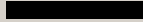
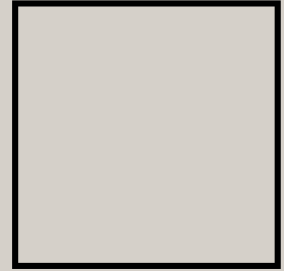


AN ANALYSIS OF WAITING AND
WHY THE PRACTICE OF
SELF-IMPOSED WAITING MATTERS.



2020

LET
THEM
WAIT



MARKO ALEXANDROS KAGIOGLIDIS

32947

Integrated Design B.A.

Integriertes Design B.A.

Supervisor and Examiner:

Prof. Annette Geiger

Prof. Asli Serbest

University of the Arts Bremen

Hochschule für Künste Bremen

GRAMMAR RECAP

The word

(to) wait

is a *transitive verb*. This means it does not require an object to act upon.

(to) await

is a intransitive verb. Therefore it always needs an object to act upon¹. This means *awaiting* is always with reference to a destination, an end or goal. On the other hand, *waiting* does not require such objective².

1 REUTER, T. (2019). WARTEN (p. 13). FRANKFURT AM MAIN: WESTEND VERLAG.

2 TRAFFIS, C. TRANSITIVE AND INTRANSITIVE VERBS–WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?. RETRIEVED 15 OCTOBER 2020, FROM [HTTPS://WWW.GRAMMARLY.COM/BLOG/TRANSITIVE-AND-INTRANSITIVE-VERBS/](https://www.grammarly.com/blog/transitive-and-intransitive-verbs/)

00 PROLOGUE

Have you ever thought about nothing? It's odd I am only just smart enough to know that this is beyond my ability to comprehend. I am only just intelligent enough to grasp the void I create when I put myself in a state of waiting. But I will never be able to look inside the void, or even understand it. How could I ever claim to know what waiting is?

I never waited in my life. I only awaited.

Awaited the train, the visa approval, the deadline, the idea, the creativity, the friend, the end of my meditation class, the end of something, the end of my life. We are born, we live, we die.

I wonder what happens when I do nothing. When I wait for nothing. Will I miss out on something? The fear of missing out. FOMO. The fear of not being in control. I fully trust my environment that nothing will happen – to me. But what else does it take for me to fully trust and be able to let myself fall into self-imposed waiting?

I wonder if this is just me who cannot grasp waiting. Or if no one knows what waiting really is. Somehow something is happening inside me when I wait. Something miraculous. Something that changes who I am. I am picking up where I left off but not in the exact same place. I feel like I made a loop. I feel like I was levitating for a moment. I feel like I was pressing pause for a moment. I feel like I fully owned a moment. I feel like I gained a little bit more ownership of myself for a moment. These moments – so meaningful or meaningless – they make me feel alive. But why? I *just* waited. I did not even *do* anything.

Waiting feels to me like the afterlife. What will happen next?

Will I go to heaven? Will I go to hell?

Where am I going?

Nowhere in particular.

Especially when I wait,

I am not going anywhere.

And that is good.

I do not have to go anywhere.

I can just be—for a moment.

I am all alone when I wait. Not lonely – just alone and by myself. I am closer to myself. I realise that all I have is myself. All I do is up to me only and there is no one taking care of me. I am responsible for myself only.

I feel like there is more than being productive, working or doing things. Hence, I can not fully agree with the idea of this existentialism. But what's the point of it? Is there something bigger? Am I an essentialist after all?

I consider myself the protagonist of my own life. So, I would be an existentslist, but I know there are things beyond my abilities to act on. Does this mean I am and will never be able to make the miracle of the void of waiting graspable. Because I am only awaiting and always will be as long as I am alive? Some take this as a crushing and depressing idea.

I don't like to think in this way. This is just what waiting is. It is Absurd and actually, there is something liberating about accepting it. All of the drama, the stress, the pressure, the worry and the doubt still exists when I wait.

But when I wait, at least I can occasionally step out of the situation, get a glimpse of something different and step back in to continue.

There is actually no such thing as winning and losing, or missing out and falling back. Life in this world is a strange and absurd experience. As absurd as waiting itself. We are mortal. So, there is always an end to our lives – our world – our existence – existence itself. So it seems, there is always something we await. We can never achieve pure waiting, but we can feel the warmth of the feeling of pure waiting whilst moving in the realm of awaiting closer to waiting.

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In the prologue, I outlined the difference between waiting and awaiting.



01 INTRODUCTION

Is *waiting* something good or bad? I looked into different kinds of waiting beside the waiting for something or someone (awaiting) and beyond the kind of waiting which is forced upon us by something or someone else. I searched for the kind of waiting which is self-imposed, its positive effects and why it seems like such uncultivated and bedevilled practice in the culture and society I live in.

I was raised with the preach “Who rests, will rust!”. But is that so? Am I obliged to fill any gaps of waiting, to never rest? To never rust? Am I really rusting when I do nothing? When I wait? Or, even worse, when I practice self-imposed waiting?

