The Method of Hope

ANTHROPOLOGY,

PHILOSOPHY,

AND FIJIAN KNOWLEDGE

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1 ⌢ Hope as a Method

This book examines the place of hope in knowledge formation, academic and otherwise, in response to ongoing efforts in social theory to reclaim the category of hope (see, e.g., Hage 2003; Harvey 2000; Zournazi 2002; cf. Williams 1979, 1989). These efforts are part of divergent searches for alternative modes of critical thought that have followed the apparent decline of progressive politics and the rise of right-wing politics (cf. Lasch 1991). As David Harvey puts it: "The inability to find an 'optimism of the intellect' with which to work through alternatives has now become one of the most serious barriers to progressive politics. . . . I believe that in this moment in our history we have something of great import to accomplish by exercising an optimism of the intellect in order to open up ways of thinking that have for too long remained foreclosed" (Harvey 2000: 17).

Because these efforts constitute social theorists' response to conservative politicians' appropriation of the language of hope, for most social theorists, hope as a subject immediately triggers a series of ethical concerns regarding its content and its consequences (see Crapanzano 2003: 6; Zournazi 2002: 218). For example, in a series of interviews with renowned thinkers on the subject of hope, the philosopher Mary Zournazi has recently observed,

> The success of right-wing governments and sentiments lies in reworking hope in a negative frame. Hope masquerades as a vision, where the passion and insecurity felt by people become part of a call for national unity and identity, part of a community sentiment and future ideal of what we imagine ourselves to be. It is a kind of future nostalgia, a "fantastic hope" for national unity charged by a static vision of life and the

exclusion of difference. When, for the benefit of our security and belonging, we evoke a hope that ignores the suffering of others, we can only create a hope based on fear. (Zournazi 2002: 15)

Zournazi instead seeks to carve out a space for "a hope that does not narrow our visions of the world but instead allows different histories, memories and experiences to enter into present conversations on revolution, freedom and our cultural sense of belonging" (ibid.: 18).

In a more sociologically inspired effort, the anthropologist Ghassan Hage contends that we need to conceptualize societies as "mechanisms for the distribution of hope," arguing that "the kind of affective attachment (worrying or caring) that a society creates among its citizens is intimately connected to its capacity to distribute hope," and that neoliberal regimes have contributed to the "shrinking" of this capacity (Hage 2003: 3).

Although I am sympathetic to these efforts to reclaim hope in progressive thought, the focus of my investigation in this book does not concern either the ethical question of what the proper object of hope should be or the sociological question of what social condition increases or decreases actors' capacity to hope. Rather, I approach hope as a methodological problem for knowledge and, ultimately, as a *method* of knowledge deployed across a wide spectrum of knowledge practices, as well as of political persuasions. It is my conviction that any effort to reclaim the category of hope for a greater cause must begin with an examination of the predication of knowledge, academic or otherwise, on hope, and vice versa.

My investigation into hope draws on a comparative examination of very specific hopes in particular knowledge practices. The book is first of all my own response to the long-standing hope kept alive by the Fijians I came to know during ethnographic fieldwork in Suvavou, Fiji. Since the late nineteenth century, Suvavou people, the descendants of the original landowners of the Suva Peninsula, where the city of Suva stands today, have sought proper compensation from the government for the loss of their ancestral land. Because of its economic and political importance, the government has repeatedly maintained that the case cannot be reopened. De-

spite this repeated rejection, Suvavou people have continued to pe-
tition the government.

For Suvavou people, seeking this compensation has been more
than a matter of either monetary gains or identity. The long series
of petitions that they have sent to the government, I argue, repre-
sent an enduring hope to confirm their self-knowledge, the truth
about who they really are. In the Fijian context, what is true (*dina*)
is effective (*mana*), and vice versa. For Suvavou people, to receive
a large amount of compensation from the government for their
ancestral land would be an effect of and proof of the truthfulness
of their knowledge about themselves. In this book, I seek to answer
a seemingly self-evident question: How have Suvavou people kept
their hope alive for generation after generation when their knowl-
edge has continued to fail them? In order to answer this simple
question, the book investigates the work of hope across different
genres of Suvavou people's self-knowledge, ranging from archival
research to gift-giving, Christian church rituals, and business prac-
tices. An investigation of the semantic peculiarity of the Fijian term
i nuinui (hope) and its relationship to Christian and more secular
discourses of hope would be an important ethnographic exercise
(cf. Crapanzano 2003: 11–14; Franklin 1997; Good et al. 1990;
Verdery 1995), but as I discuss below, the goal of the present study
is to shift from hope as a subject to hope as a method.

Ultimately, this book is an enactment of Suvavou people's hope
on another terrain, that of anthropological knowledge. In this sense,
the book is also an effort to bring into view the place of hope in aca-
demic knowledge. Some readers may find this juxtaposition contro-
versial. As discussed in chapter 2, by the time of my field research
(1994–96), Suvavou people's struggle had been entangled with Fiji's
rising ethnic nationalism; moreover, the compensation Suvavou peo-
ple had demanded from the government might also be seen as hav-
ing potentially serious consequences for the country's economy (cf.
M. Kaplan 2004: 185, n. 7). How is it possible, the reader may ask,
to equate Suvavou people's hope with academic hope? My response
is to draw attention to a parallel between the ways in which Suva-
vou people, on the one hand, and philosophers such as Ernst Bloch,

Walter Benjamin, and Richard Rorty, on the other, generate hope, or prospective momentum. In other words, my focus is not so much on the divergent *objects* of these hopes as on the idea of hope as a method that *unites* different forms of knowing.

I did not go to Fiji to study hope, and neither did I have the philosophies of Bloch, Benjamin, and Rorty in mind when I went there. The way my research focus shifted points to a broader theoretical issue that defines the character of my approach to the subject of hope. I arrived in Fiji in early August 1994 intending to conduct ethnohistorical research into contemporary Fijian perceptions of *turaga* ("chiefs") and *vanua* ("land" and "people"). The ritual complementarity of *turaga* and *vanua* has long been a central concern in Fijian ethnography (Hocart 1929; M. Kaplan 1988; M. Kaplan 1990b: 8; M. Kaplan 1995; Sahlins 1985; Toren 1990, 1999), and my ambition was to follow Marshall Sahlins's lead (Sahlins 1981, 1985, 1991) to examine this ritual relationship in the context of Fijian conceptions of the past (cf. M. Kaplan 1995). More specifically, my project concerned the character of the relationship of *turaga* to *vanua* as a context and consequence of land alienation during the mid nineteenth century.

