so that she returned when the builders left for the day.

> "So... the atmosphere it was noisy here it was dense, it was claustrophobic, it was threatening... "

> "I'm going out for walks by myself... leaving a claustrophobic dense I can't think of words for it, smothering, loud, noisy and dusty...you know, it was it was a polluted

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[52] Shielding refers to the UK government advice that those made more vulnerable to the SARS-CoV-2 virus due to pre-existing health conditions, should stay at home and away from other people to mitigate the potential threat of them catching the virus (Department of Health 2020). Those living with people shielding were required to also shield or isolate from others so as not to potentially contaminate those shielding.

space. And finding fresh air and finding a space to open up to breathe, to walk and
to regulate my breathing, which I think that's how I saw it. I saw it as a
rebalancing... And then I'd get in the car and I was like, alright, walk back and
think it's okay, they're not going to be there".
21st January 2021.

Amanda's evocation of the material atmosphere of her home as *"threatening", "dense",*
"smothering", and *"claustrophobic"*, brings to mind Derek Gregory's (2014; 2016:39)
account of 'corpographies'. 'Corpographies' are 'instinctive, jarring, visceral' sensory
responses within warfare (Gregory 2014:33). Amanda is not a soldier experiencing war,
but she was experiencing the material intrusion of the builders next door as a forceful
sensorial intensity. Amanda's evocations of invasive material intrusion are possibly also
articulations of her lack of control of her situation with multiple detachments imposed
upon her: furlough, lock down and shielding. She expressed a sense of feeling trapped in
her home and feeling released when on walks outside. Her walks out of the house formed
a similar reorientation to Caroline's cleaning of touchpoints.

Amanda also experienced an intrusion of the rhythms of the builder's working day. She
listened out for the builder's arrival, anticipating their imminent encroachment of her
space. Corpographic responses extend to acute auditory awareness of one's surroundings
(Gregory 2014:34).

"I've got really good hearing which is annoying. So I've become so alert, I can hear
at five in the morning... I can hear the next door opening it's got a certain sound to
it. And I can hear footsteps in the back, as the builders are coming in. I've become

like, I become like a guard dog. I've become so aware of the tiniest noises because I
feel like I'm being threatened in my space. So I'm always alert and listening for
those noises".
21st January 2021.

The sense of disorientation through intrusion is not always felt violently as in Amanda
and Caroline's experiences. Some of the furloughed navigated around more subtle forms

of sensorial intrusion. Participants who sublet or rented accommodation where the owner had belongings in the space and therefore a presence, navigated around certain rooms or spaces because they either couldn't or wouldn't use them.

Chloe, who earlier used the phrase shadow life to describe her feelings of detachment during furlough, was living in a sublet flat. She was aware of the presence of the owners through the smell of belongings left behind. The landlord's smells curtailed how she used certain parts of the flat even though the owners were absent.

> "*You'd often kind of get like the smell of the people who owned it…*"

> "*that's a weird thing, that I kind of associate with that specifically that early time of being in someone else's space and still kind of smelling them… especially when you haven't had human contact in a really long time. And it's really weird to smell other people…*"

> "*They still had a bedroom that had their stuff in at the end of the corridor and occasionally, I would, open the door, you could smell their smell… Yeah, like a reminder of being in someone else's space*".
> 11th February 2021.

Through the act of breathing, smells create transcorporeal connections between an individual and their surroundings (Hsu 2020:152; Jones 2017:15; Nieuwenhuis 2015). As smells are volatile particles of a substance (Doty 2015:3) by breathing the air saturated by the smell of the landlord, Chloe was making a real physical connection between herself and her flat's owners. The absent other was still present in their smell and therefore present in Chloe herself. The emotional incongruity of smelling an absent other perhaps added to her sense of disorientation and non-belonging amidst her ongoing attempts at orientating herself inside the new spaces and temporalities of furlough. Sara Ahmed (2006a:9) asserts that a living space is like a "*second skin*" that wraps around a body. Spaces have the capacity to not just envelope but leave traces on bodies through encounters with sensory stimuli like 'the air', 'smells', and 'sounds' or social traces through encounters with other people (ibid). These residual traces have the

capacity to reform and re-orientate bodies. The smell of the landlord was perhaps in common with Caroline's experience, a reminder to Chloe that she was not living in her own space. Chloe's experience of waiting through furlough involved multiple disconnections: from work life, from the capacity to create her own daily rhythms and fully living in her home.

Within the shadow lives of intrusion, anxieties pulsed in the background as pervasive disorientations. These manifest, for Caroline as a perceived threat of her landlord entering her home and touching things, for Amanda as a watchfulness for imminent material invasion, for Chloe encountering the unwelcome smell of her landlord. Acute sensory disorientation occurred when proximity was no longer a promise but a reality through the other touching, polluting or infiltrating the body via sonic or material invasions. These pervasive and acute sensory disorientations interrupted the furloughed's re/orientation towards 'feeling at home' (Ahmed, 2006:9) within their new situation of non-work, leaving the furloughed with emotional and physical traces of the other's intrusions.

4.6 The Disorientation of Waiting in Shadow Lives

Being furloughed was an interruption to the life path of those whose world is orientated by work (Akkermans et al 2020:1). This chapter has started to explore what happens when the orientation of a body towards work is disrupted and it is held waiting. The sudden detachment from work life and enforced period of waiting, created a new space which required the furloughed to find new orientations within the familiar space of home. Chloe's evocation of leading a shadow life at the opening of the chapter involved navigation around another and experiencing things she would not otherwise see or feel. Those leading a so-called shadow life like Chloe, formed a significant group within the study and so it is important to share their experiences of finding their way through furlough. Chloe's evocation of shadow life gave a name to a certain pattern of behaviour reported by the furloughed during their enforced waiting period, where other people became a relational marker for the furloughed's own emotional orientation. This chapter has begun to open an understanding of how waiting in a suspended relation from a workplace may be felt by an individual. The furloughed narrated their experiences not

only through words such as "strange"," odd", "lost", and "uncertain", but through an articulation of detached relations. The furloughed's narrations of multiple detachments from work life, from the emotions of others, from decision making and from feeling at home begins to open a picture of waiting through furlough as a scene of multiple disorientations.

A shadow life of 'circumnavigation' involved a relation to a productive 'other'. Working with Ahmed's (2006a) concepts of orientation and disorientation, this section outlined that when detached from work life, disorientation could be felt by those furloughed as spectatorship in another's working life. Consequently, the furloughed navigated around the working schedule of another causing them to reflect on their own non-activity. Those enacting a shadow life on the 'periphery' were impassive onlookers of another's heightened emotions. Drawing on the work of Berlant (2015) and Yao (2021) and their understandings of feeling emotion and choosing not to show it or deciding to be disaffected by another's emotions, this section explored how waiting in disorientation could involve an active disconnection of feelings. It discussed the surface of scenes of non-emotion as having a 'matte' quality (Jones 2022). In the non-showing of emotion the furloughed were able to create a distance between themselves and the heightened emotions of a proximate other as a form of self-care amidst the force of their own feelings. The evocation of a shadow life of 'vacillation' exposed that disorientation can be felt as a detachment from the lived present whilst feeling an orientation towards a hoped for future. The furloughed expressed being unable to make decisions about how to fill time in their current situation, whilst orientated towards a particular work future. In common with those experiencing 'waithood', within that disorientation the furloughed did not recognise that the micro-activity they already engaged in did fill time and gave it no significance. Those who felt a shadow life of 'intrusion', experienced feelings of disorientation instigated by anticipated or sensed intrusions by forces outside themselves. By drawing on sensory scholarship (Gregory 2014; Hsu 2020; Nieuwenhuis 2015) of how material forces create sensory intensities in bodies, the section illustrated how disorientation can be instigated by a non-present detached other, through material intrusions.

In this chapter I argued that the detachment from work life had created a form of spatial disorientation I termed shadow life. Shadow life involved spectatorship of another, emotional disconnection, dislocation from the present and intense sensory disturbance. These felt intensities were discreet for some of the participants, for some they imbricated and for others they became part of a sequence of changing intensities of feeling within their period of waiting. Chloe, for example who said that she felt like she was living a "*shadow life*" had circumnavigated her partner's work life and had also felt the material intrusion of her landlord's smell. Abigail who had also circumnavigated her partner's working day had also been detached from her own present and vacillated about how to fill her time. Some of the furloughed who experienced a shadow life or in other words a disorientation created by multiple detachments, experienced further disorientations which will be outlined in subsequent chapters.

The chapter began to demonstrate how orientation to work impresses itself on people beyond the workplace. And yet should also be noted that the disorientations I have outlined were being lived through and that the disorientations were 'liveable' (Harbin 2016:161). Feeling disorientation includes the capacity to endure them (ibid). The next chapter will build on this and explore the rhythms and arrhythmia of non-work life. Work life involves schedules and activities that instigate certain rhythms which energise the tempos of working lives. So whereas in this chapter I explored the consequence of detachment from work life itself, the next chapter will explore the detachment from its rhythms.

Out of "*Work Rhythms*"

5.1 Out of "*Work Rhythms*"

It is 10:16am on the 24th of May 2021, I am talking to Louise, a 31-year-old stage manager, about the start of her period of furlough. Softly spoken Louise is talking to me from her flat, looking down into the camera and seated in front of a wooden shelving unit filled with books and topped by house plants.

> *"We just walked out… we hadn't completed the job. So our… my brain in particular was, all the way through the next day was sort of, I think, whenever I looked at the clock particularly as it got close to the evening, I think my brain was mentally going "Okay, that's when you'd be in at work" "That's when you would call the half hour call". Like my brain was still very much in work rhythms… And still noting that that's what I should have been doing. Because… normally you get to see a contract, a show through right from the very beginning, where we will get handed the scripts to the very end performance when you pack everything up. And I don't think I've ever had that process disrupted before. I've always completed it. So my brain was lagging behind a bit, I think in keeping up with what was going on and was still mentally highlighting what should have been happening".*
> 24th of May 2021.

Louise is articulating the disorientation she felt whilst mentally patterning her days with "*work rhythms*" when the activity of work had ceased. Louise's phrase "*work rhythms*" conveys the repetitious and time orientated actions repeated within her work setting, a theatre. This evocation chimes with Henri Lefebvre's (2004:39) contention that through

repetition, human bodies fit themselves within rhythms of work[53]. For Lefebvre (2004:15) rhythms are ubiquitous when 'a place, a time and an expenditure of energy' coalesce, such as in places of work. And yet "*work rhythms*" extend beyond locations of work seeping into home life through the actions of preparing for work, commuting and winding down after work. Setting an alarm to a certain time, organising and wearing work clothes, packing lunches, commuting are all activities aligned *within* the rhythms of work life. The clock time of work life where an individual is required to work at requisite times determined by others, bleeds into and influences home life. The rhythms of work do not just extend into homes through practices enacted towards work life such as packing a lunch, "*work rhythms*" are *felt* as illustrated by Louise in the opening recollection. In chapter four ('Losing Orientation – Leading a "*Shadow Life*"') I began to explore disorientation as felt by the furloughed in relation to another during their period of waiting. This chapter turns away from disorientation as a navigation around and detachment from others, towards disorientation felt as a detached relation to the temporal rhythms of work life. Attention to the furloughed's detachment from work rhythms affords an opportunity for insight of how work rhythms are embodied. It opens the opportunity to explore how work rhythms manifest for a body temporarily suspended from work life. The chapter attends to rhythms felt within the transition between pre-furlough work life and the emerging new circumstance of non-work life. When differing rhythms are laid over and under each other and not in sync, it creates discord (Lefebvre 2004:16). Disrupted "*work rhythms*" and new rhythms of living enveloped within the new social world of waiting to return to work, created the conditions for feelings of disorientation for those waiting within furlough. This focus opens questions of, what does a waiting body do when it is detached from habituated work rhythms? How are power and powerlessness felt within a waiting body whose work rhythms have been disrupted? How are work rhythms narrated by a waiting body detached from work life?

Rhythms are repetitious and have a pattern. They have notes, beats and pauses that reoccur. Work rhythms could constitute what Kathleen Stewart (2010:339) calls a

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[53] Lefebvre (2004) is referring to rhythms of work and production within a capitalist system. It is beyond the scope of this study to offer a critique of the mechanism which drives work rhythms, other than to acknowledge it is the underlying structure at play here.

'refrain'. A refrain for Stewart (ibid) is an ever-emerging formation of 'rhythms, sensory habits, gathering materialities, intervals, and durations' that bring scenes and experiences into being. A refrain in music or poetry, is a phrase that is repeated creating emphasis and rhythm (Burt 2012:1151; Deleuze and Guattari 1987:332). A refrain can be a space for a performer to think about the next part of a piece, much as a pause may enable (Burt: ibid). As such, both a refrain and a pause are a way of holding time. Refrains enable order by creating a point of reference or a certain tempo of being or a point of gathering 'forces' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:312, 327). As such a refrain becomes a means to organise and hold experience (ibid:327). A refrain with its folding back and repetition becomes a thickened point around which a rhythm takes form. A 'world' is an evolving formation that emerges and is so recognisable that it is nameable (Stewart 2013:110), such as a 'world of work' or 'home life'. As such an ever-evolving world of work life may be constituted of rhythms and refrains. The experience of Louise at the beginning of this section, in her new social world of non-work whilst feeling the rhythms of pre-furlough work life, is like a refrain folding back into previously felt repetitions.

Work life for some creates a sense of belonging around practices, colleagues, clients and customers (see Taylor 2020 for an evocation of belonging in theatre work). Work rhythms or the repetitions or patterns of work become part of what holds a work life together. When an individual moves out of synchronicity with the rhythms of a community that they belong to, such as taking sick leave from a workplace, they may experience a disorientation (Harbin 2016:14). For some of the furloughed people in this study, their workplaces carried on functioning, it was their job role that had been suspended. In those situations, as the rhythms of work continued away from them, the furloughed were enforcedly out of step with their usual "*work rhythms*". In Louise's case her workplace had ceased and was no longer rhythmic but within the disorientation of her new situation she still *felt* her customary "*work rhythms*". Louise's work as a stage manager, meant that she was responsible for maintaining the timings for multiple activities in the lead up to, through and after a performance. Maintaining the rhythms of her and her colleague's work life was part of her work role. Drawing on Lefebvre's (2004:15) assertion that workers fold into the rhythms of work through repetition, perhaps maintaining the recurring timings and rhythms of her work had caused Louise to be held in the refrains of her work life rhythms.

This chapter will further conceptualise the disorientating effects of waiting through furlough. Disorientation (or its potential) is explored through feelings of detachment from work rhythms. As such I argue that disorientation was present within acts of avoiding, accepting or recalibrating detached work rhythms. To do this the chapter will outline four relations that the furloughed had with their former work rhythms. Firstly, a group of the furloughed tried to *maintain* work rhythms through new non-paid working lives. This was enacted as a measure to prevent the perceived potential to be disorientated by being out of work rhythms. Secondly the furloughed held their situation together by *substituting* work rhythms for new temporal rhythms marked by non-work activity. Through the substitution of work rhythms, the furloughed created new orientations to time. Thirdly some of the furloughed felt that they had *slipped* out of quotidian rhythms. The slippage created a distance from quotidian rhythms which they tried to actively reinstate or felt released from. The fourth section details how the furloughed reported losing their grip on work rhythms, which one described as having "*furlough brain*". The difficulty grasping work rhythms was amplified as the furloughed attempted to reinstate them, creating a disorientation as they felt unable to recalibrate to the same rhythms of their former work lives. The focus on rhythms in this chapter opens insight of how waiting within a suspended relation from a workplace is felt by an individual. Drawing on Gabriel Marcel's (1967:280) notion of waiting tensions, the chapter opens insight of how feelings towards work rhythms instigated active waiting or waiting in torpor.

5.2 Maintaining

In Louise's opening recollection, the "*work rhythms*" of her recent past are imbricated with her experience of the present creating a disorientating sense of being in one place but *feeling* in another. A week after being furloughed, Louise made a conscious decision to step out of the rhythms of work and stop thinking about the timing of tasks she would have been doing;

> "*I think I then consciously went okay, that's done. It's not happening again.*
> *That's over. Don't need to think about that anymore*".
> 24th of May 2021.

However, there were others furloughed who *actively chose* to maintain the rhythms of their work life through unpaid work. This section will outline the experiences of those undertaking unpaid work which enabled them to maintain a semblance of work rhythms and therefore their habituated lives.

Joanna, a 45-year-old charity worker, bends down into the camera as she speaks to me on her mobile from her bedroom office. Her furlough time was a period filled with unpaid work within other charities. I ask her about her first day of furlough.

> "Joanna: *I started going out and working voluntarily for charities as a*
>   *fundraiser.*
> Victoria: *What straightaway?*
> Joanna: *Yeah, straightaway. I immediately… I wanted to be nine to five… I*
>   *knew people already doing things because furlough been happening*
>   *for a couple of months already. So, I knew there are things out there*
>   *that I just could just offer my services and volunteer straight away*
>   *and try to maintain a nine to five existence for myself. You know I*
>   *like work… and I didn't want to stagnate. So, it was really important*
>   *for me initially, to have that element of still working".*
> 26th of April 2021.

Joanna turned her spare bedroom into an office space and relegated her non-working husband to the kitchen during her "*working day".* She maintained the work rhythms of "*tea breaks*" and "*lunch hours*". Joanna discussed the importance of taking breaks and of stretching at her desk although she admitted "*I replicate the same habits I have in the office at home*". Aside from a period of illness and a two-week holiday, Joanna continued in a nine to five working pattern throughout her six-month period of furlough. Joanna temporally, physically, and emotionally maintained work rhythms. She talked about how the atmosphere changed in the house between her and her non-working husband when she finished her working day.

> "Victoria: *So what was the difference in the atmosphere would you say?*

> *Joanna:*   *Probably he found me more approachable... erm... more approachable when I'm not in work mode... more open to conversation.*
>
> *Victoria:*   *So when he wasn't working and you were working, did he have to in some senses to navigate around your working day?*
>
> *Joanna:*   *Yes, probably".*
>
> 26th of April 2021.

Joanna expressed that she and her husband felt a transition in atmospheres between her working and non-working day. When I asked the participants about atmospheres in their homes during furlough, most understood that question (as Joanna does) in terms of affective atmospheres. Affective atmospheres occupy the emotional space between what is and what is not, 'between presence and absence, materiality and immaterial, and the subjective and objective' (Anderson 2014:21). They are in some senses knowable and yet they are intangible. There is no material or physical change between Joanna's working day and its cessation, and yet both her and her husband *feel* a transition. Work life instigates particular affective atmospheres such as the purposefulness (Vitry et al 2020:287) articulated by Joanna in the first interview extract. She also discussed how her "*intense" level of work "concentration*" necessitated taking breaks. Joanna's comment that she is "*more approachable*" when "*not in work mode*" and "*more open to conversation*" is an indicator of a rhythmic shift in atmosphere between her work and non-work modes. Joanna is not just maintaining the activity and temporalities of work life; she is also maintaining its affective atmospheres. If as asserted by Stewart (2013:42), 'worldings' become intentions that are followed and lived, creating certain rhythms for an individual animated by emotions, materialities and embodied encounters, then perhaps what Joanna is creating through her non-paid work life, is a new 'world' nested within the new social worlds of furlough and the pandemic. Unlike the new social worlds of furlough and the pandemic, her new world of non-paid work has similarity with her pre-furlough work life, perhaps a way of holding some agency and maintaining the familiar within the new and strange.

Unlike Joanna, who anticipated and planned for a necessity to fill and regulate her days through furlough, for Jodie a 29-year-old charity fundraiser, her first day of furlough felt like "*shellshock*". That jolt catalysed her into thinking about how she was going to fill the time of furlough.

> "*I think I set about for the rest of that week, just looking at what I could do, finding out who I could help, how I could learn… to keep myself busy*".

> "*So as I got placements with different charities, so obviously, part of furlough was that you couldn't go and work for or volunteer to work for your own organisation… Erm so I did try to structure my days because it felt weird not to have something… I've not been used to that*".
> 5th May 2021

For the first three months of Jodie's furlough she maintained a working day, finishing at six pm when her partner came home from working out of the house. I asked Jodie about the structure of her days on furlough.

> "*And so normally, it would be like… almost like work really… but I'd be nice to myself. As it went on, I got nice to myself but normally at the start, and I'd be kind of up ready, as if it was, you know, I was at work. So kind of ready to go at like eight, half eight. And then I did get nicer to myself and then started at ten and did like ten till six. But yeah, it was I think in the initial I kind of like a deep dived… So erm yeah, I think mostly it was more like work hours*".
> 5th May 2021.

Like Joanna, Jodie "*allowed*" herself "*lunch breaks*" but this was a new development for her having previously eaten at her desk in her pre-furlough working life. Towards the end of her period of furlough, Jodie's unpaid work began to slow down as the voluntary projects she was involved with ended. This meant her working day was not as full as it had been. This in turn instigated a period of furlough similar in nature to that experienced by those in a shadow life of vacillation (Chapter 04, section 4.4). Her unpaid work activity

didn't fill her self-directed working day and so she waited for her partner to return home, unable to decide how to fill the spare time.

> "Jodie: there was that gap in the evening where I'd be like, I don't really know what to do.
>
> Victoria: So what did that feel like, not knowing what to do as a person who's filling their time consciously?
>
> Jodie: It felt really weird, like, I wouldn't say out of control, but it just felt like there had to be something that I should be doing, but I didn't know what it was".

5th May 2021.

Like Joanna, Jodie created a new non-paid working world. However unlike Joanna, Jodie's new working world differed from her pre-furlough one, enabling her to "*be nice*" to herself by having "*nicer*" work hours and (previously untaken) lunch breaks. Jodie had felt compelled to maintain "*work rhythms*" through voluntary work in the same sector as her usual job. Furlough however, had opened the opportunity to experiment with new working patterns and attitudes to self-care in relation to work. When I asked Jodie what she would maintain from her furlough non-paid working life, she says "*definitely not feeling bad for like relaxing more*". She also discussed that the new working world she created during furlough where she worked unpaid for a variety of organisations, enabled her to see her value in the job market. Jodie's self-care had extended to acknowledging her worth as an employee. This is conjecture on my part, but perhaps the non-paid nature of the work Jodie was doing, is what led her to self-care, to being more flexible about her working days and letting herself take breaks. Perhaps her non-paid work did not have the same level of significance for her as a paid job and thus opened the space to experiment with how a working day *could* unfold.

Jacqueline, a 54-year-old stage manager, shared the desire to maintain the rhythms of work. However, unlike Joanna and Jodie, the start of furlough was not an event that catalysed her into trying to maintain or establish "*work rhythms*". Initially Jacqueline structured her days around her husband's working day (as discussed in Chapter 04 section 4.2) and allowed herself to enjoy a series of activities like exercise, baking and

personal development courses that she didn't have time for during her usual hectic work schedule. She initially gave energy to these activities, but that began to wane. Jacqueline described the way she began to title her bicycle rides on her fitness app.

> "There was more momentum earlier on, definitely. You sort of reach a point where you just think… God… I remember naming, you know, on the apps, naming my bike rides like 'no idea' 'I don't know where I'm going'… you know… 'not this one again'… that kind of thing".