I used methods such as self-experiments and -observations, the examination of classical and philosophical literature, scientific studies and contemporary media to circle and explore the seemingly ungraspable practice of *waiting*. The results of this journey are documented in a collection of essays:

Personal analysis about how I unlearned waiting and why it seemed much easier in my childhood to idle. I admit openly that I indeed miss this ease. I asked myself the question, if that is just a subjective trait I developed over the years, or if I am just one amongst many who experiences this unrest. If that is the case, I am indeed concerned that this is a problem exceeding my personal life. A problem we as a society have and perhaps should at least consider addressing - maybe even to provoke a change in paradigm to stop seeing *waiting* as a problem but rather as an opportunity - an opportunity for creativity, authenticity and paradoxically also for productivity.

Hence, I began to investigate how trends in urban surroundings shape the way we wait; For example; that today's train stations are more like shopping malls that happen to have platforms attached¹. In which we are no longer seen as a waiting subject, but a profit-generating object.

But when we are considered a *waiting* subject; what is happening inside us? And why does each of us perceive the practice of waiting differently? To answer these questions I looked at how waiting is inevitably linked to the core belief systems and traits of the culture we are in; Such as Europe's religious history dating back to the 16th-century Protestant reformation, the reformer and theologians Martin Luther and Johannes Calvin including his followers² and the ethical values that are shaped by capitalism and arguably neoliberalism.

Among other things, I will introduce to you the gremlin that wakes up inside us, once we feel uncomfortable while waiting³. I will also outline why waiting spaces are widely suppressed and about to be extinct⁴. Towards the end I will look into how Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* can help us to gain a better understanding of waiting on a philosophical level; It is opening up a discussion on existentialism and essentialism. But also making us face some daunting realities or chances in *waiting*. One thing can be said for sure – without giving too much of a spoiler – *Waiting* is making us think.

So, if we see all of the trends and changes in the way we wait as an indicator, then what does it measure? And – perhaps even more importantly – is the practice of *waiting* just a consequence and or can it be a liberating tool?

CHAPTER ONE

AROUND US

LEARNING AND
UNLEARNING TO WAIT

In the prologue, I outlined the difference between waiting and awaiting. I introduced the topic of waiting and the structure of this work. This raised the questions if waiting is an indicator for something and if it could be a tool.



02 YOU'RE JUST AN EXTRA

A traffic light turning red. A delayed train is taking a play on you. A meeting is cancelled short-notice. A pandemic is messing up your plans.

Situations where it seems like I have no control over or lost it long ago. Often the forces around me seem way bigger than my own. I might feel like I am just as little as a side effect, an extra, a watcher.

Watching the events unfold.

Feeling the effects on me.

Playing my predetermined role.°

It seems as though we are often not in control. We are at the mercy of something or perhaps someone else – shaping our daily lives.°° At the time of writing this, the world seems to be at the mercy of something so little we can not see with our own eyes. Some feel its omnipresent effects in their lives. Others on their lives. The world seems to be in a constant state of emergency. Normality has come to a halt. Halting us.

Everything one planned, one looked forward to, one was excited about – anxious about. All vanished overnight. I believe it will never be the same as it used to be again. There will not be a 'back to normal'. There is only the 'new normal'.

° Sure, we are at the mercy of algorithms, power structures and corporate interests and so on to a large extent. Perhaps a topic for another time.

°° I noticed in my research, that there are already so many works on the kind of waiting refugees are experiencing when they are awaiting for their Duldung. Works which are highly important. Acknowledging this seemed necessary. This brought me to the question if that it all there is? Surely, there must be more than that.

All that once seemed settled and agreed on,
lost its validity.

Suddenly there was *nothing*.

Well, *nothing* planned. *Nothing* that used to
shape our everyday lives.

I heard many voices actually liking this new state of nothingness.
Or in other words; Not having to do the planned and the obligatory.
Not having to do anything.

Also sociologist and risk researcher ORTWIN RENN (2020) sees the ordered lockdown in early 2020 similarly: As a chance for a deceleration for individuals. Further an opportunity to reflect on oneself, when reducing on the many activities one does. Although the arising anxiety and responses ((A)to 'freeze': ignoring the dangers; (B) to 'flight': in the case of the comprehensive lockdown this meant hiding from the world and avoiding any unnecessary contact. And (C) to 'fight': panic buying) to the lockdown are not to be denied ⁵.

But to get to the state where one can reflect on oneself, one must first be able to cope with any described anxieties. One key for overcoming these anxieties is of external nature. Renn continues, that in the case of the COVID-19 situation, the German government tried its best to ensure and communicate that everything has been done to take care of its citizens ⁶.

If we apply this key to something more general, like temporary or unexpected spaces, then we could say that individuals always need the feeling of being taken care of. Only then, these new vacant spaces can be used for self-reflection.

So perhaps for some people the new external condition was welcomed and also liked. It gave them a legit reason not to meet their societal obligations: Meeting their colleagues in person five days a week; Having dinner with their parents every Sunday; To be dragged to events they actually didn't want to go to.