I began archival research at the National Archives of Fiji in August 1994. My target was the extensive body of government records concerning land alienation during the nineteenth century, and in particular the so-called Land Claims Commission's reports (hereafter LCC reports) on the history of each tract of land originally claimed by European settlers. My archival research led, however, to the unexpected discovery of something more intriguing than archival records. Each day, I noticed a number of Fijian researchers at the archives who requested and read the same LCC reports as I did. Some were heads of *mataqali* (clans), and others were interested persons from throughout Fiji, including a number of Fijian lawyers and "consultants" in Suva who specialized in providing legal advice on land disputes. My project turned to archival research and its associated evidential practices, and, ultimately, to the hope that the researchers, including myself, all shared in our respective pursuits of documents. Numerous lawyers and consultants

and Suvavou people had themselves conducted extensive archival research into the Suva land case, and Suvavou emerged as the focus of my ethnographic project.

The parallels among the divergent Fijian, philosophical, and anthropological forms of knowledge, and the unity I seek to bring to light, rest on a particular notion of hope. In the terms of this book, hope is not an emotional state of positive feeling about the future or a religious sense of expectation; it is not even a *subject* of analysis. Rather, following Bloch, Benjamin, and Rorty, I approach hope as a *method*. In these philosophers' work, hope serves as a method of radical temporal reorientation of knowledge. My insistence on using the category of hope derives precisely from this potential of hope as a method. As subjects of analysis, desire and hope are not easily distinguishable from each other, and the category of hope can easily be collapsed into the more thoroughly theorized category of desire.[1] Anthropologists have recently adopted desire as a cornerstone of analytical perspectives ranging from psychoanalysis to structural Marxism (see, e.g., Allison 2000; Sangren 2000). Unlike the subject of desire, which inherently invites one to analyze it with its infinitely deferrable quality, I argue, the conceptualization of hope as a method invites one to hope.

My investigation of hope as a common operative and method in Fijian, philosophical, and anthropological knowledge practices owes a particular debt to Marilyn Strathern's conscious efforts to juxtapose Melanesian knowledge and anthropological knowledge as comparable and parallel "analytical" forms (see Strathern 1988, 1990, 1991a, 1991b, 1997). Strathern has drawn attention to a series of aesthetic devices such as decomposition and substitution through which, according to her, Hageners in Papua New Guinea make visible their "inner capacities" (Strathern 1991a: 198). Strathern has made use of the parallel and contrast between "indigenous" and social analyses in her efforts, not only to question assumptions behind anthropological analytical constructs such as gender and part-whole relations (Strathern 1997; see also chapter 3), but also to *extend* Hageners' analytical devices to the shape of her own analysis (see Crook, in press).

Annelise Riles's work *The Network Inside Out* extends Strathern's concerns with analytical forms to analytical forms that resemble forms of social analysis such as the network form (Riles 2000). Whereas the distance and contrast between indigenous and social analyses has enabled Strathern to extend the former to the latter, the formal affinity and lack of distance between the knowledge practices of NGO workers and those of social analysts has led Riles to other analytical possibilities, not predicated on the existence of distance. Here Riles tackles the broader analytical issues at stake in divergent efforts to reinvent ethnography after the crisis of anthropological representation (see, e.g., Clifford 1988; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Comaroff and Comaroff 1992; R. G. Fox 1991b; Marcus and Fischer 1986; and see also Rabinow 1999: 167–82), and, in particular, in ethnographic studies of expert knowledge where the idea of difference, whether cultural, methodological, or even epistemological, cannot be sustained as a useful analytical framework (see Boyer 2001; Brenneis 1999; Holmes and Marcus, in press; Jean-Klein, in press; Marcus 1998, 1999; Maurer 2002, 2003; Miyazaki and Riles, in press; Reed 2003; Strathern 2000).

In this book, I seek to contribute to this broader debate by proposing a somewhat different ethnographic possibility. Specifically, my investigation of the character of hope across different forms of knowing, Fijian, philosophical, and anthropological, points to *replication* as an anthropological technique (cf. Strathern 1988). By replication, I mean to allude to both the structuralist notion of formal resemblance across different domains of social life (see Fajans 1997: 5–6, 267) and the notion of replication as proof in scientific methodology. Although Harry Collins and other science studies scholars have complicated our understanding of the latter (see Collins 1985; Dear 1995: 95; M. Lynch 1993: 212; Shapin 1994: 21; and see also Gooding et al. 1989), I hope to demonstrate during the course of my argument that replication is a useful analytical metaphor for the present investigation into the character of hope. Throughout the book, I have consciously sought to *replicate* Suvavou people's hope as a modality of engagement with one another, with their God, and with their government in my own

ethnographic engagement. In this sense, the book seeks to present a modality of ethnographic engagement that is predicated not so much on objectification, in the sense of analysis or critique, as on reception and response. It was once again through Strathern's work that I learned how acts of receiving and responding can be creative work (see, in particular, Strathern's response to Annette Weiner's critique in Strathern 1981). It is equally important to note that my discussion of Suvavou people's hope should not be mistaken as an effort to draw attention to a seemingly more general mode of engagement with the world that dispossessed people seem to exhibit elsewhere in the world. What is at issue for me is at once both more personal and more universal. More specifically, in this book, I seek to develop an account of hopeful moments whose shape replicates the way those moments are produced and experienced. Indeed, ultimately, I hope to generate a hopeful moment.

Hope as a Methodological Problem

Hope first of all emerged for me as a methodological problem. In the course of Fijian gift-giving, characterized by the interaction of two parties "facing" (*veiqaravi*) each other, there is a moment at which the gift-giving "side" subjects itself to the gift-receivers' evaluation, and quietly hopes that the other side will respond positively. After finishing a speech consisting of a series of apologies for the inadequacy of gifts, the spokesman for the gift-givers remains motionless holding a *tabua* (whale's tooth) in front of him until a spokesman for the gift-receivers takes it from him. In this moment of hope, the gift-givers place in abeyance their own agency, or capacity to create effects in the world (cf. Strathern 1987: 23–24; Strathern 1988: 268–74), at least temporarily (see Miyazaki 2000a). But what interests me most for present purposes is that once the gift-receivers accept the gifts, they deny the importance of the act of gift-giving among humans and collectively present the gifts to God. I have, for example, heard a spokesman for gift-receivers say, in accepting gifts: "Your valuables have been offered to Heaven so that we all may be given Heavenly blessing.

May [your chief] be blessed. May your descendants be blessed. . . .
May God love us and may our duties be possible. Our love is the
only valuable." At the moment at which the gift-givers' hope is ful-
filled, it is replaced by another hope, hope of God's blessing on all
those involved. My interpretation is that this second moment of
hope is an echo of the first fulfilled hope: The first moment of ful-
fillment in ritual is an intimation of God's ultimate response. The
production of hope of God's blessing, then, is a product of a care-
fully orchestrated discursive play of human agency.