> "I'm fed up with walking here again, or riding there, or I don't feel inspired to do a course… You then have to start to think, okay, this is not a hiatus. This is a new way of life… so… how do you sustain that?".
> 6th May 2021.

Jacqueline had a gradual awareness that she needed to reconfigure and regulate her time and eventually took a voluntary job in a care home with regular hours.

> "I had a realisation that I had to have a structure in my week that was more sustainable. Like my volunteering, although it's a bit…. there is a rhythm to it… but sometimes it changes and I do extra bits of that. I think of it as… my husband definitely calls it me going to work… because you still have the same attitude. It still gives you that structure in your week and the fact that I don't get paid for it, you know, is something different, but yeah, it was definitely a gradual thing".
> 6th May 2021.

Having strayed away from her own work rhythms by aligning herself with her husband's ongoing work rhythms and undertaking non-work activity, it is curious that Jacqueline eventually came to a realisation that the non-work rhythms she had created were unsustainable. I wonder if she found that the new social world that she had fallen into at the instigation of furlough, was too removed from her former work rhythms. Jacqueline's former work world was full and busy, taking up a large part of life.

"Like anyone's job there are things about it you enjoy and things about it, you don't. But when something's taken away from you, I guess you realise the part it played in your life when it's taken away from you, not through choice, not through your own choice".

6th May 2021.

Jacqueline transitioned from a busy work life to a time of disorientation where she named her bike rides "*I don't know where I am going*" "*not this one again*" to maintaining work rhythms through voluntary work. Jacqueline had initially perceived the waiting time of furlough as a temporary situation. Ami Harbin (2016:99) asserts that disorientations occur when an individual anticipates a particular version of a near future which is then disrupted. Jacqueline's disorientation may have occurred as she suspended herself in another's work schedule and non-work activity because she felt a return to work was imminent. Temporal disorientation may be felt in the interruption between an individual's present understanding of a situation and their future orientation towards 'temporal landmarks' such as 'events, dates, times' (Fernández Velasco et al 2021:448; Shum 1998:424). Jacqueline had been orientated towards an imminent return to work which had perhaps been a temporal landmark for her. As that temporal landmark was an indistinct point of reference, perhaps Jacqueline's reinstatement of work rhythms through voluntary work was a move towards creating new structure in her life, with voluntary work creating new temporal landmarks.

Joanna understood *her need* for the structure of temporal landmarks within her daily life and created new non-paid work rhythms. For similar reasons Jodie developed new temporal landmarks in her days of non-paid work life. For Jodie it was also an opportunity to experiment with creating new temporal landmarks of lunch breaks and the creation of "*kinder*" working hours. Whilst Jacqueline eventually realised a need to make her own temporal landmarks by moving into new non-paid work life, and having a day structured through new work rhythms of her own making.

Given the opportunity to have a period of paid non-work life, why might an individual choose to fill their time with non-paid work? I remind the reader here of the multiple uncertainties that the furloughed were living with. Aside from the uncertainty that

waiting within furlough had instigated, the furloughed were waiting amidst a global pandemic and had experienced multiple national lockdowns. Perhaps the furloughed were creating a sense of certainty amidst manifold ambiguities? 'Safe uncertainty' refers to an individual's acceptance of uncomfortable or unsettling situations from a position of feeling safe (Mason, 1993). Developed by therapist Barry Mason (2019: 347) it is an unfolding, shifting, mutable perspective, relational to a situation and the people within it. For some people too much change or uncertainty in a situation can lead to 'feeling less safe' (ibid: 344). It could be that amidst the disorientating conditions of the pandemic and the uncertain duration of waiting through furlough, Joanna, Jodie and Jacqueline have chosen to replicate "*work rhythms*" in order to feel like they were holding their situations together. Creating a reproduction of a working day filled by unpaid work and creating temporal landmarks such as a defined start and end to the working day, lunch times and tea breaks, work rhythms may have provided a sense of agency and a safe and familiar structure, amidst a period of uncertainty.

For Joanna, Jodie and Jacqueline maintaining working patterns was perhaps like a refrain folding them into their past work life through their rhythms. For others maintaining "*work rhythms*" and holding their situation together had a more acute resonance during furlough. For some of those I interviewed, the 80% of salary they received as a condition of furlough[54] was not enough to cover their needs. For those people, the maintenance of "*work rhythms*" was born out of financial necessity. Married father of two Lee, a 42-year-old digital marketeer, was three months into a new job when he was furloughed. Based in the UK, at the onset of the first lockdown, his Australian employers had asked him to take unpaid leave. This lasted for a month until his employers instigated his period of furlough which lasted for six months before his job was made redundant. Looking down into the camera, silver closed curtains behind him, Lee discussed the financial implications that unpaid leave and having 80% of his wage during furlough had created for him and his family.

> *"After the build-up of not having a job in essence, and getting, you know, eighty percent of my wage, which look if I sound... I feel pathetic saying it, but eighty*

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[54] Financial conditions of furlough and SEISS grants are outlined in Chapter 01 section 1.3.

percent of my wages is not enough to cover what we need in the household. So there's a massive strain on my finance to kind of take up you know, the other part of it. Also, I went on Universal Credit[55] and got like a little bit of a top up. There's something like two hundred and fifty something pounds every couple of weeks its better than the kick in the teeth but makes hardly any difference".
25th June 2021.

On furlough out of his usual "*work rhythms*" Lee created new rhythms of work in an attempt to maintain his family.

"And so one of the things I did in that time was I thought to myself, if the world is going to be like this, how will I make money? So I started learning to trade. Yeah, so I started learning to trade Forex and Crypto in that time and that kind of topped up my earnings a little bit. Quite good at it. I was alright at it. I had my losses, but I was at one point trying to… I was on occasion being able to make my wage in a month".
25th June 2021.

Lee's new "*work rhythms*" consisted of trading and learning how to trade.

"I would get up at six in the morning and start trading. And then I would do my learning because you have to keep learning from like 9.30 to about lunchtime. After lunch… I do some afternoon trading and go on to some educator classes to learn some more in between trading. So my full-time job, in essence was trading. That's how I that's how I looked at that time. So, you know, it wasn't, I didn't take it as a journey. I just took it as you know, that's my job. And structured my day accordingly".
25th June 2021.

Lee's new work rhythms as a financial trader were born out of necessity, but Lee also talked about how central work was to his life.

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[55] Universal Credit is a UK state financial benefit for those out of work or on low incomes.

"I've always had a work ethic instilled in me by my parents, like I've worked since the age of 13, my first paper round. I have not ever really been out of work for a large period, unless out of choice, or I'm travelling. So working is something that's central to me, I just feel useless if I'm not doing it, like I'm not adding any value to anyone or anything. So that's just part of me".
25th June 2021.

For Lee the need to fill his days with work had multiple drivers, to hold his financial situation together and to feel purposeful. Lee professed that work is central in his life and without work he would feel "*useless*". For contractual reasons Lee chose to fill his furlough life with work from a completely new industry which he also had learnt to conduct. Although he was maintaining work rhythms, these were completely new ones which restructured his day in a new way. Although Lee said he felt the need to work to maintain his financial situation, he also shares some motivations for maintaining work rhythms with Joanna, Jodie and Jacqueline, his work rhythms providing purpose and structure to his life.

5.3 Substituting

In the previous section I discussed how the furloughed tried to maintain work rhythms through creating a new work life world. Those maintaining work rhythms (mostly) stayed close to the clock time of their usual work, with tea breaks and lunch breaks punctuating their days. Drawing on Marcel's (1967:280) notions of waiting tensions, those maintaining work rhythms were perhaps holding a tension of 'active waiting' unsure of an endpoint to waiting but understanding that it would end. The maintenance of work rhythms was perhaps aligned to a maintenance of active waiting. For others furloughed, holding their situation together involved following alternative temporal rhythms. For those people, time was marked not by a replication of work rhythms or by the clock, but through the duration of activities such as binge-watching television, cooking or going for walks. The marked difference between those trying to maintain work rhythms and those enacting a substitution of rhythm, is the nature of their non-work-based activity and its non-reliance on clock-time. This section outlines the experiences of

those who substituted the rhythmic refrains of work life with new temporal rhythms and new temporal landmarks.

Jodie the charity fundraiser who during furlough took "*lunch breaks*" when she hadn't previously "*allowed*" herself to, marked the time of her "*lunch breaks*" by the duration of episodes of television programmes;

> "*My friends' got Netflix. I was like I'm not married to the Netflix pressure…*
> *And I think I did much later in the year like after the initial kind of like hype*
> *everybody buying it. I did eventually… Yeah, like, I think that's how I got into hour*
> *lunch breaks was by watching boxsets, because the episodes are like an hour or so, I*
> *just watched one of them".*
> 5th May 2021.

I wonder if it was easier for Jodie to "*allow*" herself "*lunch breaks*" by marking them through television programmes and not the clock. Previously at her place of work, she had not partaken in "*lunch breaks*" marked by clock time. Whereas furlough "*lunch breaks*" were a new experience and marked through one episode of a boxset. Jodie was in some senses simulating the conventions of "*work rhythms*" by taking a "*lunch break*" during her "*working day*", but this was not part of her pre-furlough working world. It is possible that Jodie's maintenance of work rhythms was a form of holding things together. And yet at the same time she felt that her substituted work rhythms were just that, a substitution, in which she could be "*kind"* to herself and change her working hours (as outlined the last section) or have lunch breaks which she didn't take habitually. Jodie's experimentation with formations of what a world of work could be, extended beyond "*lunch breaks*" but also involved how she temporally marked the duration of those "*lunch breaks".*

A duration may be marked by the length of time a person takes to complete an activity, as a duration is time felt and 'lived' (Bergson 1911:14). Time in a duration is unknowable until an activity is complete. For some of the furloughed the beginning and end of periods of time such as days, were marked by focussing on activities such mealtimes or in Jodie's case a lunchtime marked by a television programme. The duration of a period of time may

have been filled (or not) with multiple activities. The linkage of these activities may have become for some a form of refrain through the creation of rhythmic patterns across a day. The activities and patterns may not have been a consistent refrain. The length of activity may not have been precisely the same each time and became a duration as a shifting present (Bergson's (ibid:79).

This evocation of a duration as becoming has parallels with Kathleen Stewart's (2013:110) notion of 'world' and the process of 'worlding' as non-static and always emergent. Indeed a 'world' may exist for a 'duration', like the time of furlough. The sudden disorientating experience of 'unworlding' work life and finding oneself within a new evolving 'world' of furlough may have created for some the need to detach and feel detachment from clock-time. Clock time may have been a reminder of the work life the furloughed should have been living. If we refer back to Louise at the start of the chapter, initially still entangled in her previous "*work rhythms*" and in a sense still holding onto her world of work through holding its temporal rhythms. Louise was perhaps initially holding onto what she knew as predictable within a new unpredictable world, although she did eventually detach from clock time.

Distanced from work life and clock time, several of the furloughed workers I interviewed structured their days around mealtimes and the movements of others that they lived with. Speaking to me on her mobile from her brown leather sofa, Angela, a 51-year-old supply teacher still on furlough, matter-of-factly discussed how she marked her time during furlough,

> "*I don't wear a watch. I don't wear a watch in the house. And I don't tend to look at the clock. Because time isn't as important... So I think time to me is when my husband goes out to work... when he comes home. And then when my daughter goes out to work, and then when she comes home, those are the sorts of markers of the day now".*
> 24th January 2021.

Angela's husband 's expectation of an evening meal at a certain time each day and his arrival home from work, brought into sharp focus which part of the day she was

experiencing. Aside from the goings and comings of her family members, Angela experienced her days as amorphous durations.

> "I think sometimes you have to check what day of the week it is. And I think
> that's why I got confused whether it [our meeting], was Saturday or Sunday
> because Friday night I looked…and thought Oh, it must be Sunday, then. So where
> at one time, I wouldn't have made that mistake".
> 24th January 2021.

Angela discussed supermarket deliveries as a particular temporal marker in her week. With the same food delivered each week Angela had started to rethink how she prepared meals.

> 'But you don't want to keep on having the same food. It's like really your meals are
> the only thing you've got to look forward to in the day. So you want to make
> them a bit more exciting. So I'm tending to use cookery books more'.
> 24th January 2021.

For Angela the temporal marker of the evening meal had become an event in her day where she became "*more experimental*" with her cooking, using cookery books and spices she found whilst clearing her cupboards as a guide. Perhaps for Angela her period of waiting through furlough had become a version of Marcel's (1967:280) notion of 'torpor' or a devitalised form of waiting where those waiting relax because they don't know when it will end. In some senses, for Angela time had become enervated. This is perhaps evidenced by her comments about not referring to clock time and not being sure what day we were supposed to meet online. In her new world of furlough, Angela had reformed her sense of time through food: through the weekly shopping deliveries and a daily evening meal.

Chloe, a 23-year-old waitress, plotted out the temporal pattern of her weeks through the watching of certain television programmes. For Chloe, those television programmes became 'temporal landmarks' across the days of her week.

> *"So for example, tonight is a Thursday, Drag Race UK is on in the evening. Me and my boyfriend both watch it. Saturday morning, it's the same again, Drag Race, but the US version, but this one for us, we sit in bed, and sometimes we get a McDonald's breakfast. And that's just like that every week... I find it's TV is a gauge for me in terms of what time of day it is, by the type of show I'm watching... that's how I know the days of the week".*
> 11th February 2021.

Amidst the disorientation of non-work life and her navigation around her partner's working day (discussed in the last chapter in section 4.2) Chloe found some temporal structure through watching television programmes. She also created structure through daily lunch time walks and like Angela the preparation of an evening meal.

Chloe was not alone in marking time with television watching. A common strategy for those waiting in furlough, was to watch back-to-back episodes of television programmes to fill time. Their days were marked by how many episodes of a series they had watched. Mostly the furloughed were watching television series that they were already familiar with, having watched them in the past. A common thread was that in the rewatching, they paid more attention and found new significance within the programmes. For example, Adrian, a 61-year-old supply teacher, shared with me his newfound love of an old favourite programme.

> *"This is really, really ridiculous while I'm watching right, I'm going for it. I am watching... I'm trying to watch.... every episode from the beginning of the Fresh Prince of Bel Air. It's amazing how the story lines, those are amazing, you know, the race lines, the sexist lines, the moral lines. It was all there in the 90s there was all you know, it's just so much and how it really was really is a good programme. But I don't think you would appreciate it at the time. But looking back now because I put it on iPlayer[56] It's what it really is one of the top to me one of the top programmes ever made".*
> 21st January 2021.

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[56] iPlayer is a BBC streaming service.

Adrian's days marked by watching episodes of Fresh Prince of Bel Air were as much about filling time as marking time. Adrian used binge-watching as a means to fill the durations of his days. His days were marked by the number of episodes he watched. Adrian also marked his days with daily walks. This was in common with the majority of the furloughed I interviewed. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK government had created restrictions on people's movement not just work life (as detailed in Chapter 01 section 1.1). As such during national and regional lockdowns, movement out of the house had been reduced to daily exercise and essential shopping trips. The walks which many of the furloughed took, were part of an allowed daily exercise activity out of the house. A walk out of the house perhaps had more resonance than just a temporal marker, it was a chance to escape the confinement of their home.

In lieu of clock-time, Angela had created temporal markers through the presence and absence of others. Jodie maintained work rhythms through unpaid work but developed a new rhythm of lunch breaks marked not by the clock but by episodes of a television programme. Whilst Chloe also marked her passage across a week through television programmes. Adrian's days were marked by the number of episodes of a television series he watched. Although not following clock time, by marking time through activity the furloughed were still somehow conscious of the need for a temporal structure. Perhaps the furloughed who in the first section were *maintaining* work rhythms were also 'actively' waiting and feeling the tension of an imminent end to their waiting. Their maintenance of work rhythms connected to feeling the nearness of a return to work. In contrast, possibly the furloughed who waited through furlough by *substituting* work rhythms for activity, were sliding out of active waiting towards a more devitalised and relaxed form of waiting. Perhaps for Angela, Chloe and Adrian the move towards slackening the tension of waiting and not maintaining work rhythms was part of a realisation that the end of waiting was not imminent.

5.4. Slippage

The first section 'Maintaining' detailed the experiences of the furloughed who actively tried to stay in work rhythms by replicating a working day through unpaid or new paid work. The furloughed articulated that they were doing so in order to hold their situation

together. In the second section the furlough substituted work rhythms for new temporal rhythms marked through the durations of non-work activities. This next section details the experiences of the furloughed who slid out of habituated rhythms and either couldn't or chose not to reinstate them.

> *"There were definitely days where I just rolled back into kind of being 18 or 19 again and waking up at 10 o'clock in the morning and staying up until God knows what time".*

> *"I didn't know what day it was, it was like Christmas, you know, when you lose that … that Christmas period where you haven't got a clue what day it is or what time it is[57]. That's what it felt for me the first couple of weeks of furlough… just trying to think you know, what day is it?"*
> Claire, 47, trainer in manufacturing, 11th of February 2021.

Claire is articulating a relation to time very different from the regulated time of her work schedule. The disorientated relation with time Claire is discussing is perhaps a 'slip'. Sara Ahmed (2006a:166) defines a 'slip' as the disorientation that happens when things in proximity do not 'hold things in place' but create 'a feeling of distance'. A slip can make an object (in this instance regulated time) 'seem out of place' even when it's within reach, so it may feel as if the object is 'slipping away' (ibid). In Claire's case the disorientation of the 'slip' is keeping a hold of a sense of time. Claire is not holding onto regulated time but becoming distant from it. Claire articulates the distance she feels from work rhythms through the analogy of the Christmas holiday period, a traditional break from work in the UK. In that break, workers purposefully let work rhythms slip knowing that they have an imminent return to work. In the holiday period holding work rhythms might feel incongruent as it is a time of relaxation. Claire perhaps allowed time to slip and created a distance between her and work rhythms during furlough as she assumed it was a temporary situation.

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[57] Claire is referring to the period in the UK between 25th December and 1st of January which for some is taken as a holiday as whole businesses and orgamiisations close during that period.

Alison, a 50-year-old catering manager, shared Claire's feeling of time slipping during furlough. Talking to me from her studio apartment where she lives alone, Alison discusses how she lost her habituated routines and found maintaining a regular rhythm to her day challenging,

> *"It was very hard to hang on to a schedule... I was I was eating at different times I was sleeping at different times. Like sometimes if I'd got into something that was either learning or [unpaid] work or getting an idea in my head or I've got a project I want to get out, I'd stay up to like four in the morning just doing it, thinking I don't have to get up and go or be anywhere. So my schedule was kind of moving. I went from being someone that would get up at like six in the morning to someone that sometimes wouldn't go to bed till four or five in the morning. And my clock was changing in those first few months it was um yeah, no structure, really no structure. As much as I have fitted things in I never knew what day it was or things like".*
>
> 12th January 2021.

This slippage of habituated rhythms was in deep contrast to Alison's pre-furlough days which were regulated by her diary;

> *"I normally live by my diary schedule, I've got meetings, I've got places I need to be I've got things and I'm probably always looking at my diary and always aware of what time of day is where I need to be next, what's even happening tomorrow or the rest of the week. Where those first few months in lockdown other than knowing that I had regular sort of yoga or something I didn't... time was very fluid".*
>
> 12th January 2021.

Eventually Alison established a regular routine. However, after a short period of going back to work when the UK government restrictions on eating out were lifted[58] Alison then experienced another period of furlough which made regulating her time difficult again.

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[58] UK government strategy 'Eat Out to Help Out' to support the hospitality sector subsidised customer covers for three days a week during August 2020 (H. M. Revenue 2020c). The scheme meant that some workers

> *"And then I guess now almost nine-ten months later, I've went through that phase of like time being really fluid and then maybe a few months was trying to get myself into some kind of routine trying to do things but then furloughed, not furloughed it was very hard".*
> 12th January 2021.

In common with Alison, Lydia, a 31-year-old non-essential retail worker, and her partner both slipped into disrupted sleeping and eating patterns. Both furloughed, their days had no semblance of their previous habituated work and living patterns. Lydia's time during furlough was in stark contrast to her former life of full-time work and part-time study. Then, she struggled to find the time to fit in all that she needed to do. She worked long hours and felt that she didn't have enough sleep. It was a form of living she described as "*very lather, rinse, repeat* ". With work suspended and her studies completed, waiting through furlough had disrupted her habituated living patterns.

> *"So yeah, after that went* [studies ended], *it was just because my partner was still furloughed, our sleeping pattern just completely switched around. So we'd get up at like two o'clock in the afternoon or something like that, and then stay up until the sun's up. Like we just we just became nocturnal by accident".*
> 7th July 2021.

Lydia and her partner tried to regulate circadian rhythms back to their pre-furlough days but to no avail.

> *"The silly moments were just like when we tried to reset our sleeping pattern or something like that. So, we'd stayed up for like twenty hours, like, say we'd woken up at two o'clock in the afternoon, we would then try and stay up until a reasonable time the next day, you know what I mean, to try and reset our sleep, and we'd just go a bit delirious. And it just be I was just desperately trying to find a*

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furloughed in the hospitality sector went back to work. The scheme ended at the end of August 2020 which meant hospitality workers went back into furlough.

pattern of sleep because as much as time didn't matter, it felt important to not miss 10 o'clock [bedtime], for some reason".
7th July 2021.

The "*silly moments*" Lydia refers to were times when she and her partner played childish games to amuse themselves and stay awake. Lydia and her partner's temporal disorientation, has parallels with the condition of jet lag. 'Jet lag' describes the disorientation to bodily rhythms that occurs when an individual lags behind or speeds ahead of their 'normal time zone' within the context of high-speed, long-distance travel (Anderson 2015:3; Sharma 2014: 41-42). The experience of 'jet lag' is destabilising leaving an individual temporally and bodily disorientated which manifests as disruption to sleep cycles and the digestive system (ibid).

At the beginning of the chapter, I referred to work rhythms as ingrained and embodied through repetition. And yet work rhythms do not act in isolation: they are part of a cluster of bodily, cognitive and environmental rhythms experienced by an individual (Lefebvre 2004:9). When bodies pulse in an expected way, an intake of breath or a heartbeat become what Lefebvre (2004:21) calls 'landmarks' in a rhythm. We can draw a parallel here with Shum's (1998:424) notion of 'temporal landmarks', events that become beats in a temporal rhythm. Jet lag is an experience of being out of rhythm temporally and bodily and I think a useful experience to draw on when thinking through the abruptly disrupted rhythms of work life through furlough. The sudden suspension of "*work rhythms*" and the sudden instigation of furlough due to the pandemic, perhaps created a form of arrhythmic discord which manifested as disruptions to sleeping and eating patterns as experienced by Alison and Lydia. John Anderson (2015:13) reports that recovery from the disorientation of jet lag becomes possible through 'time and [when] the extraordinary slips back into the ordinary'. By 'the ordinary' Anderson (ibid) is referring to a return to a 'pre-travel state'. For Lydia and her partner, their sleep patterns did not regulate until her partner went back to work and he returned to his habitual pre-furlough work rhythms. Lydia then regulated her sleep patterns in line with his. Alison also was able to fall back into her usual sleep patterns during a period of returning to work, but they were disrupted again when she went back into a further period of furlough.

