

There will be extra-time
Azza Zein

Meeting place

The place has a fence. It also has a caring net that will be revealed.
There are pots, some lying and some hanging on the fence.
The trees hug and twirl around. We hear birds' sounds.
The unpainted wooden striped fence places us in Australian suburbia.
We wonder: is this before or after the lockdown?
In the backyard, a table and two chairs are waiting for a meeting to occur.
We wait.
There is no barbecue stand.
The play will reoccur over and over—each screen with one act, one space, one object.

Translating the bucket

Is the bucket being kicked? Or is time being kicked?
Inside the one-act, we are confronted with a vessel of boredom, existential boredom. Since when have we been in this isolated state, isolated suburbia, isolated continent? Do the restrictions allow us to express anger in our backyard? In a country where social space disapproves public display of excessive emotions: should one kick the bucket? There is a strange familiarity with such an expression as I read the title. Am I missing a translation? While I search all that it might mean, I am confronted that it implies, for the native speaker, death in the act of suicide. Translation sometimes hurts not because it others but because it reminds us of the impossibility of embodying all expressions. The lack of translatability can sometimes isolate from difficult meanings. In the inadequacy of translatability, meaning is imagined, and the backyard can be rearranged.

The act of kicking while seemingly superfluous, redundant and useless acts as a resistance to conventional forms of waiting and coping. Under COVID19 lockdown, conformist and accommodating strategies such as planting, and baking emerged as a social 'waiting out'.^[1] *Kicking the bucket* forms a refusal to good restrained manners.

Mending the bucket

Let me start writing again. Kicking is not vomiting in despair; its force is therapeutic. The kick is not heroic, but seems a necessary expression of resistance. There exist two acts on different screens: one of force-display and one of restoration. The protagonist kicks the bucket, then mends it. The protagonist kicks the bucket to repair it. Time lies enmeshed between two acts that inform each other. There cannot be mending without externalisation of the anger. Can one kick history to mend it? Can one kick the vessels of white-washed isolated narratives that are kept safe in the backyard? The bucket is empty. The backyard—an isolated vessel—standardises our bodies. Inside this familiar rectangular shape, one could experience bodily continence, unless one kicks—and mends the bucket. In the act of caring for this transforming object, time stretches. Time stretches, and we become aware of its possibility and irreversibility.

After watching each kick, I say to myself: you might gain ‘injury time’. We are in a sort of a soccer stadium, with all the time to play but no one to play with. One can only make sense of time passing if there is an anticipation of an end. In the backyard, it seems someone anticipates the endgame.

There will be extra-time.

[1] The term ‘waiting out’ is borrowed from the anthropologist Ghassan Hage. While discussing the concept of stuckedness in relation to racism, Hage articulates how in times where crisis has become normalised, ‘waiting out’—‘waiting for something to end or to go’—becomes a form of endurance of the civilised differentiating themselves from the vilified others.

“... to ‘wait out’ the crisis is perceived as something that one is proud to do. It is a mark of a deepening of the civilisation process. It is civilised to know how to endure a crisis and act in an orderly, self-governed, restrained fashion.” p.105

Ghassan Hage, “Waiting out the Crisis: On Stuckedness and Governmentality,” in *Waiting*, Online edition (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2009), 97–106.