I enjoyed this new unexpected limitation, too. I began to workout everyday, I had time to move into a new flat-share without the usual stress of moving, I could get to know my flatmates, I took one hour everyday to intentionally do nothing also known as sensory deprivation (ok, I did something. I walked to the park with only my key in the pocket. No phone, no music, not even a blanket to sit on). I even further experimented with the 'intentionally doing nothing'. Some call it water or dopamine fasting. Once I extending this 'intentionally doing nothing' to one day. From falling asleep, to waking up the day after the following day. I turned them off and stowed them away in a box and I began to hear things again. Sounds as simple as the city with all its birds singing, the trams passing by, the wind in the trees, the chatter in the street. I listened to it for hours. I began to hear the nuances and the most subtle changes. Reactions and action with one another. Around me but also the ones inside me. I realised this was happening all the time. I just couldn't perceive it in my everyday life before the pandemic. Even though this sounds cheesy, I must admit that this is exactly the kind of romance that made and still makes such uncertain times bearable for me. Nevertheless, I was incredibly lucky.

I found myself not being in the risk group, not being in a hard affected area in Germany, not being in a city too crowded, not being in a place with bad weather making me stuck at home, not being affected by a sudden income halt, not being socially isolated, not being deprived of real physical human-to-human closeness.

It gives me an uneasy feeling to even say that I was able to enjoy this time which was negative and deadly to many. Clearly, the COVID-19 pandemic created a space around myself and other people on a different layer among the impactful one point five meters of physical distance. But only because I was not merely dependent on other people.

Effectively it created space around myself that I have not felt before. Space I was able to claim for myself. Space I did not take away from someone else. Space I was able to control. Space in which I was the only person in charge.

Perhaps we are not only a side effect, an extra or a watcher. Maybe we are more of an active player than we think. Each of us is a participant. Even in the cases that seem so beyond our control; as little as a delayed train or as big as a global pandemic. But only if we are not merely dependent on something or someone else. Or if someone or something else depends on us.

In the prologue, I outlined the difference between waiting and awaiting. I introduced the topic of waiting and the structure of this work. This raised the questions if waiting is an indicator for something and if it could be a tool. I explained how we react differently to unexpected situations – like a pandemic. This brought me to the conclusion how vacant spaces are created.



03 IF YOU REST, YOU RUST

The saying that was preached to me when I was younger goes like this:

“If you rest, you rust”.

I used to love this saying. I took it as a motivator for a persistent search for productivity and dopamine. But I asked myself the question, what were the effects on me and the origins of this saying? And in which way does it reflect the culture I am in?

The culture I was raised and still live in today is a culture shaped by Protestantism, Catholicism and Calvinism. All are intertwined and affected the strong drive for economic growth and a capitalistic way of thinking today.

With Catholicism being the breeding ground for Protestantism which brought up figures like Johannes Calvin in the 16th century. He brought the idea to life that one should devote oneself to one's occupation because the occupation is given to humans by God as probation⁷. Calvin's followers of the second and third generation took this idea further; Overwriting the – in Germany and Scandinavia spreading – Lutheranism idea that 'man does not want to earn money to earn more money 'by nature', but simply to live. To live the way he is used to and to acquire only as much as is necessary'. The followers extended Calvin's idea to; Devoting oneself to one's occupation

because the occupation is given to humans by God as probation and ply it industrious to maximise wealth and reinvest it. Because economic success will please god and to you will be blessed⁸. This extension made Calvinism an enabler for capitalism which found its breeding ground in the countries in which the industrial revolution began. From Switzerland over the Netherlands and all the way to Scotland. With the spread and export of the industrial revolution, even to Lutheranism protestant regions, the extended Calvinist ideas were spread as well⁹. I agree with ULLRICH (2017) – who summarized the spread of Calvinism and capitalism: Even if religiosity declines, the pursuit of prosperity and accumulation of capital persists hence Calvinism is today more present than Lutheranism¹⁰.

This may explains why self-imposed or forced resting might be seen as such deuced activity. Even in societies in which only about half of population believe in a god¹¹. Therefore it is often seen as sinful, as lost productivity and the market value of oneself seems to decline. In the text 05 MARGINALISATION I will also outline how the systems in our society changed to suppress any resting.

Nevertheless, the mentioned preaching made me want to go on cycling day trips by myself at the age of ten. I followed one cardinal direction, explored the nearby Neckar river valley, the Swabian Alb mountain range and local Schönbuch forest. The saying gave me a drive to 'see the world'. It taught me to never stop to learn and to explore. To never stop pushing myself to the edge of my comfort zone. And beyond too.

I built my comfort zone right at the edge where it would challenge me. This is where I feel at home. If I don't have a challenge I will search for one and surely I will find one.



Enter Lucky (slave) and Pozzo (master). Lucky on leash, carrying his master's baggage. ^{A B}

Always finding the next challenge – the next dopamine kick. Every time just a little more extreme than the previous one. Working in Mongolia at 35 degree Celsius below zero. Getting escorted out of a village by police in Vietnam. A near-death experience in a lightning storm on a hike in the Caucasus mountains. I drained myself just like Pozzo and Lucky his slave on the leash in *Waiting for Godot*; Trying to keep up with the indefatigableness of my desires for the next challenge. So, what was my next challenge?