The slippage of temporal rhythms was felt as disruption for Alison and Lydia and her partner. It was a disruption they attempted to recalibrate. Alison had initially embraced the slippage out of her habituated "*work rhythms*" but eventually wanted to restore regulation to her days. There were others who felt the slippage from work rhythms and welcomed it. Aaron, a 55-year-old aeroplane dispatcher, experienced new rhythms of living during furlough. With his wife and adult daughter both working full time and out of the house, Aaron fell out of step with their habituated rhythms as well as his own usual "*work rhythms*". In a similar manner to Alison, Aaron used the time of furlough to explore activity and ideas that he did not usually have time for like making music and learning how to make films through online courses.

> "*My sleep just has gone all over the place during the furlough I'm currently on. Because I'm trying to sort of explore different things and connect with people, I tend to sort of do calls to America at one am to three am. So I'll go to bed at ten get up at half twelve do the zoom call, go back to sleep for four hours. So my bodily senses are kind of a bit like* [gestures juggling] *But I'm used to it, it I'm not uncomfortable in it*".

> "*So, and I in terms of sleep, and I can sleep any time of the day now, because of that I kind of … the sleep kind of adapts to that. And also, probably my eating patterns probably have sort of gone with that as well. Because you don't have a block breakfast, you know,* [gestures with a chopping motion three times] *three times a day. You don't have that, it's just grazing on things. But I don't feel physically ill with that at all*".
> 22nd January 2021.

In his usual job in aviation, Aaron was responsible for the timing of international flights. As his work was heavily time sensitive, his time at work was dictated by forces outside himself. In furlough he found temporal freedom and autonomy.

> "*It's, before you don't have a choice, you it's, it's fixed. Whereas now I feel like there's the sensation of time it doesn't feel like I have to adhere to what I have to get this done by this time. Those tenets, I suppose I don't have to adhere to them so*

much. They're more as guidelines rather than, you know… say if I was working a nine to five job that would be everything, I would be blocked and kept compartmentalised and only part was for me. My days are much more about fluidity, with an idea of what I need to do be a domestic, creative or whatever. But I can kind of, you know, sort of go with the day more, I can determine the day more than the day determines me, if that makes sense".
22nd January 2021.

Unlike Lydia and Alison who found themselves disorientated by being outside of habituated rhythms that they preferred to try and re-establish and maintain, Aaron found freedom in the new temporal rhythms of furlough. For him his previous habituated work rhythms felt restrictive. Alison had also initially embraced being outside of habituated work rhythms and like Aaron used that time to explore activity she previously didn't have time for. Unlike Aaron she eventually felt disorientated by being out of her pre-furlough rhythms. She felt that she had filled her time with too much activity and began to feel "*overwhelmed*" and "*pulled back*" towards regulating herself back into a more familiar routine.

I wonder if Aaron's embracing of new deregulated patterns of sleep and wakefulness are a direct result of straining against a work life dictated by a clock. He mentions time at work as "*blocked*" and "c*ompartmentalised*" with only "*part was for me".* This perhaps indicates feeling a lack of agency at work and a separation of self from work self. This is at odds with the experiences of many in this chapter, particularly those trying to maintain "*work rhythms".* Aaron did not discuss any attempt to recalibrate back to his usual regular temporal rhythms, instead he says that his days are "*about fluidity*" and that "*I can determine the day more than the day determines me*". Unlike Lydia and Alison who strained against the disorientation created by a slippage in their temporal rhythms, Aaron embraced them.

Jessica, a 23-year-old non-essential retail worker, talked to me from her living room. Framed photographs on display behind her and across her windowsill to her right. Her curtains printed with books on bookshelves were closed but the sun was streaming through them illuminating the pattern. Jessica gesticulates and talks animatedly as she

discusses slipping out of her sleeping and eating patterns during furlough. Her quotidian rhythms shifted in line with her partner's night shift working. Pre-furlough their working patterns were not the same, she worked a day shift whilst he worked nights. Jessica slid into her partner's work rhythms which changed the times when she slept and ate.

> "When I was furloughed, there were points where we were going to bed at five o'clock in the morning and getting up at five at night and that was fairly normal. But that was a norm quite different than before… It was weird… our entire meal schedule just was completely geared around him… I was cooking at like 10pm at night … at some point I was cooking at five o'clock in the morning… I kind of felt a bit like a housewife. It was really weird… normally it would be like a 50/50 split because we both work.".
> 17th May 2021.

Jessica's slippage into her partner's rhythms allowed them time together that they did not have pre-furlough. For that reason, she actively embraced the change in habituated rhythms. Although from her comments above, the change in domestic rhythms did not come without challenges for her particularly around the change in mealtimes and domestic chores. Jessica's navigation around her partner's work rhythms finds some echo with the experiences of the furloughed outlined in last chapter leading a 'shadow life' in particular the notion of being in relation to another. When Jessica did finally return to work, like Alison she resumed her pre-furlough work rhythms, although she did add that in order to do this she had to be "*super, super organised*".

Aaron and Jessica embraced their experiences of slippage in habituated rhythms and ensuing disorientations. Lefebvre (2004:88) posits the idea of being 'grasped' by a temporal rhythm and 'abandoning oneself' to it, much as one would through music and dance. The abandonment within rhythm that Lefebvre (ibid) describes is a felt experience of rhythm. For Lefebvre there is a dichotomy between having to be outside a rhythm in order to identify it but at the same time be within it in order to feel it (ibid). This process of oscillation between identification and feeling has some parallels I argue, with the furloughed's identifications of work rhythms in this chapter whether maintaining, substituting or feeling their slippage. In Aaron and Jessica's cases the identification and

feeling of being detached from work rhythms had led them to step away from them. I like to think of Aaron slipping out of the restrictions of a work life where he not only worked closely with clock time, but was in some senses the clock, and then becoming abandoned to what he calls "*fluidity*" during furlough. And Jessica slipping into a nocturnal life that she would not have had, in order to be closer to her partner.

Claire had articulated slipping out of work and quotidian rhythms as being like the Christmas holiday period. For Alison, holding on to and maintaining regulated time became challenging even though in her previous work life she had been in charge of logistics within a café and led by her diary schedule. Lydia and her partner had fallen out of their usual sleeping patterns and struggled to reinstate them. For Claire, Alison and Lydia the detachment from work rhythms had been a temporal slippage which they articulated as disorientation through their not knowing what time or day it was. The sense of time which had been in their grasp when in work rhythms, had now felt distant through their detachment from work rhythms. Aaron and Jessica had also slipped from work rhythms but in their cases, they did not attempt to reinstate them but each in their own way had begun to accept the temporal slip. For Jessica, the temporal slip had allowed her to spend more time with her partner as she had recalibrated to his time. This wasn't without challenges, but she had come to accept them. Aaron on the other hand had embraced the temporal slip and relished the lack of restriction the new free flows of time being furloughed had afforded him.

Claire, Alison, Lydia, Jessica and Aaron were perhaps falling into differing intensities of the waiting tension of torpor through their disorientated relation to time. Their waiting time had become distanced from the object which could have given them some *sense* of connection to work life, regulated time. Claire, Alison, Lydia and Jessica gave a sense that the spectre of work rhythms was somehow present, possibly in their awareness that work rhythms *should* be present. Aaron however had actively embraced the slip in quotidian time and had perhaps reorientated into a tension of deep waiting torpor. His activity suggested he had moved his orientation away from his usual work life and felt ambivalent about any recommencement of it.

5.5 Haziness and Recalibration

The chapter has outlined how some of the furloughed maintained "*work rhythms*" through unpaid work, how "*work rhythms*" were substituted by alternative temporal markers and that the furloughed had slipped out of "*work rhythms*" and either attempted to reinstate some sort of habituated pattern to their day or actively didn't. Whether maintaining, substituting or feeling their slippage the furloughed gave work rhythms significance within their lives. For Lefebvre (2009:27) 'to grasp a rhythm it is necessary to have been grasped by it; one must let oneself go, give oneself over, abandon oneself to its duration'. Which opens the question of what happens when you lose grip of and cannot re-grasp that work rhythm that you have previously given yourself to? This section explores how the furloughed felt time as hazy and amorphous, difficult to grasp or "*elastic*" as one participant put it. "*Work rhythms*" became hazier the more time the participants spent away from them and found it difficult to reconnect to when they went back to work.

> '*26 April 2021 11:43*
> ***To:*** *JONES, VICTORIA J.E. <victoria.j.jones@durham.ac.uk>*
> ***Subject:*** *Re: Furlough research*
> *[EXTERNAL EMAIL]*
> *Perfect! 1.30pm ok? Part of the consequence of being furloughed is 'furlough brain'*
> *- I can talk about it in the interview but a lack of professional socialisation for a*
> *year. Impacts professional skills so meeting communication etc.*
> *Anyway I digress. Speak at 1.30 pm.*
> *Apologies once again.*
> *Joanna'.*

Back at work after being furloughed, Joanna, a 45-year-old charity worker, forgot to refer to her diary and missed our pre-arranged meeting. She termed this haziness in time organisation as "*furlough brain*". She wasn't the only one to experience similar temporal disorientation. One participant rang me in a panic apologising that they had missed our meeting, but they hadn't missed it, as it had been arranged for the following day. Another forgot about our meeting and took their dog for a walk. Whilst one participant came to a Zoom call ten minutes early so that she would not forget the meeting and would be on

time. An awareness that they were not as acutely conscious of time and experiencing time differently than they did pre-furlough, was expressed by *all* the people I interviewed for this study. As such, the disorientation of having hazy time perception, the inability to keep time and the fear of not being able to keep time emerged in the study as a common concern of those furloughed.

Although Jayne, a 37-year-old chef, had filled her time of furlough developing a pie business and looking after her two small children, she also expressed a hazy relation to time during that period.

> *"It [time] felt like, forever. And, um, and it felt like it's been… Yeah. And it's, and it felt like no time. So, it would flip between that. So, like, when occasions would come around. Or when you realise I haven't seen my friends for so long like in I think, in the moment, like, time would feel like it was going slowly but then when you stepped back and a week had passed, how's that whole week just gone? Yeah, time did weird things in furlough. Definitely".*
> 5th May 2021.

Jayne's articulation of time is perhaps informed by the torpor of extended waiting. Jayne, in line with all those interviewed, was in multiple waiting situations, for furlough to end, for government restrictions to end, for the pandemic to end. Feeling time as differing fast and slow tempos was also experienced by Alice, a 37-year-old optometrist. A single mother with two primary aged children, Alice articulated a disorientation around feeling her period of furlough as the "*longest and shortest time at the same time".* I asked Alice why she thought that time felt differently during her furlough period.

> *"I think it dragged because we didn't seem to have a target to aim for and didn't know what… erm there wasn't really much structure… there wasn't a difference between a Monday and a Saturday. They were the same. So it was like, just the same day over and over again. I mean, in some ways… My children go to their dad's house on a Sunday. erm so that was my only day that that I knew what day it was if that makes sense. Because it seemed like it was just, oh, it will be Sunday again in*

these many days. erm, it seemed to... it was just it was like Groundhog Day, which every day was the same apart from that one day a week".
17th January 2021.

Alice and I met online on a Sunday the one day that she said felt differently from other days. The lack of structure is perhaps what Claire was alluding to when she said furlough felt like time during the Christmas holiday. The feeling that days were undifferentiated and difficult to keep track of was echoed by many of the participants who compared the experience to the 1993 film Groundhog Day. Groundhog Day (1993)[59] follows the fortunes of a weather forecaster Phil Connors, played by actor Bill Murray, as he relives the same day repeatedly. In doing so, the character enacts personal growth moving from cynical narcissism, to denial, to depression, then acceptance and emotional fulfilment. My understanding is that the participants were comparing their time in furlough to 'Groundhog Day' because they felt the days repetitiously in terms of activity and spatial use. However, the experience of furlough may also have comparison with the film in the way that the furloughed went through a disorientating detachment from their usual relationship with time and a feeling of being slowly changed by the waiting experience of furlough (something I will explore further in the next chapter).

Joanna, Jayne and Alice are articulating how the detachment from clock time into what Alice deemed unstructured time had created a change in how they perceived time. Time in relation to work rhythms had been suspended. What happened when a waiting body attempted to pull out of the amorphous, hazy, fast-slow time of furlough and recalibrate back into work rhythms? For Sarah Sharma (2012: 18) 'recalibration' is the process an individual undertakes to create a temporal relation with an external other. The other that an individual synchronises their bodily rhythms with, may be a person, technology or an organisation (like a workplace) (ibid). Recalibration therefore becomes a form of temporal control by an individual in order to maintain that external relation. Having detached from that calibration during furlough, those returning to work were attempting to recalibrate their rhythms in line with work again.

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[59] The furloughed participants were not the only people to find a parallel between life in lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic and the film Groundhog Day (1993), for example see Secor and Blum 2023.

Jenny, a stage manager, was still furloughed but when we discussed her worry about imminently going back to work and not remembering how to do her job.

> *"I don't know if I can even remember how to do my job. I don't know if you know, I know the difference between stage right and stage left, or there's that as well. There's a lot of things which are like, Can I do the job? Do I want to do the job, but I should do the job because I've waited a year and a bit. The money is good. It's like all of those things. So yeah".*
> 17th May 2021.

Abigail, a fine dining chef, echoed some of Jenny's concerns around returning to work after her first period of furlough and not being able to recalibrate back into its rhythms.

> *"I was a bit worried that I was going to be really slow. And we were all a bit slow and tired to begin with. Because we're used to like getting lots of sleep and not doing really lots of work and stuff".*
> 14th January 2021.

Abigail's recalibration into furlough time had involved sleeping and minimal activity. Her worry about not being able to recalibrate back into work rhythms had been an anxiety fulfilled. After the social isolation of furlough, Abigail also discussed looking forward to being with colleagues again in person as opposed to meeting on Zoom calls. For Abigail *"it felt like it was really good that it was going back to normal".* Jenny on the other hand discussed anxiety around not just slotting back into the rhythms of the actual job but also the social aspects of her work.

> *"I'm also more scared about the going back to work because of the social, the social thing and the culture that surrounds theatre, that's also a huge... because I know I'll be able to flick into the job because it's something that I've done for so long, it might take a little while, but I'll be I'll be able to get into it quick enough. But it's the going out every night going to the pub drinking and drinking and drinking and*

the conversations and the jokes, the humour, the sort of banter that back and forth, but really quick, and you have to be on top of your game".
14th January 2021.

Jenny and Abigail are expressing common anxieties amongst the participants of the study that after their period of furlough people would forget how to do their job or be slow at it. Some of those expressed those anxieties as a lack of confidence about their abilities. Abigail and Jenny's differing attitudes to returning to work with colleagues is also reflective of experiences of other furloughed people in the study.

For Carol, a casino worker aged 60, recalibration back to the rhythms of work was not straightforward. Prior to her first period of furlough she had been working in the casino industry for forty years. Carol explained to me that casino work is time sensitive both in terms of the activity around the gaming tables but also how the staff regulate their breaks.

> *"Victoria: So before furlough were you quite good at sticking to the clock?*
>
> *Carol: Oh yeah. You have to, it's part of the structure of years and years and years this place is... it's always the case in casinos.*
>
> *Victoria: And now that's a little bit broken?*
>
> *Carol: Yeah, big time [laughs]".*
>
> 5th March 2021.

Carol was talking to me during a second period of furlough. She had initially been furloughed for seven months and then returned to work for a few weeks when government restrictions on casinos had been temporarily lifted. During that return to work, she found that her time management and that of her colleagues was deeply disoriented.

> *"I've lost all time management. Like, there's no sense of urgency of anything. Erm, it didn't appear until we went back to work temporarily. When we had a twenty-minute break I was late off everyone because I've never thought about looking at the clock. I was terrified by it because it just seemed that you were talking, and you*

didn't bother looking "ah I'm due back at back at twenty to ahhh its quarter to. And I realised then my time management was gone".
5th March 2021.

I asked Carol if her sense of time had returned at any point;

"[laughs] I just got no urgency of anything. Like appointments, yes. I had a hospital appointment this morning at ten thirty which it was like, every minute was basically every minute of the day to get there on time. And not too early and not too late".
5th March 2021.

Carol's hazy grip on time had extended beyond the workplace to her everyday interactions. I interviewed Carol during her second period of furlough. She was worried that on her return to work her management of time, which she deemed crucial for her job, was not going to be re-established. Her main concern was being late back from breaks which were held in a fixed time period. Anyone taking more than their allotted twenty minutes would be taking time off their colleague having the next break.

"But thinking about going back to work. It's like I don't know. But it wasn't only me that was in that category of breaks, everything being late because normally you get the twenty-minute break. You have twenty minutes... if you take twenty-one or twenty-two then that's two minutes off their break you are taking and because they've got to come back 20 minutes later. It's not like if you're on a break from one to twenty past. If you don't back until twenty-five past, they only get from twenty-five past to twenty to".
5th March 2021.

Carol's not wanting her disorientation about time to impact on her colleagues was part of her wider attitude to work. For Carol work constituted her social life as well as work life as all her close friendships were based at work. As such she wanted to be fair with her and her colleague's time and found her disorientation around time management frustrating.

Although Joanna had stayed in the rhythms of work life during furlough through voluntary work in the same sector, she had still fallen prey to a hazy grasp of time she deemed "*furlough brain*". For Jayne who had spent her time in furlough staying in work rhythms by developing a new business, "*time did weird things in furlough".* For Jayne this meant time took on new qualities of elongated drag or of speeding up. This was echoed by Alice who had found time during furlough simultaneously unstructured and repetitive. For Joanna, Jayne and Alice quotidian time had taken on new qualities which meant in differing ways they had been disorientated by losing track of time.

Jenny, Abigail and Carol expressed anxiety that they could not recalibrate into their previous work rhythms when returning to work. For Abigail and Carol those anxieties became reality when they did return to work and found recalibration difficult. Return to work not only entailed recalibration into previous temporal work rhythms but also the refrains of social work rhythms. Abigail and Carol had looked forward to reconnecting with colleagues and reinstating their social work rhythms. Jenny expressed anxiety about whether she could recalibrate into the social rhythms of her work life. I wonder if Jenny, Abigail and Carol's difficulty in recalibrating back to work rhythms is a result of being in a protracted state of waiting and feeling the devitalised position of torpor and then having to reverse as their period of furlough came to an end. It is interesting that Joanna, who had remained in work rhythms and could be said to have remained in active waiting for work to begin again, also experienced a hazy grasp of time after returning to work. Perhaps the work world she had made through non-paid work in order not to be disorientated by a detachment from work rhythms, had after all not prevented some measure of disorientation for her.

5.6 The Disorientation of Being Out of "*Work Rhythms*"

This chapter built on the previous chapter's evocation of waiting detached from work life by being furloughed as a disorientating experience. At the opening of the chapter Louise had discussed keeping a mental note of the work rhythms that she had been suddenly detached from until a week after she had been furloughed. For Louise and others furloughed work rhythms are ingrained in their quotidian lives. In this chapter I drew on Lefebvre (2004) and Sharma (2012) to explore the furloughed's relation to work rhythms

and Stewart's (2010:339) notion of the refrain to articulate repetitions of work rhythms. The differing relations to work rhythms expressed by those furloughed: those who maintained them, those who substituted them, those from whom they slipped and those who attempted to instate them, opens further dimensions of disorientation experienced whilst waiting through furlough.

The furloughed who maintained work rhythms sought out unpaid or alternative paid work. Drawing on Stewart's (2013) notion of world making, I argued that the recreation of a 'world' of work may have been a form of holding things together amid the uncertainty of waiting for their usual work to start again. The 'temporal landmarks' (Shum 1998:424) they made across their 'working days' manifest as tea breaks and lunch breaks, created a structure which reinforced the notion that they were maintaining work rhythms. I argued that the detachment (or pre-emption of detachment) from work rhythms, had created a disorientation which created for this group of furloughed workers a need to feel that they were still within work rhythms. Those who 'substituted' for the loss of the temporal structure of work rhythms, created new temporal structures through non-work activity. This group of furloughed workers detached from clock time as well as work rhythms.

Working with Bergson's (1911:14) notion of a duration as time 'lived' through bodies, I outlined that those who 'substituted' did so by creating rhythmic patterns of days plotted through the comings and goings of family members, the making of mealtimes and the watching of television programmes. I argue that in substituting for work rhythms with non-work activity, the furloughed were beginning to accept their new non-working world. Other furloughed workers felt a 'slippage' from work rhythms and couldn't or didn't reinstate them. I drew on Ahmed's (2006a:166) idea of the 'slip' to express the detachment from work rhythms and quotidian time that being furloughed had instigated. Some of those who experienced the slippage from work rhythms felt it as a disorientation that they wanted to reorientate out of but found reorientation difficult. Others embraced the slippage as an opportunity to live in rhythms they would not normally be able to because of the foregrounding in their lives of their usual work rhythms. Some furloughed felt that they had a 'hazy' grip or had lost their grasp of work rhythms. Having given themselves to work rhythms (Lefebvre 2004:27), the detachment from work rhythms had made those rhythms become hazy. Drawing on Sharma's (2012:18) notion of

'recalibration' the feeling of haziness came to the fore as the furloughed attempted to recalibrate into their previous temporal and social work rhythms. After returning to work, some of those furloughed reported remaining feeling hazy about work rhythms.

I argued that being out of work rhythms involved dimensions of actively maintaining them, substituting them, feeling their slippage and attempts to reinstate them. Each dimension possibly instigated a differing relation to a tension of waiting for work life to restart. I argue that those maintaining work rhythms through non-paid and paid alternative work, did so with the feeling that the reinstatement of work life was imminent. In other words, they were actively waiting (Marcel 1967:280). Those who substituted or felt work rhythms slip, may have been starting to wait within a tension of torpor or an acceptance that the end of waiting was distant and indistinct. I argued that waiting with a feeling of a hazy grip on time and former work rhythms, seems to have left a residue on those who experienced it. Essentially this chapter argued that being furloughed opened a realisation of how ingrained rhythms are in quotidian and work life, through the threat and then reality of their absence. In other words, the absence of work and quotidian rhythms highlighted their importance in maintaining structure in lives. The next chapter will further explore these feelings of haziness by focussing on how the furloughed felt about the suspension of work life. Whereas this chapter and the last explored the consequence of detachment, the next chapter will explore the detachment itself and the potential for that detachment to create disoriented feelings when work life is suspended.

"*Hanging in Space, in Time*"

6.1 Suspension

It is 14:35 hrs on the 18th of January 2021, I am talking to Andrea, a 53-year-old chef. Andrea talks to me whilst leaning on the edge of her brown leather sofa, the corner of a multi-window photo-frame filled with children above her head to her right, my left. Her demeanour is relaxed, dressed casually with hair scraped back into a ponytail, she is open and forthcoming in her responses. I ask Andrea how conscious of time she was during her period of furlough.