It soon became clear to me, however, that my own analytical
treatment of hope as the product of a ritual process was temporal-
ly incongruous with the prospective orientation of hope itself (see
Miyazaki n.d.). The analysis was predicated on the assumption that
the manipulation of ritual language produces something (a sense of
collectivity, religious faith, hope, etc.). The retrospective treatment
of hope as a subject of description forecloses the possibility of
describing the prospective momentum inherent in hope. As soon as
hope is approached as the end point of a process, the newness or
freshness of the prospective moment that defines that moment as
hopeful is lost.

I am seeking here to ask a somewhat different set of questions
than those long explored in anthropological studies of the gift since
Bronislaw Malinowski and Marcel Mauss (Malinowski 1922;
Mauss 1966 [1925]). First of all, the focus of my attention is not
so much on the question of reciprocity and the Maussian notion of
hau, or the "spirit of the thing given," that prompts a return gift,
which have preoccupied generations of anthropologists (see, e.g.,
Godelier 1999; Sahlins 1972: 149-83; A. Weiner 1992). Second,
my attention to the temporal dimension of gift-giving may recall
Pierre Bourdieu's attention to temporal strategies in gift-giving in
the context of his critique of Claude Lévi-Strauss's structuralist
treatment of exchange (Bourdieu 1977: 4–6), but, unlike Bourdieu,
the methodological problem at stake for me is not the tension
between subjective and objective standpoints but the interconnec-
tion between the hope entailed in gift-giving and the hope entailed
in its analysis.

The argument of this book is that hope presents a set of methodological problems that in turn demand the temporal reorientation of knowledge. Looking at hope as a methodological problem, and ultimately a method, rather than a product or a strategic moment in a language game or a semiotic process, leads us to reconsider hope as a common operative in all knowledge formation. My claim is that thinking through hope as a method allows us to begin to confront the most fundamental problem—what knowledge is for.

My encounter with Fijian hope resonates with the German Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch's discussion of a "not-yet" (*Noch-Nicht*) consciousness at the very moment at which hope is fulfilled in his philosophy of hope (Bloch 1986). I first encountered Bloch's concept of the not-yet through the work of the Japanese anthropologist and cultural theorist Naoki Kasuga, who has conducted extensive ethnographic and historical research in Fiji. In an article published in Japanese, Kasuga seeks to explain how Fijians maintain their faith in land as the ultimate source of everything good even when land continually fails to fulfill this faith. According to Kasuga, "Fijians' persistent attachment to land is a daily reminder of what has 'not-yet' come, to borrow Ernst Bloch's phrase (*Noch-Nicht*), and of its immanent arrival. In the midst of disappointment, [the attachment to land] once again allows them to discover that reality is still in a state of not-yet. This cycle in turn sustains Fijians' persistent attachment to land" (1999: 386; my translation). I shall return to this repetitive quality of Fijian hope later in the book.

Bloch's best-known work, *The Principle of Hope* (1986), has received enthusiastic praise (e.g., Hobsbawm 1973: Steiner 1967: 90–91), as well as criticism (e.g., Habermas 1983; Ricoeur 1986: xiv), from influential thinkers.[2] Bloch's argument has arguably had its most prominent influence in the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* (1993a [1967]).[3] Nevertheless, although there have been numerous efforts to recuperate the contemporary relevance of Bloch's philosophy (see, especially, Daniel and Moylan 1997; Hudson 1982; Jameson 1971; Jay 1984; Levinas 1998: 33-42; Roberts 1990),[4] unlike much-celebrated con-

temporaries and close friends of his such as Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and Georg Lukács,[5] Bloch (1885–1977) remains a marginal figure in anthropology and in social theory more generally (see Malkki 2001 for a notable exception).[6]

From my point of view, what emerged at the intersection of Bloch's philosophy of hope and my ethnographic encounter with Fijian hope was a methodological problem. In *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch focuses on the question of how to overcome the incongruity between the retrospective orientation of philosophy as a contemplative form of knowledge and the prospective orientation of hope. According to Bloch, it is this temporal incongruity that has prevented philosophy from apprehending the nature of hope. In Bloch's view, therefore, hope is a methodological problem, that is, a problem of the retrospective character of contemplative knowledge.[7]

Bloch's methodological framing of the subject of hope prompted me to rethink the temporal orientation of my analysis of Fijian gift-giving, referred to earlier (Miyazaki 2000b; Miyazaki n.d.). To the extent that my analysis followed the flow of the gift-giving event, tracking every step of the ritual, in sequence, the temporal orientation of my analysis mirrored that of the gift-giving event itself. However, this prospective orientation was enabled by a retrospective perspective of my own. My analysis was predicated on the assumption that the moment of hope of God's blessing was an effect of and part of the strategic manipulation of ritual language, that is, it foregrounded what was analytically conceived as an *end point,* or *result.* More precisely, my focus on the production of hope followed the studies of Michael Herzfeld, Webb Keane, and others of how actors' manipulation of the formal properties of ritual language results in the emergence of certain particular forms of consciousness (Herzfeld 1990, 1997; Keane 1997c). From this point of view, I understood the exchange of words and objects in Fijian gift-giving as carefully designed to generate hope of God's blessing among ritual participants (see chapter 5). The focus of my analysis, in other words, was on the ritual process as seen from the vantage point of its effects. As I would later come to understand, any analysis that foresees its own end point loses its open-ended-

ness. The temporal orientation of this analysis and that of the ritual practices it described were incongruous. However, where the focus on production demands a retrospective perspective from the point of view of what is produced, ritual participants maintained a forward-looking orientation at every step of the ritual. More precisely, from ritual participants' point of view, the maintenance of a prospective perspective was at the heart of ritual performance. This was true even though the same participants engaged in the same ritual form repeatedly, and hence could be said to know the ritual's outcomes or effects (cf. Bourdieu 1977: 5).

Upon discovering this temporal incongruity, my initial urge was to pursue a framework of analysis that would replicate the temporality of every moment in the gift-giving event. In approximating the structure of the ritual moment, analysis would in a sense be in that moment. A framework of analysis that is completely synchronous with a present moment is an illusion, however. The challenge I faced is pertinent to a more general problem of how to approach the infinitely elusive quality of any present moment. As William Hanks has noted, "To say 'now' is already to have lost the moment. To say 'here' is to objectify part of a lived space whose extent is both greater and lesser than the referent" (Hanks 1996b: 295). This paradox of the present, according to Hanks, "produces a synchrony, only to be superseded, overtaken by its own momentum, unable to stop the motion of meaning" (ibid.: 295–96).