Slowly and unaware of it, another fascination besides the dopamine obsession built up. A fascination with the moments which weren't filled with dopamine: The moments of idling. The moments of waiting.

Not the hard work in the Mongolian winter. But being up at 2 AM staring at the thermometer of the hard coal oven and awaiting for it to stay at a constant 85 degrees after loading it with more coal, that the simple open heating system would not freeze within minutes. And sitting on red synthetic leather seats on a train in Russia. Waiting and staring out of the window. Looking at the passing landscape: Birch forest, pine forest, birch forest, pine forest, wooden shacks, birch forest and pine forest again.

Becoming an observer of my surroundings and myself. Retrospectively I began to learn that something is happening inside when I wait. Could it be a kind of liminal process? It feels like it's something important and underestimated to my wellbeing.

A fascination not with the waiting that is forced on me, but the kind of waiting I put myself in. Precisely the kind waiting that can be a lot more unbearable than the waiting that is forced on one. It is the kind of waiting that needs self-discipline and most importantly freedom.

A privilege I got as a person born in Europe and it is undoubtedly shaped by the socio-economic bracket I am in. The kind of waiting we looked so far at is a waiting which is usually forced on us, but with the necessary freedom, I believe it can be annexed and turned into a more conscious *waiting* which may even contribute to our wellbeing.

In the prologue, I outlined the difference between waiting and awaiting. I introduced the topic of waiting and the structure of this work. This raised the questions if waiting is an indicator for something and if it could be a tool. I explained how we react differently to unexpected situations – like a pandemic. This brought me to the conclusion how vacant spaces are created. Upon this conclusion, I looked into the influence of religion on today's restlessness in Europe and my fascination with the moments of idling.



04 STOP, BE STILL, THINK, PAUSE.

"[...] if we don't always act on our first impulses, even when there is pressure to make a snap decision. But instead take a moment to stop, be still, think, pause.

Granted, that certainly takes courage." [Laughter ° in the crowd] ¹².

The speaker continues: "Above all, it calls for truthfulness in our attitude towards others – and perhaps most importantly it calls for us to be honest with ourselves." [Applause from the crowd] ¹³.

What fascinates me with this quote is not particularly the content. It could be on the 'Top 10 Motivational Quotes' on one-of-the-many-motivational-and-life-changing-quote-sites.com. But that's not where it's from. It is from one of the most powerful women in the world in 2020 ¹⁴: Chancellor Dr Angela Merkel in the Harvard commencement speech in 2019 ¹⁵. The person in charge of one of the, I'd call it, least still and least pausing country in the world when looking at the GDP ⁹⁴.

For me, this raises two questions: Firstly: Why does it seem so hard to put this call for pausing into action? For that, I will explain how waiting spaces have changed and why not everyone waits in the same way.

And secondly: What is this "truthfulness in our attitude to others" and that "it calls for us to be honest with ourselves."? I will address this question later with the help of Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*.

° Until today, I wonder why the crowd laughed in that moment. Do they think it's hideous to pause for a moment?

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05 MARGINALISATION

In this chapter, I will outline some places from the past, the present and a speculated future. How waiting has changed and might will change. I will look at digital and away-from-keyboard spaces. After examining these I will show where we can see a trend towards a suppression of *waiting* and how marginalisation is occurring depending on one's socio-economic status.

Do you remember the last time you went to a train station? Likely you never have been to one. I have never been to a train station, nor to an airport. These places were extinct long ago. Or perhaps never existed for me. Train stations were converted into shopping malls that happen to have platforms and tracks attached. No more waiting time here. It's time to shop! Chasing the deal advertised on the platform with your phone or inside one of the many retail stores!

We need to take a history detour to understand how we got to malls instead of train stations. Train stations used to be built with waiting rooms. Those were designed to oppose the brick, glass and steel constructions of the platform area and entrance hall – rooms designed to make the travellers forget what they were actually waiting for; Waiting rooms with sojourn quality were created¹⁶. But even in 1849, this idea that train stations give busy travellers a place for serenity and discretion was criticised¹⁷. Soon the idea was born, to not idle away any time. Some argued that waiting time should be used for educating the masses¹⁸. In the 19th-century we can see the start of the consideration to use waiting time in a more 'useful' way¹⁹. Or in simple words 'to not waste time'.

Train stations transitioned from places with waiting rooms – where waiting was embraced and made more bearable, making the waiting person forget what they were actually waiting for – to places where the masses should be educated; to places of consumerism. I am inclined to doubt whether the architects of the 19th century had consumerism and advertisements as a ‘useful’ activity opposed to idling away time in mind.