> *"... time, it just seems to be no... time just seems to be timeless at the moment.*
> *Other than a kind of loose structured day, because of the routine that I'm in.*
> *There doesn't seem to be any structure, which kind of... erm... pictures... picture*
> *frames your days, and there's no structure, there's no time. There's no, I'm not*
> *working. I'm not going to get to be anywhere by a certain time. I've got nothing in*
> *my diary. So everything seems to be like a bit of a... nothingness.*
> Andrea, 53, chef, 18th January 2021.

Andrea gestures away from her body as she says *"nothingness"* as if batting it away. Absent from a work life that filled her diary and where she felt she had tried to over fill her time; Andrea's period of furlough had left her disorientated in *"timelessness"*. Although spending furlough at home with teenage children and a home working husband, the suspension into non-work life for her felt like *"nothingness"*. The suspension of work had taken the forward momentum of time away from Andrea. In saying *"timeless"* and *"nothingness"* Andrea is perhaps expressing a loss of momentum.

This chapter explores feelings of loss created by the suspension of work life. The previous chapters explored how the detachment from work life through being furloughed, instigated new relations to another or to time. This chapter explores the loss itself, the furloughed's non-acceptance and eventual acceptance of being in suspension from work life. Waiting in furlough interrupted the flows of quotidian time for those affected by it. For some of the furloughed, this interruption disconnected them from the structure of work rhythms and was felt as a loss as in Andrea's opening comments. For others waiting in furlough was a welcome relief from the excesses of their work life. Waiting in suspension instigated feelings of heaviness expressed as *"stagnation"* for some, and detachment articulated as *"floating"* for others. This chapter explores the opposing tensions of stagnation and floating whether welcomed or resisted by the furloughed. It argues that for those who accepted the suspension of work life, waiting through furlough opened new opportunities to examine themselves and their work life situation.

In the context of grief, Lisa Baraitser (2017:1) describes suspended time as 'viscous liquid' noting that it coagulates and 'pools' in a manner that brings to the fore a sense of time without 'flow'. In common with Andrea, Baraitser is describing time without momentum. Denise Riley (2012:31) on whose work Baraitser builds her version of suspended time, describes the suspension of time as like being held within an edgeless 'globe'. Within this temporal immersion, Riley (ibid:66) asserts that it feels like you are 'saturated' by time, 'You are time'. Riley's evocation of time as 'edgeless' chimes with Andrea's description of time as *"timeless"*, suggesting that Andrea is describing motionless time, suspended time. Andrea's articulation of her experience of time as *"nothingness"* during furlough is perhaps an expression of grief for the loss of her work life. Grief is part of the process of letting go of an object (Ahmed 2010:138). Andrea's enforced detachment from work life, an object which had given her a certain orientation in her life, had left her disorientated by its loss. As a consequence, Andrea articulated dimensions of time similar to ones expressed by those who grieve. Grief as a feeling of suffering and loss can occur in many circumstances, not just death (Maddrell, 2020:108). Experiences that create disjuncture from the momentum of an expected life path such as heartbreak, enforced migration, cancelled medical treatment or redundancy can instigate feelings of bereavement. During the COVID-19 pandemic and its conditions of enforced social distance and controlled mobilities, people grieved for the postponement of life

events (ibid:109) such as graduations, weddings and family gatherings. In this context, grief for a suspended work life is not an extraordinary assertion.

As outlined in the first chapter, in the UK the cessation of work life through being furloughed was sudden. So how was the sudden suspended relation from work life felt by those who experienced it? Kathleen Stewart (2007:19) asserts that 'When a still life pops up out of the ordinary, it can come as a shock'. In the last chapter, Jodie, a 29-year-old charity fundraiser, had described her first day of furlough as like "*shellshock*" which had catalysed her into instigating a semblance of work life through voluntary work. Several others also described being furloughed as a shock, including Andrea.

> "*But this furlough, I was kind of thinking, I felt like the rug has been pulled out from underneath me. I don't know what the hell I'm gonna do. I was just in shock, complete shock*".
> 18th January 2021.

Andrea's comment about feeling like the rug had been pulled from under her, suggests her feelings of stability connected to her work life had been disturbed by being furloughed. Denise Riley (in conversation with Lisa Baraitser) speculated whether it is the suddenness of an act that is the catalyst for a person to feel grief and the 'time stopped' feeling' (Baraitser 2020:342). I wonder if Andrea's articulation of her experience and its dimensions of "*timelessness*" and "*nothingness*" is partly fuelled by leading a full and busy work life and feeling purposeful and then having a sudden (and unwanted) entry into the suspended time of furlough.

Andrea's articulation of experiencing time differently, folds back to Ahmed's (2006:20) assertion that disorientation involves 'encountering the world differently'. For Andrea, work life and its associated indicators of clock time such as her diary, were suspended and replaced by "*timelessness*". In the last chapter I explored that the previous work lives of the furloughed had been dominated by certain work rhythms. In order to fit with their previous work lives, the furloughed had recalibrated towards certain work life

temporalities which had been suspended[60] during furlough. To be suspended, involves tensions between, a *detachment from* that which was and an *orientation towards* what will be. Lisa Baraitser (ibid:346) proposes that suspended time is felt when we are in experiences that shock us because they 'don't appear to have beginnings and ends and parameters that we imagine to be spatial and have to do with movement'. Perhaps because of the disruption to her by furlough, Andrea is articulating a position of non-calibration, resisting recalibration into new furlough temporalities or holding herself between calibrations. Her expressions of "*timelessness*" and "*nothingness*" are possibly articulations of feeling in a suspended state of betweenness because she cannot envisage an end point to her waiting for work to begin again.

6.1.2 Resisting Suspension

Andrea discussed that the lack of structure through work instigated the sense she was in a "*timeless*" time that felt like "*nothingness*". Claire, a trainer in manufacturing, articulated that during the initial months of furlough she did not allow herself to embrace the free time of furlough. Claire felt it important to hold onto some form of structure to her days.

> "On furlough... for a good while, in the beginning, I was conscious of time, because I didn't want to get in the habit of just completely relaxing and not losing all tracks of time. I think when you break for, you know, you leave at Christmas... you really don't care about what time it is because you want that relaxation. Whereas I was a little bit fighting it through furlough because it wasn't my choice, it wasn't something that I prepared for. So, for me, I needed to structure I suppose...Time was... in the beginning, I was definitely structuring my days and weeks".
> 11th February 2021.

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[60] As I outlined in Chapter 01 (section 1.9) 'the furloughed' became figures in wider discourse ascribed differing attributes during the period of furlough. On the 2nd of September 2020 in a debate in the UK parliament about the future of furlough, Prime Minister Boris Johnson described those in furlough as being in a state of 'suspended animation' which 'prevents them from going to work' (HC Deb 2 September 2020). Johnson's use of 'suspended animation' aligns 'suspension' with 'prevents' and 'animation' with 'work'. Those held waiting in furlough were doing so at the behest of their employers. This was due to social distancing measures introduced by the UK government to mitigate the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus requiring that some businesses suspend trading. Johnson's implication in that address was that the furloughed had some agency over their situation and when they could return to work. This was of course not the case as returns to work were decided by employers not employees.

Claire's resistance to calibrating to the potentially unstructured time of furlough, was in relation to not wanting to be furloughed and actively waiting for her employer to call her back into work. Claire's active waiting was a maintenance of an orientation towards her work life. To find our bearings in a situation we create a relation to something we recognise and are familiar with (Ahmed 2006a:1). The relation we have to that object is how we orientate (ibid). Claire's orientation to her workplace involved regular contact with non-furloughed colleagues via texts and mobile phone calls. Claire's comment about "*fighting it*" suggests that she felt the pull of letting her time become unstructured but resisted it to maintain her orientation to her workplace. For Ahmed (ibid:2) the orientation towards an object involves both how we feel, and how we feel about that object. Claire feels connected to her workplace and her colleagues. Her orientation is to maintain a feeling of connection with them. Without that orientation Claire would be physically and emotionally detached from the workplace. Resisting feeling detached involved for Claire a maintenance of connection.

Claire had not wanted to be furloughed as furlough had been imposed on her by her employers. Claire had initially felt resistant about the move into furlough. In contrast, Caroline, a 49-year-old charity worker, had understood that her organisation might need to furlough her and complied with it. However, the manner in which she was furloughed made her feel "*let down*" by her employers. She described the lead up to furlough and how she felt at its onset;

> "*I felt utterly rejected, utterly useless. And as if the organisation didn't care, not least because my bosses say right, well, we'll talk before you go on furlough. I put a massive amount of work in so the business critical stuff was all done. So nobody else had to pick that up. And then very suddenly, you know, I'm there. I've done all this, there was no thank you. There was no check in with my manager to make sure everything was good. I was just abandoned, and I really hadn't expected it to feel quite so horrendous*".

> "*I thought that by not being forced into it, by taking control of some of the decision that it would feel better, erm which is why I hadn't realised that I'd feel quite so horrendous*".
> 20th February 2021.

Prior to being furloughed Caroline said she felt positively about her work and workplace. She enjoyed the challenge and variety of experiences that her role enabled. Being furloughed had made Caroline feel "*rejected*", "*useless*", "*abandoned*" and "*horrendous*". Caroline is expressing how being furloughed had made her feel alienated from her employers. Sara Ahmed (2010:168) describes alienation as an 'intense burning presence' that can 'feel like a weight that both holds you down and keeps you apart'. During the interview Caroline several times said that she felt "*rejected*" or "*let down*" by her employers. As some of her colleagues had not been furloughed and kept working, Caroline said that this made her feel less valued by her workplace and separate from her employers. The feelings of alienation did not end for Caroline when furlough ended. In a follow-up email a year after our interview Caroline told me;

> *"I have lost trust in my manager... I struggle to commit to deadlines at work. I have lost my zing for it".*

> *"... now I realise that my commitment to work was not matched by my work's commitment to me. I was the dispensable one. I don't need to be that one. but because I have lost my Why? I have lost my get up and go".*
> Caroline, by email 10th April 2022.

The affective atmosphere of alienation and intense feelings Caroline had expressed about being furloughed, had not dissipated a year later. Ahmed (2010:169) suggests that those who come to feel alienated 'experience the world as a form of resistance'. In other words, as Caroline felt alienated from her workplace, she began to feel that the workplace was resisting her, and she had started to resist her workplace. Resistance is an impeding or slowing effect exerted by one object onto another. Pre-furlough Caroline enjoyed the flow of working life, her comment about losing her "*zing*" for work, contrasts with her comments about enjoying the challenge and variety in her work pre-furlough. By not committing "*to deadlines*", her 'refusal to comply' is a form of resistance (Ahmed 2021:334). For Caroline her feelings of alienation and resistance in relation to her workplace had been ignited by her time in furlough. That she felt as strongly as she did about this a year later, might point to the manner that furlough had been initiated and the disoriented feelings it had produced.

Claire and Caroline had in differing ways felt negatively and resisted the suspended time of furlough. For Claire resistance took the form of non-acceptance of her present situation and active waiting for the reinstatement of her former work life. For Caroline, resistance took the form of resignation and a feeling of disenchantment and detachment from her workplace which she had previously felt emotionally attached to. Resisting the suspended time of furlough, involved enjoying work life and not wanting to detach from it. Claire and Caroline both orientated towards their employer during furlough with the expectation that their situation was temporary and work life would imminently restart. Claire eventually did accept her situation (as outlined later in the chapter) but ultimately was made redundant from her job. Whilst Caroline did not accept her situation but did return to her job feeling that her relationship with her employers had been irreversibly negatively impacted.

6.1.3 Welcoming Suspension

There were others furloughed who welcomed the opportunity to temporarily suspend their work life. Some discussed having work conditions or colleagues that they felt were unsafe in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whilst others had ongoing issues with annoying colleagues, demanding employers or unpleasant work cultures and welcomed the opportunity to suspend their job and have time away. A small part of the participants relished the opportunity that being furloughed opened to spend more time on hobbies such as poetry writing or new pursuits like test trialling new business ventures. However, a dominant narrative was articulated by workers whose pre-furlough work lives were over full and all encompassing. Alison, a 50-year-old, working on the logistics for a co-operative café speaks to me from her studio flat. Her burgundy hair matching her burgundy spectacles and patterned jumper. Alison is warm and open in our discussion of her time during furlough.

> *"I really welcomed it. Actually, I've been quite sort of unwell and I was I was kind of a burnout stage. So, when I knew the pandemic was coming, we're having to reshift everything, and I knew we'd have to do big work with the org structure and everything. I just thought thank God you know, I'm gonna have a couple of months kind of off. I welcomed it. For me personally, I was sort of glad of the pause and the*

first two or three months furloughed, loved it. I was at home, catching up on all the things I hadn't had time to do… looking after my health. I was walking. I was doing all the things that I've kind of set aside because work had become so manic and full on and a lot of responsibility. So, the first two to three months I remember enjoying it".

12th January 2021.

Alison talked about furlough as a welcome relief from her busy work life. She described that she was "*unwell*" and near to "*burnout*"[61]. [62]. Alison talked about her role within a cooperative café as feeling like a "*community*" which she was clearly emotionally attached to. Alison's relation to work was beyond the transactional and extended into a sense of responsibility for her work colleagues. For her, work was a labour of love. Sarah Jaffe (2021:1) argues that being enmeshed in a work life entangled with personal emotion, in other words working for the 'love of it', creates a propensity to over work and burn out. Jaffe (ibid) ascribes this tendency, for a desire for work not to feel like work, but to be an extension of social life. Looping back to Ahmed (2006a:1), how we feel is in relation to how we feel about the objects that we orientate towards. This may be why people such

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[61] The World Health Organisation (WHO 2019) defines 'burnout' as a specific form of 'chronic workplace stress' typified by 'exhaustion', 'feelings of distance from one's job' and a reduction in professional effectiveness. This definition echoes the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (1981) developed by psychologist Christina Maslach which measures levels of 'exhaustion', 'personal accomplishment' or sense of achievement, 'depersonalisation' or feelings of distance from the work situation amongst those who feel stress through work. The Maslach Burnout Inventory also measures 'involvement' or feelings of relation between a worker and those they are working with (ibid). In the MBI, burnout is experienced by those who work within the service economy, education or health care sectors whereby workers interact with others and utilise 'creativity, problem solving, or mentoring' in their encounters (Schaufeli et al 2008:206). As such burnout is in part created by relation with others as well as creating physical and emotional incapacities (Maslach 1982:32). Unlike MBI, the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) (Kristensen et al 2005) measures stress in all work situations. The CBI also takes account of burnout experienced as physical and emotional stress beyond the workplace. Burnout, dependent on which measure is used, can involve workplace and non-workplace physical and emotional stress. I point this out, as the participants who talked about burn out and exhaustion worked in jobs where the distinction between work and social life was blurred.

[62] The 2021 film 'Boiling Point' follows the movements of a head chef over an evening as he moves towards and through a service in his restaurant. It is a useful illustration of how a sequence of personal and professional interactions can build towards feelings of burnout. The film gathers momentum with the protagonist encountering an ever-increasing series of emotional and practical expectations and responsibilities, at him by others. The exhausted protagonist eventually physically collapses. His collapse marks the end of the film and the end of the relentless motion and demands that have brought him to this point. None of the participants discussed collapsing, but they did talk about feeling exhausted by the emotional and physical demands of their workplace and colleagues.

as Alison who want to feel positively attached to their workplace, and over-work as a consequence.

Alison was not the only participant to feel tired prior to furlough and welcome it as a rest period. Jessica, a 23-year-old non-essential retail worker at a visitor attraction had also felt fatigued before her period of furlough.

> *"... before furlough, I was really tired especially from like October 2019 till March 2020. I was just exhausted. And I was surviving. And I was like trying to get through. So I would get up 10 minutes before I was gonna go to work. Because sometimes that's all the notice they give you".*
> 17th May 2021.

I asked Jessica what the most satisfying part of her job was.

> *"In general, um, because we work in experiences, so making people happy specifically, especially kids, I love doing birthday parties. So whenever you see a child open their notebook, and you know, they love unicorns, so you make a special effort to make sure they get a unicorn one and seeing them light up. Like that's lovely. Or seeing people just say that they had a great day, like things like that... I would say the vast majority of it is centred around the customers because if they're happy, you have a great day".*

For Jessica, work was a labour of love motivated by a desire to make other people feel happy. Jessica talked about her concern for her colleagues' physical and mental well-being and her own. She discussed going back to work between lockdowns whilst grieving for her grandmother who had died the day before and feeling the strain of maintaining a level of composure in front of the visitors. She described work as like being "*on a stage, you have to be really smiley and really happy and really excited*". Jessica had prioritised the feelings of colleagues and strangers over her own, through her desire to maintain a happy atmosphere at work. Arlie Hochschild (2012:5-6) proposes that this 'emotional style' of service work whereby loving a job 'becomes part of the job' blurs the line between work life and social life making it difficult to tell when work life ends and begins. Jessica has very obviously blurred the boundary between work and social and felt it as a strain.

Like Alison and Jessica, for Jenny, a 27-year-old stage manager, the momentum of an all-encompassing work life had started to creep up on her pre-furlough. She worked long hours and the period before furlough had been particularly hectic.

> *"It's not very maintainable. And that's something I've realised over this past year. You can't really have a life when you do that job, because it's so intense in all different ways".*
> 17th May 2021.

I asked Jenny to elaborate on the term 'intense' and she outlines a typical working day,

> *"So, sometimes we'll start at nine o'clock in the morning, and we'll finish at 11. And we'll have a couple of hours when we can break. We always have to be one or two hours ahead of everybody and what's happening. It's just like, it's just a huge machine that never stops. And the time scales are just so ridiculous... especially at the beginning of productions when you have rehearsal periods and technical rehearsals, and you're trying to get a production up and running. As soon as it's up and running it starts to slow down. But that initial period is extremely intense. And that's where we were just before March had happened".*
> 17th May 2021.

Jenny articulates the intensity of her pre-furlough work life as a "*machine that never stops*" which gives a sense of relentless motion. Her long working days made it difficult for Jenny to separate work and social life. In common with Alison and Jessica, Jenny discussed how her work and social life were enmeshed,

> *"I mean, as intense as it can be, you do make really, really, really good friendships and relationships. And a lot of the conversations and experiences you have together are not particularly average. So, you know, you'll face things, which not many people would, or you just have really deep conversations about personal things that you wouldn't necessarily have with your friends".*
> 17th May 2021.

Jenny talked about how she felt about being furloughed;

> *"Lovely. Because I could just sleep. I really, I really, really welcomed it… I was just so grateful to have that time off… for the first few weeks I just did what I wanted to do and what my body wanted to do. And I just thought I'm going to relax as much as I can".*
> 17th May 2021.

Alison, Jessica and Jenny entered furlough with an expectation of a reprieve from the manifold demands of work and have an opportunity for rest. Alison had discussed that furlough was good for her health and enabled her to detach from responsibility. Jessica talked about furlough as detaching from feeling exhausted. Jenny had also spoken about feeling tired but also detaching from the intensity of her work life. For Kathleen Stewart (2007:19) when a stilled life happens out of the blue, perhaps such as being furloughed, it can 'be a flight from numbing routine and all the self-destructive strategies of carrying on'. Alison, Jessica and Jenny say that they would have carried on with their usual stressful lives were it not for the suspension from work life provided by furlough. Although they did not talk about work as 'self-destructive' they did discuss it as "*unsustainable", "exhausting*" and "*over-whelming*". Alison, Jessica and Jenny may have felt a form of weariness which Eleanor Wilkinson and Iliana Ortega-Alcázar (2018:163) define as a 'slow wearing down'. This is a form of tiredness created by the persistent rhythms of everyday life.

Alison, Jessica and Jenny had discussed furlough as a break from the demands of their work life. For others, feelings of unsafety had gathered around their workplace as a result of the pandemic. For those participants, being furloughed was welcome because it enabled them to be physically distanced from strangers and colleagues within the conditions of the pandemic.

> *"So it was a relief that I wasn't going to have to go… because you have to get very close to people when you're doing an eye test. And at that stage, we didn't have PPE[63]. Apart from stuff that we bought ourselves. We didn't have, couldn't get wipes for love nor money. So, it was when we did see people it was really tricky. We*

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[63] PPE is an acronym for Personal Protective Equipment such as face masks, visors, disposable gloves and aprons used by those in health care settings.

didn't have gloves or anything like we've got now. So yeah, it was kind of a relief...
that I didn't have to interact closely with people at that time".
Alexandra, a 40-year-old optometrist, 15th January 2021.

For 30-year-old estate agent Amy, pregnant at the onset of her furlough period, the suspension of work also came as a relief. Amy talks to me from her living room, a half-painted wall behind her as she rocks a wriggling baby at her shoulder.

"I was quite relieved, because obviously being in that limbo of not knowing,
obviously, not knowing the effect it could have had on me being pregnant because
it was still early days, and nobody really knew the effect it [SARS-CoV-2] could
have on pregnant people erm women, but I felt relieved to know where I was. And I
knew, right, I'm furloughed, this is the way it's gonna be. Just go from there really.
And plus, obviously being at home, I felt safe".
13th January 2021.

Pre-furlough, Jayne, a 37-year-old pastry chef, had felt vulnerable working with a boss with suspected COVID-19 who was also enacting practices in her workplace that she felt were unsafe.

"I was like hyper aware about washing your hands and being hygienic. And I ended
up counting how many times I had gone around the shop and came back and
washed my hands. And I've done it 12 times and he hadn't done it once. And... and
then he told me about how he thought he might have COVID, and I was just like sort
of silently in my mind freaking out... and were like working face to face and he was
like putting in a half-eaten croissant down... stuff you shouldn't do anyway like
putting it down on the surface and not washing the surface. So I ended up lying and
saying that my daughter had been sick and I had to go and pick her up... So, yeah, I
like walked out, because I was really concerned about their hygiene standards and
about my safety and my family's safety... And then because I think my... think I
decided to take my daughter out of childcare at that point as well. Because

*everything was just so unknown about the safety aspects of everything. And then,
I think I maybe told them that I couldn't go back to work cos I've got like a
massive childcare commitment now. And they put me on furlough".*
5th May 2021.

Alexandra, Amy and Jayne's comments are a reminder that the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was instigated under the conditions of a pandemic. The pandemic had the potential to create additional workplace stress for people who physically interacted with strangers (Rose-Redwood et al 2020:98). Alexandra had felt her personal safety had been compromised by not having the appropriate SARS-CoV-2 virus protections in place in her workplace. Jayne had felt her personal safety had been compromised by a colleague who was not enacting appropriate protocols to mitigate the spread of the SARS-CoV-2. Amy had felt unsafe due to being unsure of the effect of the SARS-CoV-2 virus on pregnant bodies. Alison, Jessica and Jenny had discussed furlough as a welcome break from the demands of their usual busy work life. Whereas Alexandra, Amy and Jayne welcomed furlough as a suspension from the uncertain conditions that the COVID-19 pandemic had created in their workplace. Looping back to Mason's (1993) notion of safe uncertainty, perhaps Alexandra, Amy and Jayne needed to feel some semblance of safety in order to cope within the multiple uncertainties of employment and the pandemic.