My investigation of hope in this book begins with the impossibility of achieving analytical synchronicity. Here, I once again turn to Bloch, whose solution to the problem of the incongruity between the direction of philosophy and that of hope is to reorient philosophy toward the future. In his view, hope can only be apprehended by hope. On the face of things, this move would seem to come up against the same limit. However, I argue below that the difference lies in the fact that Bloch's proposal does not treat hope as a *subject* of knowledge. Rather, it is a proposal to regard hope as a *method*. From this point of view, the impossibility of achieving synchronicity foregrounded in Bloch's concept of the "not-yet" becomes the means of apprehending hope itself. The remainder of this

chapter is devoted to explicating this idea and examining its theoretical implications for anthropology and social theory more generally. For anthropology, this idea takes on the relevance of problems of agency and temporality. For social theory, it suggests an unexpected point of confluence between German social thought and American pragmatism as exemplified by the work of Bloch, Benjamin, and Rorty. The ultimate goal of this exercise, however, is not to theorize hope but to construct an analytical framework for approaching concrete moments of hope that I encountered across different domains of knowledge in Suvavou, ranging from archival research to religious discourse to gift-giving rituals to business. I first turn to philosophical arguments about the temporal orientation of knowledge entailed in efforts to capture hope as a subject of contemplation. The question of hope in turn naturally invites the question of God, that is, of the problem of the *limits* of human agency. The next section therefore turns to questions of agency to show how, for Bloch and others, questions of temporality displace questions of agency. The chapter concludes that this displacement is instrumental to hope as a method, that is, to these philosophers' efforts to deploy hope as a means of apprehending hope. I follow with an overview of the argument of the book as a whole, as it unfolds in each of the individual chapters.

Reorienting the Direction of Knowledge

If there is little empirical ground for hope, on what grounds and for what should one hope? For many philosophers, this deceptively simple observation is at the heart of the problem of hope.[8] Just as the focus of Christian eschatology shifted from a concrete hope for the second coming of Christ to an abstract hope for an afterlife (see Bultmann 1957: 51; Kermode 2000: 25; Moltmann 1993a [1967]), the insufficient empirical foundation of hope has led many philosophers to make a purely moral argument for hope (see Ricoeur 1986: xv). In *Critique of Pure Reason,* for example, Immanuel Kant asks the famous question, "What may I hope?" (1929 [1781]: 635), or "If I do what I ought to do, what may I then hope?" (636).

Kant's answer to this question derives from his assumption that "there really are pure moral laws which determine completely *a priori* (without regard to empirical motives, that is, to happiness) what is and is not to be done, that is, which determine the employment of the freedom of a rational being in general" (636). For Kant, "hope in the moral progress of human society" comes down to "moral faith," or faith beyond knowledge, the philosopher Robert Adams observes (1998: xxv, xxvi), that is, faith in the possibility of "a moral world" (Kant 1929 [1781]: 637), which is itself also the condition of that possibility (see also Peters 1993: 143). This understanding of hope is not so different from the notion of "hope against hope" often attributed to Saint Paul's comment on Abraham, who "against hope believed in hope" (Rom. 4:18; see Muyskens 1979: 136) or indeed of Kierkegaard's existentialist philosophy (cf. Adams 1987).

Ernst Bloch's philosophy of hope represents a significant departure from this conventional framework of philosophical contemplation on the subject of hope. In his magnum opus, *The Principle of Hope,* Bloch seeks to "bring philosophy to hope" (Bloch 1986: 6) and analyzes a variety of hopeful visions ranging from daydreams to fantasies about technology to detective stories and the Bible (see also Bloch 1988). However, I read *The Principle of Hope* not so much as a study of various manifestations of hope as an effort to reconstitute philosophy on what he calls the "principle hope" (*das Prinzip Hoffnung*). In my terms, Bloch's philosophy is a proposal for hope as a method of knowledge.

In *The Principle of Hope*, Bloch confronts the limits of philosophy in its capacity to comprehend "the world [as an entity] full of propensity towards something, tendency towards something, latency of something" (Bloch 1986: 18). According to Bloch, the limits of philosophy derive from its retrospective character: "Contemplative knowledge [such as philosophy] can only refer by definition to What Has Become"; in other words, it "presuppose[s] a closed world that has already become. . . . Future of the genuine, processively open kind is therefore sealed off from and alien to any mere contemplation" (ibid.: 8).

What Bloch points out here is the incongruity between the temporal orientation of knowledge and that of its object, the world. According to Bloch, this incongruity has also prevented philosophy from appreciating the character of hope. He proposes to substitute hope for contemplation as a method of engagement with the world. Bloch's philosophy of hope in this sense is a methodological move to reorient the direction of philosophy: he thus proposes to turn philosophy toward the future and to what has "not-yet" become. Bloch introduces the notion of the not-yet consciousness as the antithesis of the Freudian notion of the subconscious. If the power of psychoanalysis is predicated on the rebounding power of the repressed or suppressed, the power of hope as a method rests on a prospective momentum entailed in anticipation of what has not-yet become: "a relatively still Unconscious disposed towards its other side, forwards rather than backwards. Towards the side of something new that is dawning up that has never been conscious before, not, for example, something forgotten, something rememberable that has been, something that has sunk into the subconscious in repressed or archaic fashion" (Bloch 1986: 11).

Moreover, according to Bloch, the philosophy that is open to the future entails a commitment to changing the world: "Only thinking directed towards changing the world and informing the desire to change it does not confront the future (the unclosed space for new development in front of us) as embarrassment and the past as spell" (Bloch 1986: 8).

The German Marxist philosopher's intense concern with hope resonates, albeit in an unexpected manner, with the American pragmatist Richard Rorty's own turn to hope.[9] In a series of essays entitled "Hope in Place of Knowledge," Rorty reads John Dewey's pragmatism as a proposal to replace knowledge with hope. As in the case of Bloch, this turn to hope demands shifting the temporal orientations of philosophy. According to Rorty, Dewey's criticism of metaphysical philosophy for simply being "an attempt to lend the past the prestige of the eternal" (Rorty 1999: 29) sought to substitute "the notion of a better human future for the [metaphysical] notions of 'reality,' 'reason' and 'nature.' . . . [Pragmatism] is 'the

apotheosis of the future'" (ibid.: 27). The resonance between Bloch and Rorty derives from their efforts to anchor their critique of philosophy in the problem of the temporal direction of knowledge. More concretely, their shared pursuit of a transformative philosophy leads them to a shared concern with the future, that is, with the direction of knowledge. American pragmatists' commitment to the task of changing the world (that is, making it more democratic) could also be described as a future-oriented faith in themselves. Rorty emphasizes that Dewey sought to make philosophy "an instrument of change rather than of conservation," even denying that "philosophy is a form of knowledge" (ibid.: 29). "American pragmatism is a diverse and heterogeneous tradition. But its common denominator consists of a future-oriented instrumentalism that tries to deploy thought as a weapon to enable more effective action," Cornel West observes (1989: 5).