On a personal note: My mind is tired of advertising. I am feeling sick of the visual screams telling me to consume more. I get bombarded with them when I take a train, tram, the underground or the plane. I get it right away when people argue that they prefer to take other means of transportation. Meaning individual transportation – their own car or to fly business or first class instead of public transport in economy class. Without a doubt that in the non-economy class, transportation – being in transition – can be more bearable and almost ‘relaxing’.

A close look at individual transportation.

In the feature “Station longing”²⁰ ANNETTE SCHELD (2020) provides us with touching evidence from a German motorway service station. Evidence including statements like “Driving makes me calm”²¹, “Freedom”²² and “I like to listen to the sound of the wheels rolling and the sound of the engine [...] this is relaxation”²³.

In the feature, she describes how individual transportation, the car, is for many a refuge; Where they get time to think, to ground themselves. Where they have full control over the situation they're in²⁴, where they are alone, where no one tells them what to do, whilst being protected by a metal and glass cage from external influences like wind, heat, rain and also advertisement.

I also have a memory of a different waiting experience. A memory from 2019 from Russia, where I noticed a difference. As a fact, the Russian Railway is fully state-owned²⁵. Almost no advertisement inside the carriages or at the train stations. Similarly, to the metro in Moscow. A friend once commented on a trip to Russia's capital: "Taking the metro here is like being in a Museum". The Russian Railway and Metro could make more money with advertisements and one could argue it is lost profit. Nevertheless, I am inclined to argue that the lost profit could be seen as the cost of waiting. I almost feel like that—in the case of Russia—I was allowed to wait here. I almost feel like I got paid by the Russian government to wait because I did not look at advertisements which would 'pay for my idling time'.

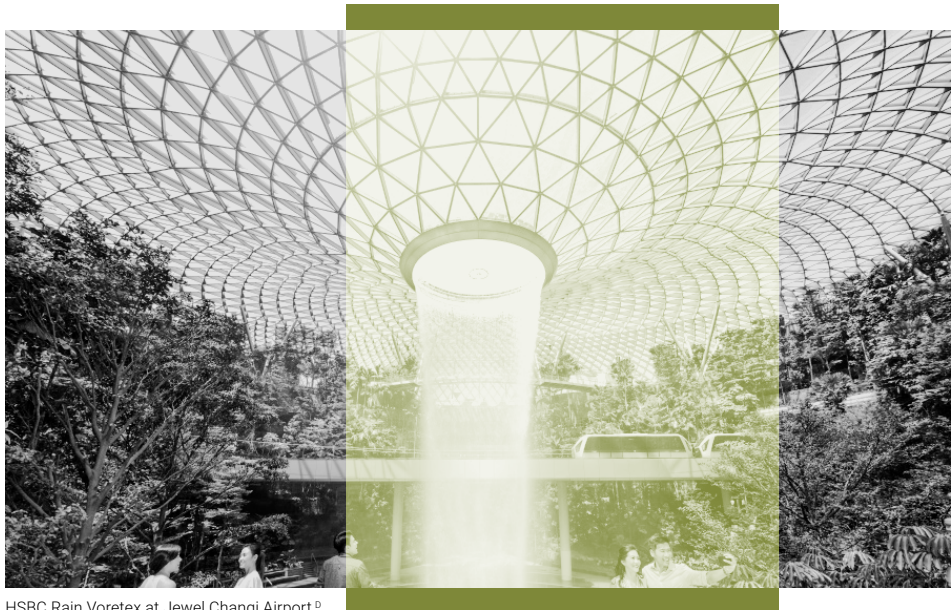


Moscow metro underground station ©

The choice I have in Germany is to pay by looking at advertisements or that I cover the cost of individual transportation to claim a space in the urban world in which I can wait – In which I can idle. One other option in Germany would be to cover the cost for a first-class ticket to get access to waiting lounges with less advertising. Especially in air transportation.

Let's shift our focus to airports: Clearly, airports and train stations are quite the same in the terms or the commercialisation of any waiting spaces. With the difference that they're just more expensive and accompany a security check. Plus, sanctions on bringing your own food and drinks called prohibition and flight regulations.

Recently airports – in particular the global hubs – have become a mix of theme parks and shopping malls. Especially seen at Singapore Terminal 4. This hub is an interesting case to look at. The 2017 opened terminal²⁶ optimises the commercialisation but also it sparkles here and there with the 19th-century idea to make the travellers forget what they're actually waiting for²⁷.





Kinetic rain installation at Changi Airport ⁵

Structures “featuring an indoor “forest valley” with 3,000 trees, a 40-metre high “rain vortex”” ²⁸ and a “Kinetic Rain sculpture” ²⁹ invite travellers to let themselves wonder in their own thoughts. Although it is important to bear in mind that the price tag for a flight ticket to enter this hub – this heterotopia of a waiting space is high and not affordable for everyone. Depending on the price one can afford for a ticket, the experience can differ even more.