For those who welcomed suspension, their 'satisfying something' (Berlant 2011a:1-2) or positive attachment to work life, had come to instigate overwhelming feelings. To welcome the suspension of work life and the uncertainties of waiting through furlough, was to create a relieved detachment. Unlike those who resisted suspension and maintained a tension of active waiting, those who welcomed suspension immediately adopted a devitalised tension of waiting through their acceptance and embracing of it.

6.2 Stagnation

In the previous sections the furloughed either resisted being furloughed and in their resistance become disorientated, or they welcomed furlough as it provided the opportunity for self-care for those feeling tired or unsafe in their workplace. Either way the furloughed came to feel time through a new lens of suspended work rhythms. Some

of those furloughed either feared the stagnation of suspended time or felt that they had stagnated and attempted to expel their feelings of stagnation. Stagnation suggests a lack of flow. A pool of stagnant water, be it puddle or lake, becomes thickened by an accumulation of insects and bacteria attracted by its stasis. The longer a pool remains stagnant, the more viscous it becomes. This perhaps folds back to Lisa Baraitser (2017:1) and Denise Riley's (2012:31) thoughts that in a time of loss, time begins to become noticeable as it loses momentum and pools. A stagnant pool teeming with accumulated life, is murky and mysterious. Perhaps the furloughed's feelings expressed as stagnation, are an articulation of their disorientation within the unfamiliar.

The fear of stagnation manifests for some of those furloughed as a form of 'chronophobia', an anxiety shared by those in 'confinement' around the potential vastness of time, specifically a suspicion that time might be endless (Baraitser 2020:341). For others furloughed, stagnation was felt and expressed as a bodily sensation which they said they needed to exorcize. This section explores disorientation expressed as stagnation. It outlines the tensions of fear of stagnation, being in stagnation and strategies the furloughed used to expel the unwanted state of stagnation.

In Chapter 05, Joanna a 45-year-old working in the charity sector described how she maintained the rhythms of work life through voluntary work in the same sector. I want to revisit something she said in our exchange.

> *"I didn't want to stagnate. So, it was really important for me initially, to*
> *have that element of still working".*
> 26th April 2021.

Joanna discussed how her pre-furlough work life working for a charity was full and fulfilling. She gave the impression of thriving on busy working days filled with responsibility and pressure. The voluntary work she set up during furlough ensured that she did not disconnect from the momentum of work life. Returning to Lisa Baraitser's (2020:346) assertion that events that do not have overt dimensions, 'beginnings and ends', 'movement' can be felt as disturbing. It is possible that Joanna's articulation of not wanting "*to stagnate"* is a fear of the unknown temporal dimensions of furlough and an

attempt not to be disorientated by non-work life. Joanna had talked about the process of adjustment to furlough and the pandemic as like the process of bereavement.

> *"You go through shock, anger, resignation and an adjustment".*
> 26th April 2021.

Her articulation of her lack of control around the pandemic and furlough as akin to the stages of "*bereavement*", is perhaps an expression of loss for her usual work life[64]. Joanna had pre-empted the potential threat of stagnation during furlough, by setting up voluntary work in advance and then settling into it as soon as she was furloughed. For Joanna, not wanting to "*stagnate*" was perhaps an expression of 'chronophobia' and feeling anxious about potentially feeling the disorientation of an expanse of boundless time. Joanna was articulating the potential for her to "*stagnate*" during furlough and resisting it. Other people furloughed said that they did experience "*stagnation*". For Jacqueline, a 54-year-old stage manager, stagnation was felt as an affective atmosphere in her home. When I asked Jacqueline, about the difference between being inside and outside her house she replied,

> *"My immediate reaction was to say, the obvious containment and freedom, sense of space comparison. But as my brain went there, I suddenly realised and this perhaps goes back to your question about the atmosphere in the house, that I've it's just occurred to me that being in the house… is like… I love my house… I can't believe I'm going to say this… stagnation… or waiting or yeah like, it's not just containment in terms of walls… But it's a… sorry I'm just thinking this, and it's only just occurred to me and assessing it. It's almost like a containment from going forward".*
> 6th May 2021.

Jacqueline describes her spatial confinement as a feeling of "*stagnation*". Jacqueline discussed that feeling as, "*being held feels like something more oppressive than a support*".

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[64] The feeling that the detachment from work life felt like grief, finds echo in a paper by Peter Hamilton, Oonagh Harness and Martyn Griffin (2022:534) which explores from a business management angle a worker's sense of dignity during furlough.

Jacqueline's articulation of the undesirability of "*stagnation*", the lack of momentum, the feeling of being held, calls to (my) mind the containment of stagnant water. For Jacqueline this atmosphere specifically had a relation between being confined at home and the lack of momentum within the suspension of her work life. Out of the house Jacqueline began to volunteer at a care home. She formed relationships with those she cared for and became part of the care home's community. The most satisfying parts of Jacqueline's pre-furlough life as a stage manager had been the "*camaraderie*" of working in a "*very close-knit team*" and seeing the "*physical reactions*" of the audience with their "*oohs and ahhs*". Her pre-furlough life was full of relations with people, be they colleagues or audiences. Despite living with a husband (who sometimes worked from home), the lack of in person interactions and busyness of work life, had created for Jacqueline an atmosphere of stagnation in her home.

Jade, a 34-year-old stage manager also discussed experiencing stagnant atmospheres in her home during furlough.

> *Jade:* "*I think a lot of the time when I was on my own, I felt... it felt quite dead as an atmosphere, it felt quite stagnant* [gestures with a flattened hand]. *And trying to get out of the house was quite important. But often, I'd find that I take that atmosphere with me* [gestures with a hand over her head]. *And so you know, when you feel that sort of like a dark cloud, and then you go back, I'm gonna go for a walk. And then like, this bloody dark cloud is following me around, I just can't get rid of it. And yeah, so I'd say that it was very changeable. And* [pause]... *not necessarily always, like, quite a lot of time wasn't very positive atmosphere*".
>
> "*Victoria:* *Okay, you just described it as kind of dark. Can you kind of expand on that a little bit about what that actually means?*
>
> *Jade:* *Yeah, so I guess, like, stagnant is another word that I would definitely use for it, where it just felt sort of lifeless and like, like a constant struggle and a constant push. Like, there was a heaviness in the air. And that was quite impenetrable at times*".
>
> 15th May 2021.

Jade forms a shape with her hand as if holding an object. For her the stagnant atmosphere is almost tangible. Erin Manning (2007:8) proposes that gestures are a reminder that not all things can be fully expressed in language and that gesture can provide an alternative vocabulary. In this way, gesture has an interrelation with language particularly 'where the felt is said even as the said is felt' (ibid). And yet, gesture alone is empty without the relation of language and context. Jade gesticulates with hand movements pushing away from her body, imaginably a signal of wanting to move away from stagnant atmospheres. Jade's gestures and articulation that the stagnant atmosphere sometimes moved out of the house and stayed with her, are perhaps examples of how affective atmospheres and bodily capacities can be in relation (Ahmed 2014:10). That the atmosphere moved with her outside of the home, is perhaps an instance of how affects can be 'sticky' and have 'residue' (Ahmed, 2010:40; 2014:89). Jade's gestures are conceivably also an indicator of the 'excess' of the affective atmosphere she was feeling (Anderson 2014:160).

Stagnation was described as a spatial and bodily atmosphere by Jacqueline and Jade. Jade articulated stagnation as a mood that stayed with her whether in or out of the house. Like atmospheres, moods are something we can find ourselves in. Moods have the capacity to linger, even when we sometimes want to move on from them (Ahmed 2014:13). They can colour how we perceive our surroundings and situation (ibid: 14). Jade's evocation of feeling stagnation as an atmosphere, perhaps mood, that had felt *"lifeless"* with a *"heaviness in the air"* was possibly her extending her inner feelings outwards towards her surroundings. For others, stagnation was expressed as feeling bored. Boredom is felt emotionally and corporeally (Anderson 2004; Nash and Lyon 2023; Schweizer 2008:24) sometimes expressed as a mood (Newman 2021:124). Moods like atmospheres are something we hold onto and move with us (Ahmed 2014:15). Jessica, a 23-year-old, non-essential retail worker discussed how she experienced boredom as a form of ennui.

> *"For me… boredom is just, there's nothing to look forward to. There's nothing, everything that I want to do just sounds a bit mehh… Like, I wasn't depressed or anything, it was more just like, there was a list of shows I wanted to watch. But I just had no real desire to watch them. And nothing was really interesting, me".*
> 17th May 2021.

A mood such as boredom can have a hand in whether we decide or are willing to do something, whether we are 'in the mood' (Ahmed 2014:14). As such motivations and moods are in relation to each other. Jessica has the intention to watch some television programmes and has a mental list of them, and yet her lack of motivation keeps her stagnating in boredom unable to ignite enough energy to actually watch them. Her detachment from work life and feeling held up, perhaps prevents a capacity to move out of stagnation and boredom. As such Jessica has possibly slid into a waiting tension of torpor.

Lesley, 65-year-old, swimming teacher described the atmosphere in her house as "*boring at times really boring*". Lesley shares a feeling of ennui expressed by Jessica;

> "*Lethargy, lethargy, I would think because when I get bored, I can't you know... I think, lethargy sort of not so much depression but sadness, you know, because you haven't got... you can't... I can't... because I'm not keen on housework, then I go and do some and then I get totally bored. And then I'll go and do something like you know, scroll on my phone which I don't like doing you know, I'm looking on Facebook and things. And then you think I need something to do, I need something to do and then I would, you know, think I'll go and read me book and I get bored with that. There's nothing on the television or you know, it's just, it's just a lethargy*".
> 28th May 2021.

Lesley's feelings around boredom are echoed by Alice.

> "*a lot of it I was just really fed up and waiting and being bored is very draining. Um I think so I was feeling quite tired. Erm it just I just feel like I couldn't be bothered to do things a lot of the time. Erm when I had all that time that I could do things, and I think I've probably wasted quite a lot of it. Just feeling like I didn't want to do anything. Erm so probably have a bit of guilt about that which will probably stay with me*".
> Alice a 37-year-old optometrist, 17th January 2021.

For Jessica, Lesley and Alice feeling bored created a failure of interest in activity which may have orientated them out of stagnation. For them stagnation was a mood of boredom and a bodily sensation felt as "*mehh", "lethargy", "draining*". The inability to move forward was not welcome and expressed negatively. Suspended time as experienced by Jessica, Lesley and Alice, is perhaps in a similar manner to those incarcerated in prison, where according to Jason Farman (2018:185), 'time is meant to be slow and thick and noticeable'. Some like Alice felt guilty about wasting time by spending time stagnating and being unproductive. In the expression of guilt there is perhaps an expression of the desire to do things within the free time of furlough, but a lack of capacity to initiate activity.

For Jenny, 27-year-old stage manager, stagnation felt bodily was something she actively wanted to move on from.

> "*Sometimes, I could feel that my body was just stagnant, and it just needed to move. So I would just walk and walk and walk. Sometimes I would leave at like, one o'clock in the afternoon and come back at six*".
> 17th May 2021.

Jenny talked about listening to MP3s of "sound baths"[65] in order to feel less stagnant.

> "*It sounds a little bit woo woo... I'd feel quite heavy in the heart* [taps her chest with a flat palm]. *And then if there's... higher sort of frequencies* [gestures with her hand by left side her head] *erm they always felt like they were clearing out like the head area* [gesticulates outward from her head] *Erm... it was just like getting rid of all of that sort of stagnant* [gesticulates in a spiral motion from her head] *built up sort of negative energy, like I just needed rid of it. And then the lower sounds would be sort of this part of my body* [gestures between neck and stomach area] *and then the lower even more would be like the root part of my body. Erm... you hear like a Himalayan sort of cymbal... being rung, it just really vibrates through your head* [gestures over her head]. *Erm it just feels like it's getting rid of it almost*

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[65] According to Jenny, "*sound baths*" are "*frequency music*" made by rubbing the inside of crystal bowls. As she told me this she gestured as if she was holding an implement and made a circular motion.

like I'm doing this picking up [makes a ball shape with her hands] *all of the things which have stressed me out and like throwing it away* [gestures throwing it away from her head]. *That's what it felt like".*
17th May 2021.

In common with Jade, Jenny used her body to express corporeal feelings of stagnation. Through gestures she communicated a transit of stagnation from her body. It was striking that those who talked about stagnation did so by gesturing away from their body as if pushing stagnation away. Perhaps for them stagnation was taking imaginary dimensional form.

For the furloughed, feelings of stagnation (and their potential) involved an orientation towards an unwelcome object which they either dreaded or already felt and wanted to exorcise. For those who discussed stagnation, it was linked to a fear of detachment from quotidian rhythms and the perceived unknown of a situation without momentum. Whether expressed as fear or as a bodily feeling or mood, stagnation was variously articulated as *"draining", "heavy"* an*d "oppressive".* This was perhaps an articulation of not wanting to feel disorientated through feeling the slow viscosity of time. A pool of thick viscous material such as a muddy puddle, has limited capacity to move beyond its thickened edges. I wonder if the not wanting to feel stagnation was linked not just to feelings of stasis but also feelings of containment. Or rather not wanting to feel contained by a lack of perceived possibilities that their usual productive lives afforded.

6.3 Floating

When floating in a body of water like a lake, we lie on the surface. Unlike stagnation that suggests cessation of movement, floating requires us to surrender and move with the momentum of the liquid. The surface of the water holds and suspends us sometimes with soothing motions, sometimes buffeting us in directions we would not prefer. Some of the participants articulated that they felt like they were "*floating"* during their time of furlough. For the furloughed, floating was an articulation of multiple detachments from work life and from others. For some furloughed, floating was felt as a strain, for others it felt like a privilege. This section explores the feelings of those furloughed who felt like

they were floating and connected their feelings of detachment to feelings of care from and for others.

It is 14:20 on the 3rd of March 2021 and Carlos, a 27-year-old food technologist, talks to me from his living room. A black sofa with grey and monochrome cushions set against a grey wall is visible behind him. With a headset and microphone, he sits at a desk and swivels in his seat as he talks to me;

> *"That whole period was just a floating moment that for me lasted five months, so it's not just a weekend. And there was a lot of things I expected of my employer that I didn't get at the time. So I did feel a bit forgotten and a bit taken for granted".*
> 3rd of March 2021.

I asked Carlos to expand on his comment about floating;

> *"In terms of floating maybe I didn't describe it properly. Floating meaning that you're just hanging in space, in time basically ... you're just waiting you're standing there. And from say before the April when I was furloughed till the very end, although I tried to keep myself active the whole period of five months, if I look back, I would probably find it hard to remember exactly what I did, because I felt like I was just waiting to hear something or waiting to be given good or bad news. I wasn't sure what, what would be the progression after that".*
> 3rd of March 2021.

Carlos articulates floating as being held in a position of uncertain trajectories, not knowing when he would go back to work. His comment that floating in furlough was not like a "*weekend*" but much longer, is perhaps connecting the non-productive time of furlough with the non-productive time of the weekend which is (for some) a suspension of work life between working weeks. Lisa Baraitser (2017:100) in a different context[66], describes being in a 'floating temporal frame' as an acknowledgement that one upholds a relation to a structure but is disconnected from the wider temporalities that hold and

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[66] Lisa Baraitser's (2017:100) comment is referring to being part of the organisation of the family but not feeling part of a particular generation.

frame that structure. Transposed to this context, Carlos' feelings of floating are in relation to his disconnection from work life, but his furlough is within the condition of having colleagues still working within the temporalities of work life, and so he feels in relation to but untethered from the temporalities of work.

Carlos stayed buoyant throughout his duration of furlough with activity he cannot remember. The forgotten activity was perhaps a form of self-care, maintaining some semblance of momentum amidst his uncertainty. 'Maintenance' for Baraitser (ibid:53) 'is the temporal dimension of care', of support experienced over time. In this instance Carlos is enacting self-care perhaps as a reaction to the lack of care shown towards him by his employers; "*what caused the most discomfort was really the fact that we were sort of forgotten*". He discussed how he felt that it was the "*responsibility as an employer to take care of your employees*" and employers with furloughed employees should put themselves "*in their shoes*". Carlos' re-entry to work life was abrupt. Called back to work suddenly and required to continue as if he had "*only left yesterday for a weekend*", with a lack of acknowledgement by his employer of the length of time (five months) that he spent in furlough. Carlos' feeling of floating was aligned to feelings of disconnection and a lack of care and empathy shown to him by his employer.

For Carlos feeling like he was "*floating*" was not a preferable position. For others "*floating*" was also an articulation of detachment, but the strain was not in relation to their employers but in relation to those they considered to be in worse situations than themselves. Alexandra, a 40-year-old optometrist, waited out furlough at home with two children aged 11 and 13, and a keyworker husband who worked out of the home.

> "*We had it super easy to be honest, because financially we were fine. Didn't have to, obviously furloughed, so I didn't have to work. Erm friends of ours who in the first lockdown had small kids had to work at home and home-school their small kids, erm we had it so easy in comparison… You did kind of talking to people then… I did feel a bit kind of… unfair that, like, I couldn't talk about anything that was happening about us, or that kind of thing, because they were having it really hard, and we were just kind of floating around*".
> 15th January 2021.

I asked Alexandra if she felt being able to "*float*" was a privilege, and she agrees. Whereas Carlos had wanted his employers to feel empathy for his situation, Alexandra was the one feeling empathy and guilt in relation to those that she deemed less fortunate than herself. Floating for Alexandra was a distance from the struggles felt by others. For Alexandra, care was not about looking after herself, but about being mindful of not talking about her perceived privileged position with others. She did however articulate that the inability to talk about her situation as "*unfai*r", which suggests that not talking and caring was a burden. If I take Ami Harbin's (2016:20) assertion that 'we might best tell what we think disorientations are by looking at our expressions of care and concern for others who are disoriented' and apply that to Alexandra. Then her expression of disconnection from the struggles of others, could help us understand how Alexandra frames her own disorientation. Referring back to Alexandra's comments in Chapter 04 (section 4.4) about not being able to decide how to fill her time during furlough and not being active until her partner returned home from work. I sense that her articulation of "*floating*" and her inability to fill her time are both plausible expressions of her disorientation. Alexandra is perhaps experiencing a disorientation of detachment both from struggling peers and her productive work life.

6.4 Noticing

Noticing is an awareness that can wax and wane in intensity. What starts out in our periphery can move and grow in our perception and come to the fore. And yet that which has danced before us taking our full attention, can fade away the more we experience it or place lesser importance on it. For Sara Ahmed (2017:28) not allowing yourself to notice certain things prevents you from changing 'your relation to the world'. Which begs the question, if you did allow yourself to be open to noticing, what relations could change? In the previous sections of this chapter, I discussed how the furloughed expressed their feelings and bodily reactions to the differing tensions of welcoming or resisting of finding themselves in suspension from work life. Whether resisting, welcoming or feeling like they were stagnating or floating, by being detached from work life the furloughed had become stilled bodies. Earlier in this chapter Joanna had likened the process of being furloughed to the process of bereavement "*shock, anger, resignation and an adjustment*". So, what happened when the furloughed became resigned to and adjusted to their new

situation of paid non-work? This section explores how the furloughed's acceptance of being in suspended time opened opportunities for reorientating and noticing new perspectives on their environments, themselves and their work lives.

It is 11:55 hrs on the 11th of February 2021, I am interviewing Claire, a 47-year-old manufacturing trainer, who in an earlier section shared how she initially resisted her suspension from work. She is discussing how she eventually acquiesced and accepted it. In coming to terms with living in the disorientation of suspended and slowed time, Claire had found herself noticing things.

> *"You know, even for the change, and the challenges with family life and things like that I actually did really relax. I really, really chilled out. And I can remember, you know, where you just notice things again, having time. So even just laying in the garden and noticing some something on a leaf, or a pattern in the cloud, those kinds of things that I probably would have noticed in my childhood, but not for so long. And you think, oh, wow, stars at night, you know, I was noticing those, I would be bringing the washing off the line or looking up and seeing stars. Whether it was because there was less traffic at certain times throughout COVID or furlough. I don't know. But yeah, just noticing things".*
> 11th February 2021.

Claire's period of slowed time during furlough, allowed a form of what Elizabeth Freeman (2010:60) calls 'temporal drag' or the capacity to pull through ideas or feelings or capacities from the past to inform and be part of her present. For Freeman (ibid:65) 'temporal drag' enables resonances between the past and the present. Claire's childhood capacity to notice details in her environment such as stars or leaves had been interrupted by a busy adult life filled with family and work life. The suspended time of furlough enabled her to draw on her childhood capacity to notice things and consider her environment in a way she had not done or a long time.

> *"I had some really lovely times with my family and some time to do stuff around the house and some time for me just to do nothing. It's been so long. You know, you are*

a mum, we are just busy. And if we're not physical busy, our minds are busy. So I think it just allowed me to have some quiet times".

11th February 2021.

Claire's acceptance of her situation had enabled her to practise self-care and be able to "*just do nothing*". Unlike Alison, Jessica and Jenny earlier in the chapter who were beginning to feel "*burnout*" and welcomed furlough, Claire enjoyed the momentum of her work life and working with "*a great bunch of people*". When I asked Claire about the most satisfying part of her job, she talked about the "*feeling*" of helping a person and "*watch them grow*" and working at a company at a time when *"new ideas"* were being initiated by colleagues. Claire's initial resistance to furlough and not accepting its potential free time, perhaps connected to her positive attachment to her colleagues and work life. The suspension of work life through furlough had "*allowed*" Claire to have "*some quiet times*". Amy Harbin (2016:33) suggests that disorientation can lead an individual to new 'practices of relating to oneself'. Claire discussed that the free time of furlough had given her time for herself and her family that she would not have otherwise sought or experienced.

Claire's experience resonates with that of Laura, a 47-year-old researcher. When I interviewed Laura, she said that her time in furlough had been the happiest in her life. The memory of which, instigated a broad smile across her face. Although Laura enjoyed her work, she disliked her commute and was not keen on workplace politics. Her time off work removed layers of stress that positively affected her emotional and physical well-being, positively improved her sleep and her relationship with her husband. She said the lack of stress had given her more time to think and notice things in a way she had not previously;

> *"Oh well yeah, because I was outside a lot well things outside… garden things, because normally I never have time… When I had time off work, like at the weekends, I would normally go out Saturdays. I would go shopping, go to lunch, go for cocktails, you know that kind of thing… so I didn't kind of have much time to do*

all those other things, to kind of sit outside in the garden or be interested in plants or things that are growing… so it gave me a new appreciation of that kind of stuff. It gave me time to do that".
18th June 2021.

Laura explains that the busy momentum of everyday life that had previously prevented her from slowing down. The suspended time of furlough had opened the opportunity to reorientate her attention and like Claire, notice things in nature. More than that, in the acceptance of waiting Claire and Laura were no longer merely being subjected to the experience of waiting through furlough but allowing it to open space for other things and themselves. Their experiences are echoed by Harold Schweizer (2017:93) who considered that releasing a tension of subordination during waiting, opens a freedom to place attention on self and your own self-worth.