Underlying Bloch's and Rorty's turn to the future is their critique of the philosophical understanding of essence, or truth about humanity that is given but is hidden from humans, captured in the Greek notion of history as a teleological course of disclosure of this essence. Bloch notes, for example, that "essence is not something existing in finished form . . . [but] is that which is not yet" (Bloch 1986: 1373; emphasis removed). As Wayne Hudson puts it, Bloch "replaces any conception of a settled world with the thought experiment of a world kept open by the presence of futuristic properties within it" (Hudson 1982: 92). Rorty similarly says: "What [pragmatists] hope is not that the future will conform to a plan, will fulfill an immanent teleology, but rather the future will astonish and exhilarate. . . . [What pragmatists share] is their principled and deliberate fuzziness" (Rorty 1999: 28). Underlying Bloch and Rorty's turn to the future is their critique of the Greek idea of anamnesis and its associated teleological course of the world taken for granted in metaphysics. For both, therefore, there is no God's plan, no essential disposition of the world that will automatically unfold. Both stress the indeterminate character of the direction of the world; both abandon the notion of a predetermined end.

At the intersections of Bloch and Rorty's philosophy, therefore,

hope emerges as a method of engagement with the world that has particular implications for the temporality of knowledge formation. In their view, hope invokes the limits of the retrospection of philosophical contemplation and serves as a method for a philosophy that is open to the future. In other words, the introduction of hope to philosophy reorients philosophy to the future. This reorientation of knowledge has some significant consequences for a range of issues that are central to the current concerns of social and cultural theory. I wish to focus here, in particular, on the problems of agency and temporality.

Sources of Hope: The Problem of Agency

The predication of hope on an understanding of the world as indeterminate is for both Bloch and Rorty preconditioned by a rejection of the possibility of God. This raises a question about the source of hope. For Rorty, that source is human agency. Rorty's self-consciously aggrandizing concept of human agency explicitly rejects humility as instrumental to the production of hope.

The notion of humility "presupposes that there is, already in existence, something better and greater than the human," according to Rorty, who proposes instead the notion of finitude, which "presupposes only that there are lots of things which are different from the human." He adds: "A pragmatic sense of limits requires us only to think that there are some projects for which our tools are presently inadequate, and to hope that the future may be better than the past in this respect" (Rorty 1999: 51–52).

Underlying Rorty's preference for the notion of finitude over humility is his anti-essentialist rejection of the pursuit of the essence of humanity as the goal of philosophy: "humanity is an open-ended notion, that the word 'human' names a fuzzy but promising project rather than an essence" (Rorty 1999: 52). This rejection of the notion of essence in turn leads him to emphasize human agency (or human capacity to create a better future) in place of God's agency:

> pragmatists transfer to the human future the sense of awe and mystery which the Greeks attached to the non-human; it is transformed into a

sense that the humanity of the future will be, although linked with us by a continuous narrative, superior to present-day humanity in as yet barely imaginable ways. It coalesces with the awe we feel before works of imagination, and becomes a sense of awe before humanity's ability to become what it once merely imagined, before its capacity for self-creation. (Rorty 1999: 52)

For this reason, following Christopher Lasch's distinction between hope and optimism (1991), Patrick Deneen has argued that Rorty's (and Dewey's) "hope" cannot be called hope. Rorty's hope is simply "optimism without hope," that is, "the disposition that human problems are tractable without needing to resort to any appeals to transcendence or the divine in their solution," according to Deneen, who contrasts Rorty's optimism without hope with Václav Havel's "hope without optimism," which, he says, is based on "a fundamental mistrust in the belief that humans have the ability to solve political and moral problems, but that the appeal to a transcendent source—through hope—can serve as a guiding standard, as well as an encouragement to action" (Deneen 1999: 578). In other words, for Deneen, Rorty's optimism cannot be considered hope, because hope is predicated on a concept of God, that is, of transcendent agency, which in turn implies limits to human agency.

Rorty's move to eliminate the notion of transcendence from his hope is deliberate and strategic. In fact, Rorty anticipates Deneen's line of criticism:

A typical first reaction to antiessentialism is that it is too anthropocentric, too much inclined to treat humanity as the measure of all things. To many people, antiessentialism seems to lack humility, a sense of mystery, a sense of human finitude. It seems to lack a common-sensical appreciation of the obdurate otherness of things of this world. The antiessentialist reply to this common-sensical reaction is that common sense is itself no more than the habit of using a certain set of descriptions. In the case at hand, what is called common sense is simply the habit of using language inherited from the Greeks, and especially from Plato and Aristotle. (Rorty 1999: 51)

Bloch's hope surfaces as an interesting counterpoint to both of these positions. The question for Bloch as a committed atheist is how to hope after the death of God (cf. Habermas 1983). Bloch's

starting point is that God is not a possible solution. "[N]o one, not even the most religious person, today still believes in God as even the most lukewarm, indeed the doubters, believed in him two hundred years ago," he observes in *The Principle of Hope* (1986: 1291). He therefore seeks to decouple the problem of hope from the question of agency (human versus God) per se. More precisely, for Bloch, hope actually replaces the problem of agency: imagined nonhuman agents such as God are simply a manifestation of hope. From this point of view, it is not God that is the source of hope but hope that is the source of God:

> The place that has been occupied in individual religions by what is conceived as God, that has ostensibly been filled by that which is hypostatized as God, has not itself ceased after it has ceased to be ostensibly filled. For it is at all events preserved as a place of projection at the head of utopian-radical intention; and the metaphysical correlate of this projection remains the hidden, the still undefined—underdefinitive, the real Possible in the sense of mystery. The place allocated to the former God is thus not in itself a void; it would only be this if atheism were nihilism, and furthermore not merely a nihilism of theoretical hopelessness but of the universal-material annihilation of every possible goal- and perfection-content. (Bloch 1986: 1199)[10]

For Bloch, in other words, the important choice is not so much between God and humans as between nihilism and hope. Upon the death of God, the question of agency, whether human or nonhuman, fades into the background to the extent that it is understood as a simple manifestation of human hope. For Bloch, the source of hope is neither faith in God nor faith in humans. Hope is the source of such faith.