For some, the in-flight entertainment is a continuation of the mall inside the airport: tax-free teleshopping. For others, it becomes a first-class relaxing experience with service on call. The variation of waiting experience is almost theatrically shown in two transitional physical rooms; Both are even often located in the same building. Both could not be more different from each other. E.g. Travelers' Aid Rooms (Bahnhofsmmission) and Exclusive waiting lounges. The former: It's free to get in, one can stay temporarily, and get coffee and food. All free of charge. It is open to *everyone*. No one will ask you why you're there ³⁰. The service offered by the Travellers' Aid Rooms is described as a “help” ³¹. A help which is usually offered to “homeless people [...] or [people] with very very little income” ³².

I think that the Travelers' Aid Rooms are undoubtedly highly important and good institutions and spaces in the urban landscape of Germany—as a “transit space”³³ offering support “when travelling[,] in acute emergencies [and] in existential emergencies”³⁴. Hence, I question if it is permanent tempoary space for *everyone*.

The First Class or Exclusive Lounges are often in proximity to the Travellers' Aid Room. “Regional design invites to linger”³⁵ is one of the headnotes of the Deutsche Bahn Lounges. “But why not combine the necessary [of waiting] with the pleasant [of waiting]?”³⁶ is the idea which not just the German railway follows but what the air travel industry has perhaps perfected.

One of the world best airport lounges, the *Qatar Airways Al Safwa First Lounge*³⁷ does not even feature the word term ‘(to) wait’ on their website³⁸. The transitional space is described as the “seamless journey from start to departure”³⁹. The lounge does neither feature *waiting* areas but facilities ranging from a spa, seating pods, prayer room and relaxation room to ala carte dining, waiter service and reading material⁴⁰. Both railway and airline lounges offer access to their upper-class customers only^{41; 42}.

With the Travelers' Aid Rooms on the one end of the spectrum and towards the other end individual transportation and on the far end the exclusive waiting lounges, a gap emerges where the previously described malls are found.

I begin to see a picture of marginalisation. Marginalisation where the lower and upper ends of the socio-economic spectrum are eligible to wait. Whereas the middle class – the working class – is doomed to work and consume relentlessly.

Discourse: A speculation

We are going to look into the less obvious areas. Mainly the non-physical *waiting* spaces. We checked-in in the 19th century, boarded the present of Travellers' Aid Rooms and exclusive lounges. In this discourse, we're off taxiing to the runway of the probable future to lift off to speculative possible futures of *waiting*.

Enter the era of the technological progress, globalisation and the internet of things and people. First up: The Self-Check-In. You do the work yourself, save time you would otherwise waste queueing.

As next: We call it 'Just-in-time-public-transportation': Your phone notifies you that your bus has a two minutes delay. Great, stay another two minutes in the office. And we installed 'free' wifi at all of our stations so that you can continue seamlessly where you left off in the office.

Talking of office: The office is now everywhere. No reason to take the bus at all. You can just work from home. Actually, don't even get up.

Stay in bed. Use the tablet to work in bed. Start by checking your email first thing in the morning. Because not even your most private rooms – the rooms where you charge in sleep and nor rooms where you discharge and flush – are spaces for resting. Any room should be equipped with perfect Wi-Fi signal anyways. Otherwise, your smart home won't work and you would sit in the dark. Because even your light switch is only working with an internet connection. And whilst you're already busy with one of your devices (staring at you) anyways.

Book the slot for your grocery delivery to avoid any wasted time going to the store.

You just got distracted. Or like the millennials say: You procrastinated whilst you were awaiting the call from your colleague. You begin to fill the gap; You begin to swipe – up the images of your friends and the brands you're 'friends' with on Instagram and TikTok – down the fruits in a game so simple and addicting that the advertisement constantly displayed is actually worth to the advertiser – and last but not least to the right and left the people you don't even know yet.

In a nutshell, your time is worth something. Depending on our spending patterns it's worth quite a lot to advertisers. Any time you *wait* without consuming – be that paid, premium, or freemium – is lost profit.

Talking about profits. You might be ready to argue that you are a student and that no one is making a profit off you anyways. But that is not quite true. You are an investment. And the evolving education system is taking care that this investment is as economically efficient as possible. No more teacher-centered "chalk and talk" lectures. In which your thoughts can drift away for a moments – Perhaps for many moments. Today's methods are all highly participatory and demand your full attention all the time. Otherwise, it is lost profit.

In the possible future where monotonous jobs are done by machines, the time you stand in a production line which only requires a fraction of your mental power and you can drift away in your thoughts is history.

In this future, we do jobs requiring all of our mental power only. If this trend doesn't originate in capitalism or neo-liberalism, then this never settledness might originate as previously described in Catholicism and respectively Calvinism. And even if you are not believing in anything and you describe yourself as one who stays out of the loop of the economy. Then you might sympathize with the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre on existentialism: "Man is nothing else but what he purposes, he exists only in so far as he realizes himself, he is therefore nothing else but the sum of his actions [...]"⁴³ if one sees resting or waiting not as an action.