'If I claim my experience of waiting rather than being merely subjected to it, if I resist the commercialization of time, if I own my time, if I stop to watch the woods fill up with snow, I make time matter – and then I matter. Matter, of course, is just another word for time, and time another word for being',
(Schweizer 2017:93)

However, Claire said that she was glad when her furlough ended in redundancy. The accumulating uncertainties of a longer duration of furlough might have driven her "*crazy*". The acceptance of furlough and reorientation towards non-work life was for Claire a temporary situation.

So far in this chapter I have entwined the suspension from work life with feelings of loss and detachment. The previous section outlined how acceptance of the loss of work life opened the capacity for the furloughed to notice things in their surrounding environment attached to notions of self-care. This section will explore how some of the furloughed discussed noticing a change in their relation to work life. This change was articulated by the furloughed who had discussed accepting their suspension from work and by those who had subsequently returned to work.

Alison, who worked at a cooperative café, had perceived furlough as a welcome break from an over busy work life. Furlough had given her the space and time to reflect on her relation to work. At the time of our interview (12th January 2021) she was still furloughed, in an email on the 10th of April 2022 she shares;

> *"Yes, everything changed. I questioned a lot during COVID lockdown including work, where I live, why I do what I do, my future direction. Work used to be my life, with reduced hours/ no work I realised life was not work. I also wanted to do my own thing, live my dreams, work less and earn more, hence the plans to work for myself… Realising that work/your colleagues/ the cause you work for, is not your life. I guess I was a workaholic before and I realised how little a career actually is on the scale of things (family, friends, freedom, health)".*

Waiting in long durations or 'chronicity' opens the opportunity for 'quiet noticing' of our 'capacity to begin again' (Baraitser 2017:188). For Alison, furlough had opened a space for her to rethink her work and social lives. Alison was someone whose pre-furlough work life had over-filled her time. Previously work had been a labour of love in a workplace and with colleagues that she was emotionally attached to. The shift to realising that a career is not that important was significant. As a consequence of the time to think, that furlough had enabled, Alison had started to make plans to work for herself, I understand from her comments that this was a desire to find more work life balance.

Like Alison, Caroline, a 49-year-old charity worker, had been changed by her period of furlough. Similar to Alison, Caroline discussed that since being furloughed she wanted to *"find a sense of equilibrium"*. Furlough had changed her relation to workplace and employer. In our interview on the 20th of February 2021 Caroline discussed that despite being attached to her work she had initially accepted being furloughed. However, she had quickly felt resistant to being furloughed. This was mostly due to feelings of rejection instigated by the manner in which her employer had handled her furlough. Fourteen months later her attitude to her workplace was still one of disconnection. I asked Caroline if there was anything about her time in furlough that would stay with her, she replied,

> *"A sense of impermanence. I no longer feel that I am obliged to the place that kept me going before. Now I can change".*
> By email 10ᵗʰ April 2022.

In common with Alison, Caroline had also started to think about working for herself,

> *"If I'm going to work at top speed then I need to be doing it for me".*

I suggest that Caroline's wanting a "*sense of equilibrium*" is linked to feelings of control. The feeling of wanting to work for herself is about gaining some control within her working life which she currently feels has a "*sense of impermanence*". Previously Caroline's work like Alison's was a labour of love, working for a charity that she had a personal connection with. Ahmed (2010:86) proposes that through 'noticing' you can 'realise that the world you are in is not the world you thought you were in'. In Caroline's case noticing how her employers had handled her furlough had made her realise that she was not a "*a vital part of the team*" and that she was "*dispensable*". Her sense of worth was bound with her former feeling of being an "*important part of the team*" which she had now lost. Perhaps Caroline's disconnection was irrevocable and that her wanting to work for herself, a natural trajectory of this. For Carlos, a food technologist, furlough did irrevocably damage his relationship with his employer.

> *"Quit job due to lack of motivation and involvement during furlough, followed by an expectation to "get on with it" as soon as I was needed due to reduced sales/ added pressures from customers".*
> By email 14th April 2022.

For Carlos furlough had left him feeling "*floating*" and disconnected by his employer. The consequence of this, was his leaving the job he was furloughed from. The period of furlough had made him reassess what he required in a workplace. His new employment was in a workplace where he felt his progress was being monitored and "*everyone is accountable for their input/work output*". For Carlos furlough had made him realise that having a close connection with his employer is important for him in a workplace.

Jemma, 36, had been furloughed from a job teaching English as a foreign language. In common with Caroline and Carlos, being furloughed had made her "*lose faith*" in her employer. Although she had been told her job was "*safe*" she did not "*assume it was safe*". Being furloughed had given Jemma time to reflect on her career and investigate possible alternative careers and opportunities for further training. Her furlough and subsequent redundancy cut ties from a sector in which she deemed it difficult to find further employment in. She did, however, find another job as a university administrator. I asked Jemma how being furloughed had affected her attitude to work.

> "*I wouldn't say my attitude has changed in terms of how I approach my work -   I'm still dedicated and give it my all, but I am more aware that I would rather work to live than vice versa and finding the right role/hours is important. However, putting that into practice is a tricky question, especially when work takes up most of the time. I do try to finish on time as much as possible!*".
> By email 19th of April 2022.

I think Jemma's comment "*that I would rather work to live than vice versa*" speaks to the idea that work and social life should be enmeshed as discussed earlier in the chapter. Jemma is articulating a desire for a separation of work and social life, perhaps an articulation of her discomfort at a former working life where she said relationships were close. Jemma is not the only one in this chapter to talk about wanting disconnection between work and social life. Alison and Caroline both were previously emotionally invested in their work and workplace, and subsequently became detached as a result of being furloughed. They both stated that they wanted to start their own businesses in order to have more control over their work life.

6.5 Feeling in Suspension

Ami Harbin (2016: 174-175) holds that disorientation might be experienced as so all-encompassing that an individual may be unaware just how much they are transformed by the experience. As such, resistance to feelings of disorientation risk of not allowing an individual's capacity for change through them (ibid). For the furloughed, feeling in suspension created tensions of resistance and acceptance. It mobilised fear of stagnation

and floating whether actually experienced or not. Eventual acceptance of being suspended from work and its ensuing disorientation, I suggest, enabled the furloughed to open the capacity for reflection about self and attitudes to work life. Once accepted, the disorientation of waiting through furlough seems to have opened new felt capacities and intensities which the furloughed might not have had otherwise.

Joanna had expressed a parallel between being furloughed and the process of grief as *"shock, anger, resignation and an adjustment".* This chapter explored how initial feelings about the detachment from work life and its rhythms was expressed as loss. Drawing on the work of Lisa Baraitser (2012; 2017) and Denise Riley (2012), the expression of loss was articulated as a disoriented relation with how time was experienced. In the feeling of loss, time had begun to feel amorphous and vague with a feeling of detachment from the temporal parameters that the rhythms of quotidian life can impose. For some of those furloughed, the suddenness of that detachment had been felt as a jolt, which perhaps linked to Riley's (in Baraitser 2020) evocations of how grief is felt temporally as 'time stopped'. I argued that the furloughed felt their detachment from work life as a series of tensions: resistance and welcoming, floating and privilege and finally a suspension of tension articulated as acceptance of their situation. For some, their ongoing orientation to work life instigated feelings of resistance to feeling time differently and resistance to the detachment from work rhythms. I argued that the intensity of resistant feelings was in relation to how the furloughed felt about their workplace and colleagues. I drew on Ahmed's (2010:168) evocation of alienation to argue how intense feelings of rejection were articulated in relation to not wanting to be detached from work. However, feelings of suspension were not universally resisted. Some of the furloughed had in their pre-furlough life felt overwhelmed by work life and welcomed becoming detached from it. Some workers had pre-furlough, blurred the lines between work and social life and overworked as a consequence. I argued that for them, furlough had opened the opportunity for rest, recuperation and reflection which their normal rhythms of work life had disallowed.

Other workers had, pre-furlough, become anxious about their working conditions during the pandemic. Furlough had allowed them to feel safe amidst multiple heightened uncertainties. Uncertainty about the potentially vast temporality of waiting through

furlough, manifest for some as a feeling of or potential to feel, stagnation. Stagnation was expressed as a tension of slowed time felt bodily as stasis and emotionally as boredom. I argue that the feeling of stagnation was perhaps linked to not wanting to be limited temporally or spatially, or the reverse, in slowing down not wanting to feel 'chronophobia', the potential vastness of time (Baraitser 2020:341). Either way, the furloughed were articulating a sensed feeling of a changing texture of time which they felt uncertain about. For others the detachment from work and colleagues was expressed as floating. Floating was linked to notions of care. The furloughed either expressed floating as a feeling they were not cared for by employers, which exacerbated feelings of detachment and distance. Or the furloughed felt their experiences of furlough did not mirror the struggles that others were feeling. In that case floating was expressed as care for others by not talking about their more fortunate experience of furlough. And yet, not feeling able to talk freely about their experiences, was articulated as a strain. I argue that floating therefore became a form of negatively felt tension between self and others. Through these tensions I argued that relations to workplaces are not homogenous and are felt at different intensities.

Finally this chapter argued that acquiescing to being furloughed and accepting it, opened the possibility to notice new perspectives on their situation. Releasing the pressing absence of work life by allowing the relation between self and work to suspend, became a process of reclaiming time. Looping back to Harold Schweizer's (2017:93) comment earlier that to reclaim one's own time, is to make that time matter. In other words, to realise the importance of one's own time is to understand one's own value. Reclaiming time for self-reflection became a process of understanding the relation between work and self, as Alison articulated "*Work used to be my life, with reduced hours/ no work I realised life was not work".* When orientations become part of the flows of everyday life, they become something we don't necessarily notice or question (Ahmed 2006a:5). Rhythms of work and work life may become so ingrained in how lives are lived and who we are, that unless they are enforcedly stopped, we may never notice how much they impress upon us.

In the last three chapters I argued that the detachment of work life and its rhythms created a disorientating presence for those waiting through furlough. I explored

disorientation: as a spatial navigation, a temporal disconnection and as tensions. These disorientations born out an enforced detachment from orientating object - work life. Sara Ahmed (2006a:178) maintains that 'If orientations point us to the future, to what we are moving toward, then they also keep open the possibility of changing directions and of finding other paths'. This is a sentiment that the last three chapters have also revealed, that the letting go of feelings of loss surrounding work life enabled some of those furloughed to become open to new possibilities. Those new possibilities took the form of alternative work practices, modes of occupation, forms of personal relationships, insights about self, others and attachment to work. The next chapter will discuss the conceptualisation of waiting and the plural forms of disorientation outlined in the last three chapters. I then return to the initial lines of inquiry through a discussion of the forms of disorientation in the thesis through notions of attachment, detachment and orientation. In the chapter I make suggestions for future work which could draw on the study's approach and findings. I then outline possible contributions to knowledge that the study makes and end on some final thoughts about the study.

~ Conclusion ~

The Disorientations of

Waiting through Furlough

7.1 The Lived Experience of Furlough

It is the 27th of August 2023, almost two years since the cessation of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in September 2021. Furlough was an unusual UK governmental strategy possibly never to be repeated. As I identified in the first chapter, the social, cultural, and economic significance of waiting through furlough as an emergent cultural object, shifted in wider discourse as the scheme and the study unfolded. As UK society moves on from the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on social and cultural life, how the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and those furloughed are understood will probably be subject to further perceptual shifts. This study initially sought to understand the lived experience of waiting through furlough, through three lines of inquiry: 1. What embodied feelings did the space-time of waiting through furlough instigate? 2. How is a suspended relation from an organisation (workplace) lived and felt by furloughed individuals? 3. How do people waiting in unknown durations narrate their experience? Through exploring these questions, the study has fulfilled its aim of opening insight of furlough beyond being an economic strategy and cultural object, to something lived and felt.

More importantly, the study has surfaced how people *felt* the attachment to and detachment from work life and subsequent orientation towards its recommencement. Through the approach of considering furlough as a form of waiting, the study focused on conceptualisations of the spatial, temporal, and tensive dimensions of waiting experiences. In doing so the overarching argument for the thesis emerged that detachment from work life and its rhythms had made life disorientating for those waiting through furlough. The research therefore became a study of how people wait in

disorientation. *Disorientation* was determined in the study as having *a plurality of forms* and shaped the furlough's capacity *to act, feel, and endure* their situation. This study's surfacing of the different dimensions of disorientations within an experience of long-term waiting, adds to the understanding of embodied disorientations, (non)work life and waiting within social and cultural geography, in particular geographies of disorientation and geographies of COVID-19. In other words, the conceptualisations of disorientation within this study have potential implications beyond the circumstance of furlough.

The rest of this chapter draws together the strands of the study. Initially, I work through how the conceptualisations of the four waiting dimensions were drawn on in order to create a nuanced account of waiting through furlough. Secondly, I give an overview of the disorientations detailed across chapters 4, 5 and 6 and the overarching findings of the study. Third, through concepts of attachment and detachment I discuss feelings, suspended workplace relations and the language that the furloughed used to articulate their experiences within the study. Fourth, I suggest how this study could be extended and areas of future research that that could be supported substantively and conceptually by the findings of the study. Fifth, is an outline of the contribution of the thesis to the discipline of social and cultural geography and in particular geographies of COVID-19, waiting, work and disorientation. Lastly, I share some final thoughts about the study.

7.2 Waiting through Furlough

Waiting I have determined is a suspended space-time that is always in relation to an object. Within the thesis, those waiting through furlough were held suspended and detached from work life and orientated towards the future object of its recommencement. Waiting through furlough as a space-time of suspension involved multiple intensities and capacities. By attending to the differing tensions of waiting experienced by a person during furlough, the study was able to identify how these intensities and capacities informed how a furloughed person navigated space, time, their bodies, and their feelings. The focus on waiting tensions revealed the importance a person gave to waiting and its cessation. Those in an active tension waited in an alert orientation to the imminence of its denouement. Whilst those who waited in torpor had become resigned to their duration of furlough and perhaps starting to feel detached

from the orientation of its ending. The furloughed's feelings of alertness or resignation in turn influenced how they used space, filled time, or comported their bodies. To make sense of the interrelations between the tensions of waiting and the lived experience of furlough, the study conceptualised and worked with four dimensions of waiting: space of arrangement, time as lived, whilst the corporeal and felt involved capacities and intensities.

The space-time of furlough was enacted in people's homes, which as a *spatial arrangement* is a permanent space of domesticity containing moments of circumstantial waiting, such as waiting for a kettle to boil. However, during furlough, the home became delineated as a temporary waiting space enforced by the UK government in order to mitigate the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Within this enforced separation from others, differing arrangements of waiting space folded into each other, as the home became simultaneously a permanent, temporary, and circumstantial waiting space. The shift in spatial arrangement and how people perceived and felt about those arrangements created new spatial navigations in the home for those furloughed. Navigation within the home came to involve a relation with another who became an orientation marker for those furloughed. Attention to the spatial arrangement of waiting in the study, surfaced not just how people used and navigated space. It enabled the study to explore how being orientated towards another exacerbated feelings of detachment and disorientation which contoured their experience of furlough.

Detachment from the *rhythms of work time* meant that time throughout furlough developed new tempos, rhythms, and arrhythmias. During furlough, work time became a promissory relation which the furloughed attempted to stay orientated to. Within the study, attending to how the furloughed considered and lived time, opened not only how people filled their time but how having an orientation to work time when detached from it, instigated certain forms of temporal disorientation. Their temporal disorientation had consequences not just for how they experienced time during furlough but also on their return to work life where their temporal disorientations lingered.

A furloughed person's *corporeal responses* to their period of waiting were made amidst the uncertainties of the COVID-19 pandemic, confinement to the home, and detachment

from the temporalities of work life. Attention to the body in the study surfaced how corporeal intensities experienced in the sensory register shaped how the furloughed navigated through the space of the home, other people, and their emotions. Focussing on bodily rhythms exposed the extent to which a person's normal bodily functions such as sleeping and eating are aligned to work time. The study revealed that detachment from work time had created bodily arrhythmia and bodily and temporal disorientation. On the furloughed's return to work, they had either recalibrated or attempted to realign their bodily rhythms to work time. This had proved successful for some and highly challenging for others.

The study's *attention to feelings* during waiting through furlough surfaced felt orientations to work life, to employers, and to spatial and temporal orientations. By focussing on detachment from work life, the study exposed how people hold certain emotional relations to and expectations of their workplace and employers. The fulfilment or not of these, toned people's emotional responses to their waiting experiences. Feelings during furlough were also shaped by waiting tensions. For example, those in an active tension, where return to work felt imminent, articulated attached feelings, whilst those who had slipped into torpor expressed feeling detached from employers.

By separating the tensions and dimensions of waiting, I was able to gain and present a nuanced understanding of different feelings present within the furloughed's experience. By exploring a person's period of furlough through a single waiting dimension as a lens, I could pay sustained attention to certain aspects of their experience and then work through its interrelatedness with other the waiting dimensions. For example by thinking with the spatial dimensions of waiting when considering Chloe's experience in section 4.2, I not only surfaced her spatial use but how that spatial use was influencing her emotional relation to her partner and herself. The focus on Lydia's relation with time in section 5.4 revealed that her misalignment with time during furlough was felt acutely through her body informing not just her circadian rhythms but her spatial use and eating habits. In chapters four, five, and six which outline the experiences of those furloughed, certain dimensions are brought to the fore but, as with Chloe and Lydia's experiences, they are always imbricated or enmeshed with other waiting dimensions. The approach of working with the dimensions of waiting led to the identification that waiting through

furlough was lived as an experience of plural disorientations. It also led to an understanding of how those disorientations overlapped and influenced how people lived and endured their experience of furlough.

7.3 Waiting in Disorientation

The thesis pivots around the accounts of disorientation given by those furloughed, which are presented across three empirical chapters (four, five, and six). Chapter 04 'Losing Orientation: 'Leading a Shadow Life', explored spatial navigations performed by the furloughed around a proximate or absent other in the wake of the furloughed's detachment from work life. I have conceptualised these navigations as disorientations, which manifest as spectatorship of a productive other, emotional disconnection from a proximate other, dislocation from the present felt in relation to a productive other, and intense sensory disturbances created by an absent other. Within these navigations, the 'other' became a relational marker for the furloughed's own emotional position, which one of the study participants deemed "*leading a shadow life*" (section 4.1). Spatial navigation (circumnavigation) and temporal navigations (vacillation) were made in relation to another whose productivity was a reminder of the furloughed's former productive self. The emotional navigation (periphery) was enacted as a strategy to hold oneself together. Whilst the sensory navigation (intrusion) became a consequence of material intrusions by another whose presence interrupted the furloughed's sense of stability.

Chapter 05 'Temporal Disorientation: Out of "Work Rhythms", explored how the furloughed felt about their detachment from work rhythms. These temporal detachments were discussed in relation to how the furloughed felt about and orientated towards their previous work rhythms. The furloughed either attempted to maintain work rhythms, substitute for them, felt them slip or reported having a hazy grip on them. The furloughed's attention to work rhythms I argued, was in relation to their feeling the imminence of work life restarting which in turn created differing intensities of disorientation. Those who maintained or substituted for work rhythms felt the promise of an imminent return to work acutely. Whilst those who felt them slip were beginning to

accept their detachment from work and their duration of waiting. Others lost grip of work rhythms, something that they either felt control over or felt that they had no agency with.

Chapter 06 'Tensive Disorientation: "Hanging in Space, in Time", discussed the tensions innate in the detachment from work life. The loss of work life was expressed as a temporal disjuncture akin to the grief process. It was a loss that some resisted and some welcomed. The intensity of that resistance or acceptance, I argued was in relation to how the furloughed felt about their workplace. Resistance became a feeling of being alienated or not by employers. Welcoming and acceptance led to the ability to reflect on oneself in relation to work life. The loss of work life was furthermore expressed as stagnation or floating. Stagnation was articulated as a fear of the temporal changes felt within the detachment from work. Floating was a spatial expression of the detachment itself, felt as a relation to productive or non-productive others. Finally, the chapter considered the detachment from work life as an opportunity to rethink and reorientate one's time or rhythms or sense of stability through a relation other than work. I argue that non-work life had created the conditions for the furloughed to consider the enduring impact of work life on how their lives are lived or could be lived.

Through attending to the dimensions of waiting, I formed the argument, that firstly the sudden detachment from work life and its rhythms made life disorientating for those waiting through furlough. Secondly, the furloughed's orientation towards work remained but reformed as a disorientation. Some of those furloughed maintained a connection with colleagues throughout their furlough keeping their former work life in close relation. Whilst for others furloughed, the presence of work life manifest in those they perceived to be productive who were in their proximity. Either way, my third argument is that work life remained a felt embodied presence. For those who said that they had actively relinquished work life and its rhythms during furlough, I argue were doing so in relation to their former and future work lives. Having time during furlough to undertake long aspired for activity, was made in relation to having spare time usually taken by work. The opportunity to realise aspirations outside of work life made during furlough was nonetheless being made in a space-time orientated to a return to work. So, I suggest that even for those who seemed to shed work life during furlough, it was still a pervasive presence (see Aaron in 5.4). Some of those who had embraced the freedom of furlough

time, eventually started to want the regulation of their usual quotidian rhythms (see Alison in 5.4). The space-time of furlough had surfaced certain feelings, vulnerabilities, habits, expectations, relations, and attachments that are often absorbed within the flow of quotidian life. As Sara Ahmed (2006a:5) reminds us 'When we are orientated, we might not even notice that we are orientated'. The space-time of furlough therefore revealed that which is often overlooked, the extent to which work life orientates and forms the fabric of much of our quotidian life.

7.4 Feeling Disorientated

Furlough created a discontinuity in work life for those affected, and yet as I argued in the last section, work life remained a relational presence. Even so, people furloughed were detached from their actual workplace and were paid not to work. In this section I attend to the feelings and suspended workplace relations (LoI.1[67] and LoI.2[68]) that manifested whilst waiting through furlough, and also consider how these were articulated by the participants (LoI.3[69]). I loop back to Sara Ahmed's (2004:31) notion that 'Feelings…take the 'shape' of the contact we have with objects' and suggest that feelings were shaped in this study, by how those furloughed were attached to their pre-furlough work life. Attachments may hold certain promises of happiness or fulfilment (Ahmed 2010:32; Berlant 2011a:1-2). They may move people towards objects, such as a career path or work life, because that trajectory is deemed to hold certain assurances of a fulfilling life. If someone has maintained an attachment to a work life because it fulfils certain promises or is yet to fulfil certain promises, how do they feel when that work life is suspended?

How a person felt about their initial detachment from work life may have been influenced by their strength of attachment to their work or their workplace. Those who held negative feelings towards their work life, had articulated positive feelings about being furloughed through words such as "*glad" "loved it" "enjoying" "grateful" "relief*" (6.1.3 'Welcoming').

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[67] Line of Inquiry 1. What embodied feelings did the space-time of waiting through furlough instigate?

[68] Line of Inquiry 2. How is a suspended relation from an organisation (workplace) lived and felt by furloughed individuals?

[69] Line of Inquiry 3. How did people waiting in unknown durations narrate their experience?

Those who expressed negative feelings about their pre-furlough work life had mostly complained about their workload not the workplace, so their negativity was circumstantial and not a wholly negative feeling about their employer (6.1.3 'Welcoming). What I am suggesting is that those who expressed positive feelings about furlough did so because the attachment to their workplace had (for whatever reason) waned.