Moments of Hope: The Problem of the Present

Bloch thus practically substitutes the question of temporality for the question of agency. Underlying Bloch's turn to hope is his concern with the problem of the present.[11] In a series of essays entitled "On the Present in Literature," for example, Bloch confronts the difficulty of accessing the present. For Bloch, the difficulty arises from the lack of distance between oneself and the present moment

in which one finds oneself:

> Without distance . . . you cannot even experience something, [much] less represent it or present it in a right way. . . . In general it is like this: all nearness makes matters difficult, and if it is too close, then one is blinded, at least made mute. This is true in a strict sense only for a precise, on-the-spot experience, for the immediate moment that is as a dark "right-now" lacking all distance to itself. But this darkness of the moment, in its unique directness, is not true for an already more mediated right-now, which is of a different kind and which is a specific experience called "present." . . . Nevertheless, something of the darkness of the immediate nearness is conveyed . . . to the more mediated, more widespread present by necessity, i.e., an increased difficulty to represent it. (Bloch 1998: 120)

For Bloch, therefore, the problem of the present is emblematic of the problem of one's alienation from self-knowledge. In his first major work, *The Spirit of Utopia,* originally published in 1918, Bloch points out that our knowledge about who we are "represents only an untrue form, to be considered only provisionally. We . . . are located in our own blind spot, in the darkness of the lived moment" (Bloch 2000: 200). For Bloch, hope emerges from this condition of alienation from self-knowledge. Hope, according to Bloch, "is in the darkness itself, partakes of its imperceptibility" and "lifts itself precisely out of the Now and its darkness, into itself" (ibid.: 201, 202).

The problem of how to approach the present has been one of the most difficult puzzles in philosophy and exemplifies the problem of the lack of analytical distance more generally. One solution has been to move away from the idea of linear and clocklike temporal flow that treats the present as an instant and to introduce unevenness into the past-present-future relationship, of which the present is the focal point (cf. Munn 1992: 115). The phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, for example, understands actors' perception of the present as an intersection of what he terms retention, or the accumulation of past actions and their consequences, on the one hand, and protention, or plans for future actions (Husserl 1964 [1887]; see also Schutz 1970: 137–38). From this perspective, Alfred Gell observes, as against the philosophical problem of the

"nothingness" of the present (Sartre 1956: 175–79), Husserl sug-
gests that the present has its own "thickness" (Gell 1992: 223). The
pragmatist Charles Sanders Peirce calls the present "inscrutable," a
"Nascent State between the Determinate and the Indeterminate,"
adding, "the consciousness of the present is . . . that of a struggle
over what shall be; and thus we emerge from the study with a con-
firmed belief that it is the Nascent State of the Actual" (Peirce
1960: 5: 459, 462, quoted in E. V. Daniel 1996: 125–26). William
James's theory of the consciousness of self also draws on his redef-
inition of the notion of the present: "the practically cognized pre-
sent is no knife-edge, but a saddle-back, with a certain breadth of
its own on which we sit perched, and from which we look in two
directions into time" (James 1981 [1890]: 574). In a similar fash-
ion, George Herbert Mead famously develops the notion of the
present as "the locus of reality" in his theory of the emergent self:

> A present then, as contrasted with the abstraction of mere passage, is
> not a piece cut out anywhere from the temporal dimension of uniform-
> ly passing reality. Its chief reference is to the emergent event, that is, to
> the occurrence of something which is more than the processes that have
> led up to it and which by its change, continuance, or disappearance,
> adds to later passages a content they would not otherwise have pos-
> sessed. (Mead 1959: 23)

Nancy Munn (1990) shows that the present as a site of reality con-
struction contains intersecting temporalities that actors seek to
control.

In contrast to these efforts to develop a general theory of actors'
apprehension of the present, Bloch and Benjamin theorize the prob-
lem of how to apprehend a particular kind of present that they call
the "now" [*Jetzt*]. "The now [*Jetzt*] moves and propels itself
through each day, whenever. It beats in all that happens with its
shortest time span, and it knocks on the door," Bloch writes (1998:
127). Yet, as he notes, the now is not always accessible:

> [N]ot every present opens up for it. The actual impulses, the socially
> driving pulses, do not beat in each present fresh and vital. Not every
> time opens up for the now and the next now that stands exactly at that
> moment in front of the door and that has never "entered" before. It has

not unloaded its true contents with which and toward which it is on its way. . . . That which we call the propelling now evidently does not mean anything other than the tendencies within all that exists project-ed onto and atomized within the course of time. (Bloch 1998: 127)

Access to the now, in other words, demands another "now," that is, a moment of hope.

The problem of the now is precisely the problem Walter Benjamin tackles in his famous "Theses on the Philosophy of History" (1992 [1968]: 245–55). Let us consider for a moment Benjamin's discussion of "hope in the past" to which Peter Szondi has drawn attention (1986; see also Didi-Huberman 2000: 99). Benjamin was once a close friend of Bloch's, and the two thinkers' interests intersected (cf. Kaufmann 1997; Geoghegan 1996). In "Theses on the Philosophy of History," Benjamin criticizes the idea of history as a chain of cause and effect (see Weber 2001: 201) by pointing to the messianic role of the historian:

> To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it "the way it really was" (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. Historical materialism wishes to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to man sin-gled out by history at a moment of danger. The danger affects both the content of the tradition and its receivers. The same threat hangs over both: that of becoming a tool of the ruling classes. In every ear the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a con-formism that is about to overpower it. The Messiah comes not only as the redeemer, he comes as the subduer of Antichrist. Only that histori-an will have the gift of fanning the spark of *hope in the past* who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious. (Benjamin 1992 [1968]: 247; my emphasis; original emphasis removed)

Benjamin's messianic historian searches for unfulfilled hope in the past and facilitates its fulfillment. We might call this attitude toward the now retrospective from the perspective of the past's future moment of its own salvation.[12]

In Benjamin's "hope in the past," Szondi sees the "joining of hope and despair" (1986: 156). In other words, the historian's self-assigned messianic mission becomes the basis for hope of the his-

torian's own salvation. The historian's messianic retrospection is the source of hope in the future messianic historian even at a moment of despair. Benjamin therefore carves out a space for hope by changing the character of the direction of historical knowledge. We might say that Benjamin's hope is predicated on a dialectic of the past and the present, defined as the past's eschatological future moment (cf. Szondi 1986: 157).

According to Benjamin, this dialectic of the past and its own eschatological moment is conditioned by the past itself: "the past carries with it a temporal index, according to which it is assigned to salvation" (Benjamin 1980, vol. 1: 495, quoted in Szondi 1986: 157). In other words, the past points to the future moment of its own salvation. This view of the past is predicated on a view of the present as having an internal drive toward its own end point. What fans "the spark of hope in the past" is the historian's retrospective attention from the past's future end. The past has its own directionality, in other words, that invites the historian to participate in its internal drive toward its own fulfillment.

What Benjamin's critique of history and Bloch's critique of philosophy have in common are precisely this attention to the direction of knowledge and its associated reorientation of knowledge. Just as described in the previous section, Bloch introduces a prospective perspective to philosophy's retrospective contemplation, Benjamin reverses the direction of historical knowledge, and counters the linear temporality of conventional historical writing that relates past and present as cause and effect with a retrospective intervention that relates past and present as the past's eschatological future.