The outlined waiting spaces are all space we are put in. There is a decline in the integration of waiting spaces that are designed to make you forget what one is *waiting* for. In transitional spaces like train station and airports the development for less *waiting* spaces with sojourn qualities was and is undoubtedly made consciously, whereas in the non-physical world such as the relentless optimisation with eg. grocery deliveries, the decline in waiting spaces is maybe just a side effect. Nevertheless, as I said earlier “your time is worth something to someone”. Worth something to yourself or an advertiser. I argue that our time has gained value as the demand for it has risen. It is a limited resource. Perhaps the only resource we possess.

We used to own this time. When we were younger but also when we weren’t connected 24/7. My argument is that we could take it the past for granted that our time was our property. At least more than today. But in today’s western urban world our time has become a battlefield. Today it’s no longer given to us like in the 19th century waiting rooms. Therefore, not just Travellers’ Aid Rooms have become a “seismograph of needs”⁴⁴, but the number of true *waiting* spaces and the way we wait has become an seismograph or an indicator of societal needs, issues and changes. But it can also become a tool.

If the system with the integrated waiting places built-in is changing, we may want to learn how to establish and cultivate such physical and non-physical places by ourselves. Not to overthrow the current system in an anarchic way. But to be not merely at the mercy of neoliberalism and to consciously use it as a tool for liberation.

Perhaps a tool called self-imposed *waiting*. Therefore, we must first understand what is holding us back from doing so apart from the previously described socio-economic aspects. Meet the gremlin inside us.

CHAPTER TWO

INSIDE US

MEETING THE GREMLIN

In the prologue, I outlined the difference between waiting and awaiting. I introduced the topic of waiting and the structure of this work. This raised the questions if waiting is an indicator for something and if it could be a tool. I explained how we react differently to unexpected situations – like a pandemic. This brought me to the conclusion how vacant spaces are created. Upon this conclusion, I looked into the influence of religion on today's restlessness in Europe and my fascination with the moments of idling. Angela Merkel's call for pausing and thinking supported the idea that doing this will cause more truthfulness. Furthermore, I demonstrated how we wait differently depending on place and status and how this might result in marginalisation of the working class, but also how the design of public spaces has an effect.



06 (A-)WAITING ROOMS

My first memory of waiting: I am sitting in a waiting room at the paediatrician. I can't remember the doctor's name or why I was there. What I do remember is the 90s-building; Now I would call it a typical 'baby-boomer-generation-multi-purpose-building' located in the centre of my hometown. When I pass it today, I feel like I can see through the walls of that particular building, able to look inside the waiting room.

I see the children waiting with their parents – Awaiting their appointment.

I can see my past self in this room – wandering; looking out of the window. I wasn't a child who played in a waiting room. For reasons unknown to me as a child, the provided toys never really caught my full attention. Back then I resisted even opening a book and read, no matter if the cover showed a dramatic scene or a superhero. Even now I often prefer to wander and to let my thoughts drift away. I realised that this was maybe the last time of *waiting* with such ease by default, forgetting what I was actually *waiting* for. Awaiting my appointment. My mother on the other hand was awaiting. And so would I. With the years passing and me growing up I began mimicking the adults and their *awaiting* behaviour.

The closer I came to my mother's age in that waiting room, the more I tried to fill the gaps of waiting. What made me want to fill the gaps?

Psychologist GOLDSTEIN (2015) points out that we do this because we do not want to feel alone. When we wait, a little gremlin inside us wakes up to tell us "if you're alone that means you're not being protected by your clan and it's a threat to your safety"⁴⁵. GOLDSTEIN (2015) continues that in those moments of waiting, this "gremlin takes the controls of [our] brain and reaches for something to "be with" so [we are] not alone anymore"⁴⁶.

It feels strange to me that we seem to feel more connected to inanimate objects like our phones, media content and consumerism in a waiting situation than to the subjects around us. It gives me an unwell feeling knowing how a gremlin wakes up when I am in a waiting situation full of other people, who actually are my waiting buddies – my waiting "clan". Especially in a waiting room at a specialist doctor. Here it's likely that my waiting buddies are sharing the most similar reason to be there compared to the inanimate objects I carry with me or pick up from the shelf or the table in the waiting room.

Back then my mother must have chosen to flick through a glossy, but typical waiting room greasy and worn-out magazine. Or maybe she continued the book she brought with her, to prevent any moments of loneliness.

When I'm in a waiting room today, I would try to consciously perceive my fellow waiting buddies – my waiting clan. To *wait* more consciously. Though this raises the question; Am I still *waiting* when I am observing and becoming aware of my *waiting* clan and become conscious of *waiting*?[°]

[°] That's what is absurd about waiting. Once I grasp or even just fill *waiting* with the slightest meaning or description, it seems to fizzle out and the *waiting* seems to disappear.

What I would notice is that the gremlin inside most of the temporary clan members makes them reach for their phones and headphones, if they have not already reached for one of the provided objects to fill the void – to make them feel, as GOLDSTEIN (2015) would say, “protected”⁴⁷:

“We’re not in control of our brains”⁴⁸ but we can “[use] waiting for good”⁴⁹ by using these moments; practising to realise that we are indeed safe and that there is no reason to feel unsafe⁵⁰.