Conversely those who felt positive attachment to work life and did not want the suspension of furlough had discussed feeling "*rejected*" "*useless*" and "*horrendous*" (see Caroline in 6.1.2 'Resisting Suspension'). These were words associated with feeling othered or side-lined through being furloughed, as colleagues or those in their close proximity remained in work. As a '*structure* of relationality' [emphasis in the original] 'optimistic attachment is invested in one's own or the world's continuity but might feel any number of ways' (Berlant 2011a:13). For Caroline (6.1.2), her optimistic attachment to work and optimism about her imminent return, was disrupted by the detachment from her work life and therefore expressed in negative terms. There were others who expressed their otherness as a tension, which was articulated as "*resisted*" or "*fighting*". That tension, I suggest, was formed through holding strong attachments to their work and workplace (see Claire, 6.1.2 Resisting Suspension). The detachment created by furlough, had imaginably interrupted the feeling of continuity that holding the attachment to the workplace had provided. Optimistic attachments might insinuate positive feelings, but as Berlant (ibid) suggests and those in tension with being furloughed revealed, attachment may surface uncomfortable feelings.

Some of those furloughed remained feeling resistant to their situation throughout their period of furlough. The detachment from work life was perceived by them to have the potential to unravel a sense of continuity. Joanna had tried to maintain her work rhythms during furlough with voluntary work, "*it felt weird not to have something*" (5.2 Maintaining). The disconnection from attachments that create a sense of continuity in a life, can disturb that sense of order (Anderson 2022:12; Weil 2021:160). People such as Joanna, had formed attachments to work life over time as investments, perhaps fantasies of themselves, as a certain kind of worker or to the workplace itself (see Cockayne 2016:458; Dutta 2020 for similar evocations of workplace attachment). Jessica (6.1.3

Resisting Suspension) for example, had discussed wanting to be seen at work as someone who made other people happy. Whilst Claire (6.4) had enjoyed the "*feeling*" of helping a person and "*watch them grow*" through her work as a trainer. Work for Jessica and Claire was expressed as a scene of positive attachment; a situation that coalesced positive feelings.

Within the study, the furloughed had discussed that pre-furlough work life was a space where they could enact self-expression, feel connected with other people or feel like a productive or useful person. The experience of furlough had detached those individuals from relations and activities that they said had become part of themselves. Sara Ahmed (2006a:20) suggests that 'disorientation is a way of describing the feelings that gather when we lose our sense of who it is that we are'. This tallies with the experiences of those furloughed who had a positive connection to their workplace and who had described their subsequent detachment from it as *"surreal", "odd", "weird"* and *"strange".* The orientation of being a productive worker when disrupted, had created feelings of disorientation bound with feelings of guilt about being paid to be an unproductive non-worker. This was articulated by Abigail as "*it does still feel strange to be given… like what is quite a lot of money for just sitting in your house*" (4.1 Shadow Life also see Lydia in 4.4 Vacillation, Alexandra in 6.3 Floating).

Initial feelings around being furloughed did not necessarily remain as a person moved through their period of furlough. Attachments can ebb and flow in intensity and lose their importance or gain new significance (Anderson 2022:2-3) or they can become 'sticky' and linger (Ahmed 2006a:40). There were those who happily entered furlough understanding it as a temporary situation but over time came to feel alienated from or disenchanted with their employers, such as Caroline who said that she had eventually "*lost trust in my manager*" (section 6.1.2 Resisting Suspension). For those people, the level of disenchantment was a consequence of how attached they felt their employer acted towards them. One participant described this feeling as "*floating*" by which he meant he felt untethered by his employer, others had felt "*abandoned*" or "*left*" (see Carlos in 6.3 Floating). Their disappointment was at an unfulfilled expectation of a feedback loop of attachment between themselves and their employer, "*what caused the most discomfort was really the fact that we were sort of forgotten*" (Carlos). Those who had come to feel

disgruntled about their employer did so because their employer did not communicate with them during furlough or enacted poor communication *"there was a lot of things I expected of my employer that I didn't get at the time"* (Carlos). Feelings of detachment from his employer were perhaps being felt not just as a physical dislocation from the workplace but felt as a perceived emotional distance enacted by his employer.

Uncomfortable feelings such as guilt around being paid to not work, manifested for some furloughed as incapacities: to orientate themselves (Shadow Life 4.2), to decide how to fill their time (4.4 Vacillation), to deal with another's emotions (4.3 Periphery, 6.3 Floating) to hold onto quotidian time (5.4 Slippage) or to endure sensory disruption (4.5 Intrusion). Chloe had discussed having a *"a weird attachment"* to being in the same room as her partner during furlough, finding it difficult to decide what space to be in or what activity to do to fill her time. Chloe's "weird attachment" may have been an orientation to the productivity of her partner in the light of her own paid non-work life. His activity was perhaps a form of continuity amidst the new conditions of her furlough. Chloe's space-time of furlough had become an impasse. Disorientation can be felt as an impasse (Bissell and Gorman-Murray 2019:709; Harbin 2016:5). Ami Harbin (ibid: 18) articulates that whilst feeling disorientated, such failures to be able to move forward are felt as a 'strain', whilst David Bissell and Andrew Gorman-Murray (2019:709) suggest such impasses are a form of distancing. Drawing on both, I suggest Chloe is experiencing both a strain and a distancing. Those in the study who shared similar feelings of impasse, may have been distancing themselves from their capacity to act, as their guilt at being paid to not work was felt as strain when in the proximity of a productive other. For Lauren Berlant (2011a:10) feeling an impasse within a crisis is a means to have space to adapt to an unfolding situation. The experiences of non-action at the advent of furlough, may also have been a of slow readjustment to being in an unknown duration of waiting and a non-worker.

Others were slow to orientate into furlough and maintained a 'stubborn attachment' towards their workplace conceivably in the 'hope' of its imminent restart (Ahmed 2010b:189) (see 'Joanna' in 5.2 Maintaining). Through a 'stubborn attachment' a person may, in part, be holding onto not just the object of the attachment but the negative feeling that holding that attachment instigates. Remaining attached to the object of returning to

work as an active tension of waiting, may have been for some a form of 'cruel optimism' (Berlant 2006:21). Lauren Berlant (2006:21) describes cruel optimism as an attachment to a future orientated object that may cause those waiting for it to unfold, harm. The orientation becomes 'cruel' because the 'object that draws your attachment actively impedes the aim that brought you to it initially' (Berlant 2011a:1). I think back to Caroline who expressed negative feelings about her workplace around how they handled her experience of furlough, feelings which had become sticky and still lingered a year later (section 6.1.2). Although feeling negatively towards her employer, she had remained orientated towards an imminent return to work. The attachment to the object (no matter how detrimental it becomes for those holding it) is a form of 'continuity' holding a life together (Berlant 2006:21). Amidst the multiple uncertainties she was living with, furlough, the COVID-19 pandemic and temporary living arrangements, her orientation to work was perhaps providing continuity and therefore a sense of stability for Caroline and others in the study in a similar situation.

A slow adjustment from the orientation toward work life was expressed by some as an embodied feeling. In her initial movement into furlough, Louise (5.1 Out of work Rhythms) had felt "*Like my brain was still very much in work rhythms".* She was discussing how the rhythms of work had become a sticky attachment lingering within her thoughts. The tension of feeling that she should have been elsewhere, was an imbrication of the recursive work rhythms she had previously lived and felt. Another embodied feeling discussed across the furloughed's accounts, was stagnation. This was a bodily feeling discussed as felt, feared or unwanted. Joanna (5.2 Maintaining) had shared that in knowing that she was going into furlough she had set up voluntary work because she "*didn't want to stagnate".* Jacqueline (6.2 Stagnation) had found the atmosphere in her house as *"stagnation",* which was echoed by Jade (6.2) who said her house had a *"stagnant"* atmosphere which she felt as a "*dark cloud*" and "*heaviness*" that sometimes followed her out of the house when she went on walks. This almost palpable atmospheric expression of stagnation was conveyed by Jenny, as a feeling in her body, "*my body was just stagnant".* The expression of detachment from the flows of work life as stagnation, were shared with me not just through words but also gesture. Jade had held stagnation as an imaginary object in her hand, which she had then pushed away from her head and body. Jenny had flicked stagnation from the side of her body. I suggest that the

imaginaries of stagnation had become a coalescent point within the scene of furlough, a *thing* that had become an expression of feeling the temporal disorientation of absent work rhythms.

And yet detachment from an object of attachment and ensuing disorientation, 'can offer us the hope of new directions, and whether new directions are reason enough for hope' (Ahmed 2006a:158). The point is not that disorientations happen; it is that they can be events or moments that offer us an opportunity to shift orientation. The extended detachment from work life had led some of those furloughed to reappraise their orientation to it. Alison's (6.4 Noticing) detachment from work had caused her to evaluate her previously strong pull towards work, "*Work used to be my life... I realised life was not work*". Furlough had created the conditions for Alison to change orientation and think about working for herself. Caroline had also appraised her orientation towards her employer. Although back at work for the same employer, Caroline's (6.4 Noticing) period of furlough had left her with a "*feeling of impermanence*" through a sense of emotional detachment from her employer. Impermanence suggests that Caroline's optimistic attachment to work had left her feeling unstable. Caroline had also started, what is known as, quiet quitting or putting less effort into her work. The detachment from work life and ensuing discontinuities had, in common with some others furloughed, shifted Caroline and Alison's focus away from work life.

Alison and Caroline's reappraisal of their situations were in part connected with feelings of self-care and non-care. Care as the capacity to protect, preserve or feel concern for, has been expressed throughout the thesis as care for others, self-care or non-care towards or by others. In Alison's realisation that in her detachment from work life that *"life was not work"* in the previous section, she had started to rethink her situation. Rethinking one's situation may be considered a 'mode of care' (Baraitser 2017:5) and in this instance, self-care became a 'mode of change' (ibid:11). Alison's reassessment of her situation may have been an enactment of emotional and physical self-care against a work life that had previously left her exhausted and overwhelmed. For some furloughed, self-care was demonstrated as an acceptance of the detachment from work life, using the detachment as a space of reappraisal of their attachment to work. And yet others perceived attempting to *not* detach from work rhythms as self-care. Those attempting to maintain

(5.2; Lydia in Slippage 5.4) or substitute (5.3) their previous work rhythms, said they did so in order to not to be disorientated by the detachment from their usual work life. Contingent on an individual's attitude to their previous work life and their enforced detachment from it, self-care manifest as a distancing from or a wanting to hold onto, work rhythms.

Self-care was also expressed as emotional detachment within the study. Some of those who shared their furlough living with others who displayed high emotion, did not want to react to those emotions in order to not be further disorientated themselves (4.3 Periphery). Emotional detachment became a self-care shield, mobilised in order to not absorb another' distressed feelings. And yet emotional detachment was also used in order to protect and care for others. Some of the furloughed chose not to share their feelings with others, whether it was suffering (4.3 Periphery) or happiness (Alexandra, 6.3 Floating). This was enacted to not amplify the anguish of those already in distress or catalyse unhappiness in those deemed to be in a less fortunate situation than those furloughed.

Caring for others was expressed spatially, as a navigation around others who the furloughed deemed to be productive (4.2 Circumnavigation). Caring for the other in these circumstances, was about attempting to not disrupt their work rhythms whilst simultaneously feeling disorientated by the lack of one's own work rhythms. Tiptoeing around the other was potentially bound with feeling an impasse of not yet finding one's own rhythms whilst waiting out furlough. These small acts of spatial care perhaps providing form to an otherwise formless time. Feeling that one is being considerate to another therefore possibly became a way of making the time of furlough feel meaningful.

Several of the furloughed expressed expectations of care by their employers during their furlough period. For some, these expectations were fulfilled through communication deemed meaningful, such as regular online training sessions connected to their work role. Ongoing training opportunities were received as a sign that they would eventually return to that employer and their previous work. Maintenance of care is made through recursive acts (Baraitser 2017:53) and so the consistent positive contact by employers, helped the furloughed to maintain feelings of being a cared for employee. For others, expectations of

care were not fulfilled. This perceived lack of care changed the furloughed's feelings of attachment towards their employers, (6.1.2 Caroline Resisting Suspension; Carlos 6.3 Floating) and they started *to feel* detached from their workplace. Non-care either took the form of no or limited interaction between employer and employee during furlough. Or was employer led social interaction with other furloughed colleagues via Zoom meetings. In these interactions, the potential precarity of their job role was not discussed thus heightening the furloughed feelings of anxiety. Some of the furloughed articulated that the social interaction with their employers and colleagues without discussion of their work role, felt worse than no interaction, as the social sessions became reminders of the uncertainty of their situation.

In this section I have outlined some of the feelings (LoI.1) of disorientation that the study had surfaced through their suspended workplace relation (LoI.2). Optimistic attachments or detachments during furlough, had instigated a whole range of feelings: such as happiness, fulfilment, hope, care but also resistance, anxiety, guilt and non-care. How we use language to recount a situation becomes a means to codify that experience (Ahmed 2014:22; Bauman 1986:5; Carr 1986:71). By focussing on the language the furloughed used to express their experience, I was able to demonstrate some of the plurality of feelings and intensities of those feelings, that the furloughed said that they had experienced (LoI.3). For Sara Ahmed (2014:46) words can become sticky and attach themselves to certain situations through their repetition (ibid:46). Focussing on the language used to describe a situation, can be used to align a community of experiences together (ibid:39). There were certain common words across the accounts of the furloughed used in relation to the detached relation from work, that held particular resonances such a "weird", "odd" but also "relax" and "love". As I was privy to all the accounts, in some sense the participants had come to feel like a community to me (although unknown to each other), their common use of some phrases and words had come to inform how I understood their collective experience of attachment and detachment during furlough.

7.5 Future Work

The study opened a window on non-work-work life within the conditions of neoliberal working lives. Neoliberal working has been determined as an individual expression of an entanglement between work and social life (Hochschild 2012; Hong 2022:3; Horgan: 2021: 24; Jaffe 2021:1; Sharma: 2014:90). Work enacted as a labour of love. Within the study, most of those I asked about their pre-furlough attachment to work life, had expressed some form of entanglement between their emotional selves and work life. Work was enmeshed with promises of personal fulfilment and emotional connections with colleagues. Even those who had expressed an ambivalence to the work itself had on further examination discussed work as a source of satisfaction or positive connection with others. This study explored the misalignment of people's orientation to being a worker during a period of non-work. Those I interviewed post-furlough and those who responded to my follow-up email a year later, had intimated that their period of being a non-worker had changed their attachment to work in some way. The prevailing attitude was that strong attachments to work had waned or become negative, or people had realised through furlough that the conditions of their work life or mode of work needed to change. The unusual circumstance of paid non-work life had opened the conditions to reappraise one's position in relation to work. This end point of the study perhaps opens some new avenues for further research.

Firstly, the reappraisals of work life had been shared with me as the furloughed moved back into work life or in the immediate months after returning to work. This opens questions of whether those who discussed a changed relation to work had maintained that feeling. Was there a temporality to that feeling? Was it a passing thought or a permanent change of position? What were the practical implications of that changed relation if that feeling was upheld? Was it a change of feeling about a particular mode of work or workplace, or to work life in general? This study of the experiences of thirty-five people cannot claim to be representative of the attitudes of the furloughed in general but is a representation of how certain furloughed lives were lived. As such it may be indicative of more widely held attitudes. A quarter of the UK workforce had been supported by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme at some point (ONS 2021a) which means it impacted a significant proportion of workers.

Beyond this study, there is potential to explore the long-term impacts of having a period of paid non-work on people's attitudes to work and work life. Were those furloughed more likely to engage in, what has been termed 'quiet quitting', the attitude of putting less effort into work? Or to work less hours? Or to move towards early retirement? Or just quit work altogether? Or stay in a changed relation? These moves may have significance beyond individual experiences. Changes in attitudes to work and work life have the potential to affect work cultures and workforces, and in turn economies.

Secondly, the approach of this study of sustained attention to waiting (as a particular set of dimensions and tensions) within work life, may have implications for other circumstances of detachment from employment. Being laid off, put on gardening leave, being on long term sick or maternity leave, being threatened with or made redundant or moving towards retirement detaches and suspends a worker from their work life. These forms of (non)work that are misaligned with the normal flows of work life, share with furlough being a period of waiting. A laid-off worker waits in an unpaid suspension from work due to the temporary economic conditions of their employer resulting in an inability to pay them (Department for Work and Pensions 2023b). Those on gardening leave are paid to wait as they resign from one company and cannot take up employment with a rival company within a specified time frame (Aydinliyim, 2022:651). When a job role is made redundant in the UK a worker is given a three-month notice period of the cessation of their job (Department for Work and Pensions 2023a). A worker being made redundant is held waiting through a sustained detachment from their workplace. Those waiting to retire may wait with a similar unfolding detachment from an employer and have an orientation towards moving out of that wait into a new non-work life. Or those on maternity leave or long-term sick leave are separate for a time from work rhythms and colleagues and create a new life world set apart from work life. To create a further understanding of these circumstances it may be useful to adopt the approach of this study and pay attention to the tensions, spatialities, temporality, corporeality, and felt dimensions of waiting. In doing so a further study may unfold similar feelings of disorientation, new disorientations, or completely different feelings. The point is that thinking with the dimensions of waiting offers a particular frame of analysis, as demonstrated in this thesis.

Thirdly, the conceptualisation of disorientation developed in the thesis, as a plural condition that includes capacities, incapacities and tensions with spatial, temporal, corporeal, and felt dimensions could be transposed to further research. For example, the conceptualisations of disorientation could be applied to a situation whereby a person or persons find themselves misaligned from their usual objects of attachment or more widely felt orientations. Alternatively it could be transposed to situations or events of acute change. Such further work could also draw on the acknowledgment in the thesis that disorientations can be felt concurrently or sequentially and in differing intensities. As situations of misalignment and acute change are many and traverse all aspects of lived experience, I could write an extensive list of circumstances of potential misalignments or situations of acute change. However I wonder at the misalignment of those who swap political allegiance or find themselves in a political stance at odds with those in their proximity. Or those who come out of the care or prison systems without the orientation of a family unit. Or those whose close relationships change due to divorce or ill health. Or those whose physical appearance is irrevocably changed. Or those who embark on late in life career changes…

7.6 Contributions

The thesis makes contextual and conceptual contributions to the discipline of geography. It enriches discussion of social, and cultural geographic work on geographies of COVID-19, geographies of waiting, labour geographies and geographies of disorientation.

7.6.1 Contextual Contributions – Geographies of COVID-19

Contextually, the thesis contributes to social and cultural geography through its investigation of the lived experience of furlough within the UK Government Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. It enriches discussion of social and cultural life during COVID-19, through its development of an understanding of how those furloughed lived, felt and endured their period of furlough through first-hand accounts of their experience. In doing so, the thesis, adds to the emerging geographies of COVID-19[70]. The consequences of the

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[70] COVID 19 and its infiltration of people and spaces, its local and global significance, its impact on economies and cultures makes it a fertile subject for geographical research. Throughout the pandemic a series of special COVID-19 editions were published in geographic journals which include articles exploring the multiple impact

COVID-19 pandemic permeated all aspects of everyday life, which will potentially have resonances felt within social and cultural life for some time to come.

Firstly, the thesis substantively adds to geographic understandings of furlough. One of the major disruptions during COVID-19 was to work and work life. Social and cultural geographers who have explored work life during COVID-19 have attended to home working (Reuschke and Felstead, 2020; Rose-Redwood et al 2020:99), garment workers (Brydges, and Hanlon 2020), online educating (Burns 2020), gig working (Straughan and Bissell 2022) and labour agency (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2023). The investigation in the thesis of the lived experience of furlough adds substantially to existing understanding of work life during COVID-19 through its evocation of non-work life. Furlough affected a quarter of the UK work force during the period of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, which means it affected a substantial proportion of the work force. The instigation of furlough will potentially have repercussions for individuals and businesses who were part of the scheme for some time to come. In order to understand the future impacts of furlough, it is important to pay detailed attention to how furlough impacted on individual lives at the time. This study will contribute to 1. Understandings of the lived experience of furlough. 2 Understandings of non-work life during COVID-19.

Secondly, the focus of this study on how the enforced detachment from work life was lived out in the space of the home, adds to geographic understandings of how home life was affected by the pandemic. Social and cultural geographers have explored the effect

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so the pandemic. In April 2020 the journal Progress in Human Geography published an editorial piece outlining the virus through a geographical lens (Castree et al 2020). That piece written at the start of the pandemic, made a call out for further work around COVID 19 that utilises geographic thinking and tools. In June 2020 Dialogues in Human Geography published forty-two commentaries on the COVID 19 pandemic (Rose-Redwood et al 2020). In July 2020 Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie published a special issue 'The Geography of the COVID-19 Pandemic' (Aalbers et al 2020). The journal Human Geography has not produced a COVID-19 special edition but has published a series of COVID related articles since 2020. Since the start of the pandemic Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers has published a range of articles exploring COVID-19, including a recent commentary on post pandemic city life (Marvin et al 2023). In April 2023 Geographical Research Journal published a 'Geographies of COVID-19' special edition (Rogers and Kearnes 2023). This is not an exhaustive list, but the work within these special COVID-19 issues is expansive and explores the impact of the pandemic on social, cultural and economic life globally, in wide variety of contexts and scales. These special editions include work which explores the impact of COVID-19 including how lives were governed, supported by infrastructures, the impact of places and people, mobilities and material culture to name a few. And yet little has been written in academic geography specifically about the new spaces of waiting instigated during the COVID-19 pandemic or furlough. It is within that space that this thesis contributes to geographic knowledge.

on home life during COVID-19 in a variety of ways, such as a space of: confinement (Bissell 2021:155; Iacovone et al 2020; Nash and Lyon 2023:648-9; Walsh 2020), of care (Andersen et al 2022; Maddrell et al 2023:3), of home schooling and home working (Coe and Jordhus-Lier 2023; Reuschke and Felstead 2020; Rose-Redwood et al 2020:99) of domestic violence (Cuomo 2022) immobility (Adey et al 2021; De Backer et al 2022) new smells (Allen 2023:266) new sounds (Torresin et al 2020). In this context, the thesis will add to understanding of the space of the home during COVID-19, through its account of how the furloughed navigated, were affected by and discussed their home during their furlough period.

Thirdly, the study's conceptualisation of the home as a space of waiting for the furloughed, adds to accounts of waiting and COVID-19. Work in social and cultural geography which has explored waiting during COVID-19, has done so in a variety of contexts such as queuing (Burton 2021:219; Jones 2022; van Eck et al 2020:378), medical treatment (Burton 2021:221; van der Miesen 2020), immigration process (De Backer et al 2022), refugee camps (Moawad and Andres 2023). The thesis will add to understanding of waiting during COVID-19 through its:1. Its account of furlough as an act of waiting 2. its conceptualisation of waiting through furlough as a disorientating experience.