More important, both Bloch and Benjamin draw attention to the character of a hopeful moment. For both, hope is always disappointed. Yet, in Benjamin's view, hope in the present points to its own future moment of salvation. Likewise, Bloch draws attention to unfulfilled hope as "the repressed, the interrupted, the undischarged on which we can in one and the same act fall back upon while it reaches forward to us in order to develop in a better way" and points to how in this unfulfilled hope, "the corresponding

points of the now sparkle and transmit each other" (1998: 129, 130). Both seek to apprehend a moment of hope, in other words, by striking it with a perspective whose direction is opposite to that of the moment. In other words, to borrow Benjamin's expression, the spark of hope flies up in the midst of the radical temporal reorientation in their own analyses.

For both Bloch and Benjamin, therefore, moments of hope can only be apprehended as other moments of hope. Any attempts to objectify these moments and turn them into outcomes of some process, as both philosophy and history tend to do, are destined to fail to capture the temporality of these moments. Bloch and Benjamin succeed in recapturing the temporality of these moments, rather, by reproducing another hopeful moment, the moment of hope in their own writing. According to Bloch, the hopeful moment, or the now-time, is "a turning point [that] gathers all the undischarged corresponding elements within this time that is to be shaped . . . [and that] is the resource that enables now-time to be seen and yet not contemplated, thus without the loss of goal, without the loss of its frontier characteristic" (Bloch 1998: 131).

From this perspective, I now wish to revisit my own initial impulse for synchronicity between the temporality of my analytical framework and that of the hope of Fijian ritual participants for God's blessing. I mentioned at the outset that my initial response to Fijians' ritual production of hope was an impulse to construct an analytical framework that would be synchronous with the temporality of every moment of hope in the ritual. Note that this hopeful impulse for synchronicity emerged for me at the moment of my apprehension of the temporal incongruity between my analytical attention and its object, that is, others' hope. In other words, for me, hope was simultaneously a *cause* and an *effect* of that incongruity.

In light of the above discussion, the problem of incongruity between the retrospective framework of production and that of hope becomes a methodological opportunity. It was precisely at that moment of incongruity that hope emerged as a driving force for my own inquiry. At the moment when I apprehended the tem-

poral incongruity between my own analysis of the ritual produc-
tion of hope and Fijians' hope, in other words, I replicated Fijians'
hope on a methodological terrain. My point is that the real chal-
lenge posed by moments of hope is not so much the impossibility
of achieving the temporal congruity between knowledge and its
object as the immediacy of hope thus engendered, that is, hope's
demand for its own fulfilment. In the method of hope, this hope for
synchronicity is a "representation" of the hope to which it is
deployed. Moments of hope can only be apprehended as sparks on
another terrain, in other words. The sparks provide a simulated
view of the moments of hope as they fade away.

   In the five ethnographic chapters that follow, I wish to recapture
what Benjamin calls the sparks of hope that have flown up from
my encounter with the hope of Suvavou people. As I already have
suggested, these sparks are mostly products of incongruities
between the temporal direction of my own anthropological inter-
vention and that of Suvavou people's hope as a method of self-
knowledge. The challenge I face is how to preserve these sparks
while resisting the immediate demand of hope for synchronicity
that emerges in these incongruities. In these chapters, I examine the
work of hope across different domains of Fijian knowledge rang-
ing from archival research (chapter 2) to distribution of rent money
(chapter 3) to petition writing (chapter 4) to religious and gift-giv-
ing rituals (chapters 5 and 6) and to business activities (chapters 3
and 6).

An Overview of the Book

Underlying my turn to Bloch's philosophy is my hope to carve out
a space for a new kind of anthropological engagement with philos-
ophy. Recently, against earlier efforts to deploy non-Western
thought to challenge Western metaphysics (e.g., Lévi-Strauss 1962),
anthropologists have begun to engage in a more substantial man-
ner with the work of philosophers such as Wittgenstein (Das 1998),
Heidegger (J. F. Weiner 1992, 1993, 2001), Peirce (E. V. Daniel
1984, 1996; Lee 1997), and Charles Taylor (Geertz 2000). Al-

though I am sympathetic to these anthropological attempts to tackle philosophical problems, this book is not such an attempt.[13] That is, I am not interested in either extending Bloch's theoretical constructs to anthropology or reinterpreting the location of his work in social and cultural theory.[14] To do so would violate the spirit of Bloch's work. In other words, Bloch's particular concept of hope as a method has consequences for the character of the relationship between knowledge and its object that in turn demand a particular kind of response. That is, if as suggested above, the conception of hope as a *problem* has led many philosophers to look to moral faith for a solution, I argue that the reconceptualization of hope as a method simply demands its application and replication on a new terrain.

My investigation into the character of Fijian hope is therefore not so much a study of the hope of others as an effort to recapture that hope (Fijians' as well as Bloch's) as a method for anthropology. This general aim of the book manifests itself in the trajectory of my investigation as unfolded in the next six chapters. In this chapter, I have juxtaposed my encounter with hopeful moments in Fijian gift-giving with Ernst Bloch's conceptualization of hope as a methodological problem. Ultimately, I have suggested that a solution to this problem inheres in turning hope into a method of my inquiry, that is, in retrospectively making explicit my own analytical hope as a replication of the hope as an analytical object that had prompted me to strive for temporal congruity between knowledge and its object at the outset. In the following five chapters, with this hope in mind, I retrospectively investigate hopeful moments across different genres of Suvavou people's knowledge practices. My hope is that the constellation of "sparks of hope" in this zigzag juxtaposition between my own analytical hope and Suvavou people's hope will in turn point to yet another moment of replication, that is, hope latent in the present of anthropological knowledge of which this work is part. In this sense, the book is an ethnographically informed speculation about what comes after hope. This seems to be a particularly appropriate response to Bloch's philosophy of hope given that it is "a doctrine of hope and ontological anticipa-

tion, is itself an anticipation," as Fredric Jameson puts it (1971:
158–59).

In more concrete terms, in the chapters that follow, I demon-
strate that for the Fijians I knew, as for Bloch, hope was a method
of knowledge. More concretely, it was a method of self-knowledge,
that is, knowledge about who they were. As a method of knowl-
edge, I shall show, hope consistently introduced a prospective
momentum that propelled their pursuit of self-knowledge. I wish to
show how hope allowed the Fijians I knew to experience the limits
of self-knowing without abandoning the possibility of self-knowing
altogether.

Chapters 2 and 3 comprise an ethnographic introduction to Su-
vavou and also seek to situate Suvavou people's hope at the inter-
section of their pursuit of compensation for the loss of their ances-
tral land and their effort to confirm their knowledge about them-
selves. In chapter 2, "A History of Thwarted Hope," I discuss the
shifting location of Suvavou people's hope in Fiji's political econo-
my. My focus is on a history of Suvavou people's engagement with
the government since the late nineteenth century and, in particular,
on the government's evaluation of Suvavou people's knowledge
about themselves. At the time of my research, the government
treated Suvavou people with a certain degree of sympathy and also
perceived Suvavou people's affairs to be "sensitive" because of
their history. However, both colonial and postcolonial government
officials approached Suvavou people with a patronizing and even
condescending attitude. In these officials' view, Suvavou people
were "illiterate" and "ignorant"; moreover they were not authen-
tic traditional Fijians because of the negative effects of their long-
time exposure to city life. Following the two military coups in 1987
that toppled the democratically elected coalition government of the
multi-ethnic Labour Party and the Indo-Fijian dominated National
Federation Party, however, Suvavou sympathizers emerged within
and outside of the government owing to their status as an arche-
typical disenfranchised and dispossessed indigenous people. Yet
even these sympathizers expressed some doubt about the authen-
ticity of Suvavou people's self-knowledge. The ultimate goal of this

chapter is to point to gaps between these sympathizers' hope for Suvavou people, as dispossessed indigenous people, and Suvavou people's own hope. This incongruity in turn sets the stage for my examination of the incongruities between the direction of anthropological intervention and that of Suvavou people's hope in the chapters that follow.

If chapter 2 situates Suvavou people in the wider politics of indigenous knowledge, in chapter 3, "A Politics of Self-Knowledge," I turn to the internal politics of Suvavou. My focus is on the character of reorientation of knowledge in the context of disputes among Suvavou *mataqali* over the method of distribution of rent money received from the government for the use of their lands. The disputes revolved around a contest between two notions of a whole: the whole defined by the act of combination of parts, and the whole defined by the act of division. In recent years, the emergence of a village company and associated concepts of company shares had introduced a new notion of a whole defined by exchangeable parts (shareholders). My argument is that these competing conceptions of wholes had different temporal implications for the politics of self-knowledge.

In chapters 4, 5, and 6, I address the question of how Suvavou people have kept alive their hope. My focus is on the interplay of agency and temporality in the production of hope. Drawing on my discussion of the politics of self-knowledge in chapters 2 and 3, I investigate how Suvavou people have striven to introduce a prospective momentum to a present moment constantly invaded by retrospection. In these three chapters, I also address three themes that are central to Bloch's philosophy of hope, that is, (1) indeterminacy as a condition of the possibility for hope; (2) the backgrounding of the problem of agency in the production of hope; and (3) the repetitive quality of hope.

In chapter 4, "Setting Knowledge in Motion," I draw attention to the predication of Suvavou people's hope on a delicate balance between an emphasis on future-oriented openness and an anticipation of a moment of closure. My focus is on the content and form of petitions that Suvavou people have sent to the government over

the past hundred years. Fijian land officially known as "Native Land" is registered to *mataqali*. The *mataqali*'s ownership is founded on the records kept by the Native Lands Commission, a division of the government that created and has maintained these records. Access to these records is tightly controlled and is rarely granted to members of the public. In this sense, Fijians are alienated from their own self-knowledge. This alienation has conditioned the character of Suvavou people's petitions to reopen inquiry into their landownership. The problem the authors of these petitions have faced, I argue, is how to set in motion their self-knowledge. This has entailed an effort to render the frozen present of Fijian self-knowledge indeterminate, while at the same time indicating a method for alternative closure. My argument, contra the currently dominant treatment of reality, is that in this context, indeterminacy has been an achievement, not a given condition, and that the problem of indeterminacy has been inseparable from the problem of how to bring into view a point of closure.

In chapters 5 and 6, I turn to Suvavou people's religious and gift-giving rituals. On its surface, the highly religious quality of Fijian social life would seem to constitute such a contrast with the secular philosophical efforts to apprehend hope as to render them inapposite. Because most Fijians, including Suvavou people, are Christians, for them, unlike for Bloch and Rorty, God's presence is unquestionable.[15] At another level, however, certain parallels emerge. As in the case of the philosophical debates about hope mentioned above, Fijian hope entailed a discursive game in which conceptions of human and nonhuman agency were negotiated and redefined. Chapter 5, "Intimating Fulfillment," focuses on these moments of what I call the abeyance of agency. A comparison of Christian and gift-giving rituals draws attention to moments in these rituals at which the agency of some or all ritual participants was left in abeyance. I argue that these moments are instrumental in the production of hopeful moments.

In chapter 6, "Repeating Without Overlapping," I demonstrate the predication of hope as a method on replication, that is, on the effort to reproduce prospective momentum to knowledge from one

domain to the next. In the first half of the chapter, I examine a series of events surrounding a Suvavou village company's construction project in order to draw attention to different kinds of retrospective perspectives that constantly invaded moments of hope. My focus is on the way Fijians reintroduced a prospective perspective to these moments. Fijians accomplish this task by redefining and reconfiguring the relationship between humans and God in order to repeatedly recapture the prospective momentum latent in retrospection. In the second half of the chapter, I turn to the public debate engendered by an apology Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka delivered to the nation for his past conduct. My focus here is on the limits of hope as a method. In this debate, in response to Rabuka's critics, Christian defenders of Rabuka pointed to those critics' failure to appreciate the moment of hope in the prime minister's act of apology. I argue, however, that in engaging in this kind of rhetoric, Rabuka's defenders failed precisely to recapture the hopeful content of Rabuka's apology. My point in this chapter is to demonstrate that hope can only be represented by further acts of hope. I conclude chapter 6 by considering the implications of the repetitive quality of hope for my own endeavor to recapture hopeful moments.

Chapter 7, "Inheriting Hope," concludes the book with a reflection on hopeful moments in anthropology since the 1980s. I focus on two examples of temporal incongruity between anthropological theory and its object: the problem of colonial legacies (Asad 1973; Clifford 1988; Thomas 1991; cf. Said 1978) and the problem of what Michael Fischer has termed "emergent forms of life" (Fischer 1999; see also Appadurai 1996; Strathern 1992). In both cases, anthropological knowledge has been imagined to lag behind what is emergent in its subject. The apprehension of these temporal incongruities has in turn prompted anthropologists to attempt to correct them.[16] This sense of belatedness, in other words, generated in anthropologists a hope of synchronicity. In light of my discussion above, however, this synchronicity must be understood as an illusion. If anthropologists have focused on the question of how to make their knowledge synchronous with the present moment of

its subject, my discussion of hope begins with the limit of such synchronicity. The argument of this book is that hope as a method does not rest on an impulse to pursue analytical synchronicity but on an effort to *inherit* and *replicate* that impulse as a spark of hope on another terrain. The ultimate goal of this book, in other words, is to ignite sparks that illuminate the here and now of anthropology.

My turn to hope is a turn away from the now fashionable effort to pursue "new" subjects for ethnographic inquiry. Hope *is* a new subject for anthropology in a sense, but I do not approach hope as a subject. For me, as for the Fijians I knew (and Bloch), hope is a method. As a method, hope is not new, because it is latent in all academic ventures.