7.6.2 Contextual Contributions – Geographies of Neoliberal Waiting
Through its conceptualisations of disorientated lives, bodies, and feelings, the thesis contributes to scholarship that attends to waiting lives within the context of neoliberal life. Previous work on waiting, reflects how neoliberal ideas permeate all aspects of everyday life. This work has accounted for a range of socio-cultural and economic situations such as: waiting for health care (Kiely 2021; Pitts-Taylor 2019), waiting during incarceration (Foster 2015), waiting for the possible cessation of public services (Hitchen 2021; Horton 2016), migrants waiting to mobilise (Chattopadhyay and Tyner 2020; Conlon 2011; De Backer et al 2022), waiting within precarious labour (Axelsson et al 2017; Gupta 2023), waiting for employment (Honwana 2012; Morán & Fernández de Mosteyrín, 2017; Singerman 2007; Ungruhe & Esson, 2017), waiting within precarious housing (Ferreri and Dawson 2018:426; Muñoz 2018; Sa'di-Ibraheem 2020), waiting as a system of control (Olsen 2015), and waiting as a manifestation of state power (Secor

2007). The thesis adds to this work, through its extended attention to the furloughed waiting body as a neoliberal subject.

Secondly, the focus in the thesis on the feelings of a furloughed waiting body imbricates with and contributes to previous waiting scholarship that details conditions within neoliberal life. Previous work has surfaced a range of feelings that imbricate with those expressed by the furloughed within the study such as: 'monotony and unpredictability' (Chattopadhyay and Tyner 2020:1232), 'paranoia' (Hitchen 2021:306), 'hopelessness', 'low morale', 'stress', 'strain' and 'tiredness' (Horton 2016:354), 'uncertainty' (Axelsson et al 2017, Carswell et al 2018:11), and lack of control (Pitts-Taylor 2019:10). The feelings of resistance expressed by the furloughed in the thesis, find connection with and contribute to a small body of work that explores waiting as a strategy of resistance to neoliberal conditions (Pickering 2016; Schweizer 2017:93).

Thirdly, the elucidation in the thesis of the waiting (non) working body contributes to social and cultural geography that attends to precarious labour in the context of neoliberal living. 'Precarious labour' describes work lives that are characterised by 'uncertainty and instability' (Waite 2009:416), 'vulnerability' (Ettlinger 2007:320), feeling alienated (Ettlinger 2007:336) feeling invisible (Dutta 2019: 891) feeling on call (Smith 2009:8) and lacking agency (Worth 2015:611). These are concepts and feelings which mirror the experience of those furloughed outlined in the thesis. Previous work on waiting within precarious work lives has detailed: gig work (Morales-Muñoz and Roca 2022; Richardson 2020; Straughan and Bissell 2022; Wells et al 2021), underemployment (Worth 2015), taxi drivers (Sharma 2014:55-80), call centre workers (Pettit 2019), factory workers (Dutta 2019), chefs (Axelsson et al 2017) and creative entrepreneurs (Cockayne 2016). The thesis contributes to work on waiting precarious workers affected and held within conditions beyond their control, through its 1. account of furlough as an act of waiting 2. Its elucidation of the felt experience of waiting within the context of non-work life 3. The accounts of disorientation within the context of uncertain work conditions.

7.6.3 Conceptual Contributions

First, the thesis contributes conceptually to work on waiting in geography by drawing on Sara Ahmed's (2006a) concept of queer phenomenology. This move enhances previous work on waiting that attends to its embodied nature through ideas of phenomenology (Ayaß 2020; Bissell 2007, 2009; Dastur, 2000; Mattingly, 2019; Schweizer 2008; Vannini 2002). By working with Ahmed's (2006a) queer phenomenology, this study attends to the perceived misalignment of those waiting through furlough and feeling themselves outside the normal flows of work life. In particular, the thesis enhances work on waiting, through its conceptualisations of orientation, disorientation, and reorientation (via Ahmed 2006a), which I suggest have an affinity with the tensions experienced by a waiting body, as a detachment from, a suspension and a future orientation. In working with a queer phenomenological approach, the thesis adds to understandings of waiting whereby an act of waiting is perceived as a misaligned embodied experience by those waiting.

Second, the study contributes to waiting scholarship, by conceptually separating four dimensions of waiting experience: space as arrangement, time as lived, the corporeal and felt as relational intensities and capacities, and overlaying them with notions of orientation, disorientation and reorientation. The study contributes the imbrication of the four dimensions of waiting and three forms of orientation as a conceptual framework to explore waiting experience.

Third, this study extends work in geographies of disorientation that draw on Sara Ahmed's (2006a) concept of disorientation via queer phenomenology. It does this by presenting disorientation in a plurality of forms that encompass spatial, temporal, corporeal, felt and tensive dimensions. In doing so the study responds to calls by geographers (Schmidt di Friedberg 2018:1; Dorignon and Nethercote 2020:374) for researchers to be open to disorientation as a multitudinous experience. Current work in geography that attends to disorientation conceptualises it through emotional and spatial incapacities (Bissell and Gorman Murray 2019:714; Dorignon and Nethercote 2020; Kinkaid 2019:180; Massey 1992a:7; Wylie 2021:199). The study contributes to geographies of disorientation, through the conceptualisation of disorientation in a plurality of forms:

1. spectatorship of another,

2. emotional disconnection

3. detachment from the present,

4. intense sensory disturbance,

5. holding the familiar,

6. substituting for something similar to the familiar,

7. feeling like something is slipping,

8. an inability to regrasp something that has slipped,

9. not wanting to let go,

10. letting go,

11. recognising disorientation in self and others,

12. opening oneself to new possibilities.

Fourth, additionally the conceptualisation of disorientation in a plural form, conceptually adds to current work in geography that attends to attachment and detachment in quotidian life (Anderson 2022; Anderson 2023a; Anderson 2023b; Bissell 2022; Cockayne and Ruez 2023; Coleman 2023; Rose 2023; Strong 2023; Zhang 2023). This is through the thesis' mobilisation of concepts of attachment and detachment within the circumstance of waiting through furlough.

7.7 Final Thoughts

It is 27th August 2023, two years since I conducted the last interview for this study. The initial interviews were conducted under the conditions of a third UK national lockdown. Many of the people I interviewed were still furloughed. At the time, as a person also living in the conditions of the pandemic, I had not quite appreciated the adverse conditions we were living in and the impacts they had had on normal interactions. Being separate from other people and interacting with others mostly online had become a necessity and therefore normalised; but it wasn't normal. With the benefit of hindsight, I understand that the experiences that people furloughed shared with me were indeed extraordinary. That they gave me time to talk about their experiences amidst a whole host of difficulties and uncertainties was amazingly generous. And yet I also understand that the interviews

were a way for some of the participants to talk about their experiences with a person outside of their confined circumstances. What I am acknowledging is the generosity of those I interviewed, our shared extraordinary circumstances, and the intense conditions in which the study was made. The felt intensity of the height of the pandemic, and its subsequent winding down and end, means that my conclusions about what this study of waiting through furlough has opened have formed and reformed several times over its lifespan. I suspect that in time and through writing further papers, my views will change again.

8

Appendix

8.1 Interview Participant Overview

For ease of comparison the details of the furloughed participants in the study have been categorised in line with the UK Office for National Statistics furlough data categories.

8.1.1 Participant Gender Breakdown

F	29
M	6
Total	**35**

8.1.2 Furlough or Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) grant holder

Furlough	32
SEISS	3

8.1.3 Sectors

Catering	6
Charity	5
Education	7
Entertainment	8
Real Estate	1
Health	2
Manufacturing	2
Retail	2
Travel	2

8.1.4 Geographic Location

Midlands England	6
North East England	10
North West England	4
South Mid Wales	2
Scotland	1
South East England	8
South East Wales	3
West Wales	1

8.1.5 Nationality

British	33
European	2

8.1.6 Employment Status When Interviewed

Back to work – pre-furlough job	17
Back to work on maternity leave	2
Flex furlough and work in different sector	1
Made redundant – work in new job	6
On furlough or SEISS	9

8.1.7 Household During Furlough

Live alone	8
Live with partner	13
Live with partner and adult children	1
Live with partner and children under 18	7
Single parent and children under 18	2
Single parent and adult children	1
House share	3

8.1.8 Number of Periods of Furlough (or SEISS)

1 period	21 participants
2 periods	10 participants
3 periods	3 participants
4 periods	1 participant

8.1.9 Study Recruitment Sources

BFAWU	2
CREATE (Durham University research recruitment portal)	1
Dialogue (Durham University newsletter)	2
Equity (trade union)	1
Facebook - posted by someone else	3
Facebook furlough group s	10
GMB (trade union)	1
Instagram	1
Linkedin	3
Stage Managers Association (trade union)	5
Twitter	1
WhatsApp	1
Word of mouth	4

8.2 Interview Participants and Interactions

	PSEUDONYM	AGE	JOB ROLE	INTERVIEW DATE	DURATION
1.	Amy	30	Estate Agent	13th January 2021	00:49:32
2.	Alison	50	Catering Logistics	12th January 2021	01:09:00
3.	Abigail	32	Chef	14th January 2021	01:20:44
4.	Alexandra	40	Optometrist	15th January 2021	00:49:23
5.	Alice	37	Optometrist	17th January 2021	01:07:00
6.	Andrea	53	Chef	18th January 2021	01:19:14
7.	Adrian	61	Supply Teacher	21st January 2021	00:42:14
8.	Amanda	48	Theatre Marketing	21st January 2021	01:07:28
9.	Aaron	55	Airplane Dispatcher	22nd January 2021	01:17:00
10.	Angela	51	Supply Teacher	24th January 2021	01:05:00
11.	Claire	47	Trainer	11th February 2021	00:59:45
12.	Chloe	23	Waitress	11th February 2021	01:19:57
13.	Caroline	49	Charity Worker	20th February 2021	01:49:28
14.	Charlotte	36	Charity Worker	28th February 2021	01:05:32
15.	Catherine	59	School Admin.	1st March 2021	01:04:00
16.	Christine	57	Charity Worker	3rd March 2021	01:10:05
17.	Carlos	27	Food Technologist	3rd March 2021	00:46:59
18.	Carol	60	Casino worker	5th March 2021	01:00:34
19.	Joanna	45	Charity Worker	26th April 2021	01:30:00
20.	Jemma	36	TFL Teacher	26th April 2021	01:30:08
21.	Joseph	27	Chef	4th May 2021	00:50:38
22.	Jayne	27	Chef	5th May 2021	01:46:00
23.	Jodie	29	Charity Worker	5th May 2021	01:16:00
24.	Jacqueline	54	Stage Manager	6th May 2021	01:20:00
25.	Jana	51	University Admin.	7th May 2021	00:56:05
26.	Jasmine	26	Stage Manager	10th May 2021	00:55:35
27.	Jade	34	Stage Manager	15th May 2021	01:17:42
28.	Jenny	27	Stage Manager	17th May 2021	01:11:29
29.	Jessica	23	Retail Worker	17th May 2021	01:19:39
30.	Louise	31	Stage Manager	24th May 2021	01:15:48
31.	Leon	53	Stage Manager	24th May 2021	01:14:46
32.	Lesley	65	Swimming Teacher	28th May 2021	01:16:30
33.	Laura	47	Researcher	18th June 2021	01:20:56
34.	Lee	42	Marketing	25th June 2021	01:40:00
35.	Lydia	31	Retail Worker	7th July 2021	01:20:00

The participant interviews ranged between forty-two minutes and one hour forty-nine minutes, averaging one hour twelve minutes in length (median one hour fifteen minutes).

8.2.1 Follow up Email with Interview Participants

All 35 interview participants were emailed on the 8th of April 2022 with some additional questions about their furlough experience and 14 responded. The participants were asked sent a series of questions. Not all the questions were sent to all the participants, just the ones relevant to their experiences and their previous responses.

1. Have there been any long term affects or consequences of your time in furlough?
2. Has your attitude to work changed as a consequence of being furloughed?
3. Looking back is there anything about your time on furlough that has emotionally stayed with you?
4. During furlough you effected some life changes, did you maintain these after furlough?
5. In the interview you said that your 'sense of time' had changed as a result of furlough. Did you get back to pre-furlough time rhythms? How long did it take to get back to normal?

	PSEUDONYM	DATE EMAIL SENT	DATE RESPONSE RECEIVED
1.	Adrian	8th of April 2022	8th of April 2022
2.	Amanda	8th of April 2022	9th April 2022
3.	Alison	8th of April 2022	10th April 2022
4.	Alexandra	8th of April 2022	10th April 2022
5.	Lesley	8th of April 2022	10th April 2022
6.	Caroline	8th of April 2022	10th April 2022
7.	Jodie	8th of April 2022	12th April 2022
8.	Jana	8th of April 2022	12th April 2022
9.	Alice	8th of April 2022	13th April 2022
10.	Carlos	8th of April 2022	14th April 2022
11.	Jemma	8th of April 2022	19th of April 2022
12.	Andrea	8th of April 2022	20th of April 2022
13.	Jacqueline	8th of April 2022	22nd of April 2022
14.	Claire	8th of April 2022	3rd of May 2022

8.3 Mass Observation Archive Entries - Furlough

Through a request, I gained privileged access to the Mass Observation Archive[71] (MOA) 'Summer Directive 2020 – Part 1: Covid-19 and Time'. The Mass Observation Archive is a diary archive written by volunteers from across the UK, who are asked to write about their experiences during the 12th of May each year. The archive becomes a snapshot of life in the UK at that point in time. Additionally the MOA also sends sets of questions or directives around certain topics commissioned by university researchers. The 'Summer Directive 2020 – Part 1: Covid-19 and Time' was commissioned by a collaborative study, 'A Day at a Time'[72], between researchers at the Universities of Kent, Edinburgh, Goldsmiths and Stirling investigating how households were experiencing 'time' during the pandemic. The directive asked participants to write about the 'rhythm and routine' of their day. It asked about 'homelife' and how people's perceptions of time had been affected by the pandemic. The directive inquired about the diarists' use of 'media and technology' and whether this had changed. Finally the diarists were asked to write about the new forms of 'waiting' that the pandemic had instigated, about having a 'life on hold' or their experiences of the new formations of waiting in queues or to see loved ones.

Of the seventy diaries entries that referred to furlough, nineteen were written by people who had been furloughed. The diaries entries written by those not furloughed were useful to gauge wider attitudes to furlough and those furloughed. Some expressed concern about friends and family members who were furloughed, worried how they would cope financially. Some gave positive comments about the scheme as a move to protect jobs by the government, whilst others queried whether large profitable businesses should have access to the scheme. Some expressed jealousy of those furloughed wishing that their employers had furloughed them so they could have time off work. The non-furloughed diarists were mostly positive about the scheme and sympathetic to those furloughed.

I thematically coded the nineteen diary entries of those furloughed with the same codes as the interviews: *affect, feelings, materiality, control, sensation, time* and *waiting.* The

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[71] The Mass Observation Archive   http://www.massobs.org.uk

[72] For more information on the A Day at a Time study visit https://research.kent.ac.uk/daat-coronavirus/

experiences outlined in the diaries mirror some of those outlined in the interviews. The diarists discuss the anticipation of being furloughed, how they filled their time and their worry about job security.

I worked through and with the archive, but I have not directly referenced the MOA material in the empirical chapters of this thesis. This is primarily because the references to furlough and waiting are brief and replicate the insights I gathered in the interviews. The interview narratives are much richer and provide a deeper insight of how furlough was lived and felt. This is probably not so important, but I do not feel as engaged with the MOA diaries as I do the interviews. The diarists are anonymous participants in someone else's research study. However, the Mass Observation Archive 'Summer Directive 2020 – Part 1: Covid-19 and Time' was a useful resource for the study as it enabled me to see how the experiences, I gathered via interview tallied with wider experiences of furlough. Between 19th May 2021 and 10th November 2021, I attended six online sessions organised by the Mass Observation Archive, whereby academic researchers presented studies that had been conducted using the archive's COVID-19 material. I attended these sessions in order to learn more about working with archive material and to investigate how I could work with the Mass Observation Archive material in this study. The sessions included presentations by researchers from the 'Day at a Time' study, Rebecca Coleman and Dawn Lyon. A talk by sociologist Ben Highmore on 'The Observation by Everyone of Everyone' was particularly useful in catalysing my thinking around collections of qualitative data as representation rather than being representative. This in part informed how I formed cases with the research material.

8.4 Discourse Analysis - Furlough

Attention to discourse is to notice sentiments forming around an object through 'texts' and 'statements' (Foucault 1984 via Fairclough 2003: 123). In this study I attended to the discourse surrounding the Corona Virus Job Retention scheme and furlough as the scheme unfolded and discourses morphed. During the lifetime of the scheme, discourse around it ran across multiple platforms such as: government announcements, policy documents, official and unofficial statistics, media reports and social media posts. Focus on discourse around the scheme and furlough therefore opened perspectives of how the

scheme was being presented officially by the government and unofficially through wider channels. And yet it should be noted that analysis of discourse also opens attention to the 'imaginaries' of a situation not just its reality (ibid). For example furlough attracted certain opinions on social media about those furloughed enjoying a protracted holiday. It was a sentiment not shared in government announcements and policy documents. Noting the discourse around furlough (and SEISS) drew my attention to a dynamic shifting network of official rules and unofficial attitudes around the scheme. As such during the lifetime of the study I continued to monitor discourse around furlough both when it was running and after its cessation.

During its operation, the scheme changed many times in particular the rules around percentages of salary paid to those furloughed and the end date of the scheme, which was redrawn three times. To keep abreast of the dynamic nature of the scheme, I continually monitored UK government sites for changes in policy and guidance documents (HM Revenue and Customs 2020a; HM Revenue and Customs 2020b; HM Revenue and Customs 2020c; H.M. Treasury 2020c; Office for National Statistics 2021a; Office for National Statistics 2021b; Prime Minister's Office and Johnson, B. 2020a; Prime Minister's Office and Johnson, B. 2020b; UK Health Security Agency 2021). It was important for me to do this in order to understand some of the evolving nuances of the schemes that the participants referred to in the interviews. It was also useful to read the ongoing narratives that the UK government were creating around the scheme that were communicated via speeches by the Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak (H.M. Treasury 2020a; H.M. Treasury 2020b; H.M. Treasury 2020c).

With similar motivations, to keep track of information and narratives being shared around the CJRS, I monitored the guidelines around furlough and SEISS grants that trade unions were sharing with their members (BECTU 2021; GMB 2020; Sharp 2020). The CJRS had for some created issues around employment law and so I monitored the advice around furlough communicated by advisory organisations Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) (ACAS 2022) and Citizen's Advice (Citizens Advice 2022). This was undertaken to understand some of the potential employment law issues of furlough but also to keep a track of the narratives being generated around the CJRS.

Media reporting of the CJRS, enabled me to gain a sense of how narratives of furlough played out in a wider context. Initial reports focussed on the job retention aspect of the scheme and the need to keep jobs open in order to protect the future economy (James et al 2020; Ruzicka 2020). Later stories reported the various changes to the scheme, for example its end date which changed three times (Munbodh 2021; Swinford 2021; Tapsfield 2020) and that the cessation of the scheme would create mass unemployment (Cowburn 2020; Savage 2020). Post the cessation of the CJRS, the prevailing media narrative centred on businesses who may have been unscrupulous in applying for it (Hurley et al 2021; Neate 2021).

I monitored social media comments referring to furlough, predominantly on Twitter and furlough groups on Facebook. The Facebook groups enabled me to track changing attitudes to being furloughed as the scheme unfolded, broadly confusion, cynicism, resignation and looking for alternative employment. I followed narratives of furlough on Twitter via the hashtags #furlough #DeniedFurlough #ExcludedUk. These hashtags were predominantly connected to people excluded from furlough or SEISS. Although outside of the scope of the study, it was useful to read outsider views of the experience of furlough which often did not tally with the actual experience, for example the wider misperceptions of economic or job security.

During the course of the study I tracked the ongoing Office for National Statistics figures of those furlough or in receipt of SEISS grants in order to understand the demographics of who was in the scheme and how the fluctuations of numbers of those in paid non-work tallied with the changes in government restriction with regards the pandemic. For example, the UK government 'Eat Out to Help Out Scheme' (Keane 2020) which gave government subsidy to hospitality businesses to enable them to open and give discounted meals to customers, affected some of the participants in the study. It marked a period when they briefly came out of furlough, only to return when the scheme ended.

Attention to these discourses helped me to understand the ongoing contexts of CJRS, providing a backdrop to the situations of the participants of the study. It also helped me to understand the wider narrations of the scheme and how they may tally and differ from

those shared with me in the study. Analysis of the statistics, newspaper reports and social media was instigated before and after the interview period.

8.5 Live Diary

The initial focus of the study was the new spaces of waiting that the COVID-19 pandemic and practices to mitigate its threat had created. In order to capture people's sensorial experiences of waiting for the pandemic to be over, I recruited participants to make a 'live diary' via Whats App (Kaufman & Piel, 2020:232). The participants were recruited via Whats App groups I am an existing member of, or they were interview participants in the furlough study. An advantage of a 'live diary' via Whats App is that participants and researchers can have an exchange 'in the moment of experience' (ibid:241). The end-to-end encrypted nature of WhatsApp enabled private communication between the participants and I (Chambers, 2017:27). Each Tuesday at 11am the participants were sent the prompt 'Location? Atmosphere? See? Smell? Touch? Hear? Taste?'. The twenty participants kept a diary of live experiences over a series of months between January and July 2021. The responses varied from one word to one word per prompt to long detailed texts running over several messages. The live diaries gave a fragmentary insight of what the participants were experiencing at a given moment. My initial plan had been to overlay the participants and create one thick account of each collectively gathered moment. However, aside from the live diary making process being for those furloughed part of the approach of co-presence, the material gathered in the diaries is fascinating but has come to be beyond the scope of this study. The study came to focus in on the experiences of those furloughed. My intention is to return to the live diary material at a future date and explore it outside of this thesis.

8.5.1 Whats App Live Diary Participants

	PSEUDONYM	PARTICIPANT FURLOUGH STUDY	JOB TITLE	NO. MESSAGES EXCHANGED
1.	Alfonso	No	Designer	68
2.	**Alexandra***	**Yes**	**Optometrist**	**63**
3.	**Alison***	**Yes**	**Catering Logistics**	**74**
4.	**Caroline***	**Yes**	**Charity worker**	**115**
5.	**Charlotte***	**Yes**	**Charity worker**	**68**
6.	**Catherine***	**Yes**	**Education Admin**	**57**
7.	Denise	No	Freelance writer	39
8.	Daisy	No	PhD Researcher	50
9.	Dani	No	PhD Researcher	59
10.	Danielle	No	PhD Researcher	54
11.	Dawn	No	Freelance Arts Facilitator	49
12.	David	No	PhD Researcher	42
13.	**Amy***	**Yes**	**Estate Agent**	**50**
14.	Deborah	No	PhD Researcher	57
15.	Delyth	No	Nurse	48
16.	Dilys	No	Freelance Arts Facilitator	41
17.	Donna	No	PhD Researcher	66
18.	Dylan	No	Construction Supervisor	45
19.	Diane	No	Freelance Arts Facilitator	43
20.	**Jemma***	**Yes**	**TEFL Teacher**	**35**

1123 messages exchanged in total.

* These participants were also interviewed about their experience of furlough.

9

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