I could observe a similar phenomenon almost every day in the shared flat I used to live in. Whilst I was in my room, which was right next to the bathroom, I could often hear my flatmates phone playing German-indie-pop. It gave me the feeling they was drowning out all of the intimacy and privacy of the room and her most intimate thoughts whilst they was taking a shower. But also my thoughts as a side-effect.



Google Home in living room^F



iPhone necklace case^G

Amazon, Google, Apple and the like suggest that we have one of their ears, eyes and mouths on us as a piece of jewellery, on our wrist, as well as in every room as a decorative object, to always have *someone* around us. Say hello to the personification of algorithms and inanimate objects: *Hey Google, Alexa and Siri*. *They* have gone through a metamorphosis from something to *someone*.

Someone who can tell us the weather. *Someone* who can play a song called "Sushi" by "Von Wegen Lisbeth". *Someone* who 'knows' our taste, our preferences. Even our sexual preferences – and history. *Someone*, we think who knows us well. But the bitter truth is that we will never get to know *them*. Even if we have *them* always in our pocket, our house or wear them as a piece of jewellery. Compared to ourselves, who we indeed, can get to know if we want to.

Back in the paediatrician waiting room: The main difference between my mother and I was that she was awaiting and aware that we were at the mercy of the doctor and what was about to happen, in the terms of the diagnosis. We were both at the mercy, but the difference between us was that only she was aware of it and therefore awaiting and not waiting as I did. Perhaps because I was as a child just not yet conscious enough and I didn't have the kind of access to technology that I would have today.

Although it is a matter of perspective; Whilst we were *waiting* and *awaiting*, the doctor behind the door was letting us wait.

Letting someone wait

On the other hand; I unknowingly began to learn about hierarchies as a result of waiting and letting someone wait – intentionally or unintentionally – with good or bad intentions.

The doctor letting the patients await their appointment in the waiting room;
The bureaucrat letting the refugees await their Duldung (suspension of deportation) at the migration department⁵¹; The friend showing up late;
The president of Russia showing up late as usual[°] when meeting someone⁵²;
The women awaits the right one; their male freer⁵⁴, to then await their husbands to get back from the war and adventures as an expression of their love⁵⁵;
The housewife with the children at home awaits the husband who gets back home from work; The government of the German Democratic Republic let certain citizens await goods but other citizen not: The Functionaries rarely had to stand in line for goods which were hard to get or simply in shortage^{56, 57}.

Letting someone wait or even letting someone wait longer than agreed on can be a “calibrated psychological policy”⁵⁸ to show one's power over someone else^{°°}. Consciously or unconsciously exercise this “calibrated psychological policy”⁵⁹ hierarchy is created. This power imbalance requires (A) something what or someone who is worth waiting for. Which is usually not a happy or very free condition⁶⁰ And/or the full trust on the person's appearance or the events occurring. Or (B) anxiety of the consequences if not waited.

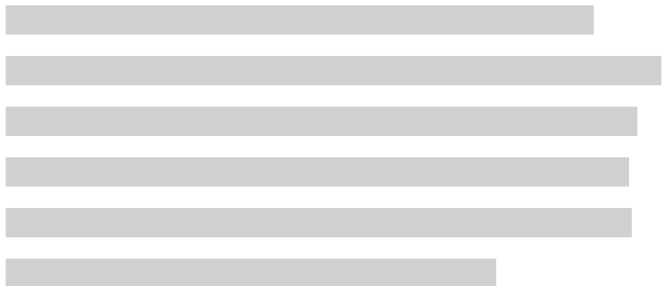
I think by observing who waits for whom and why it can effectively reveal a lot about someone's intentions and the structures one acts in. It can expose i.a. the importance and appreciation one friend has to another, a teacher has for their students (and vice versa), the role and hierarchy of certain genders in society and even whole political structures.

What if we flip this structure upside down for a moment. If we are the ones letting everyone else wait by self-impose waiting on ourselves? And could be doing something like that be beneficial to our mental health?

[°] Putin meeting the pope: 50 minutes late, Ukraine's ousted president Viktor Yanukovych: four hours, European leaders: usually more than an hour, the queen: 14 minutes, his former wife Lyudmila Putina on their first dates: one and a half hours⁵³.

^{°°} This only applies to cultures with a monochronic concept of time, in which time is seen as a limited resource⁹⁵.

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07 SELF-IMPOSED WAITING AND DISCONNECTING

"[...] [W]hile many find the prospect of being alone and doing nothing for even a short period of time to be aversive, the current results suggest that occasionally 'disconnecting' from technology and providing the nervous system with a respite from outside stimulation might actually be conducive for mental health."⁶¹

If there is one message I would like to bring across to the reader, it would be that by self-imposed *waiting* or disconnecting one creates a power hierarchy where they are on top as they let everyone and everything else wait temporarily.



Open floating pool ^H

I looked into one of the most possible disconnectedness from any stimuli:
Floating is where I ended up. Imagine you are levitating in complete darkness,
there is complete silence, you're neither feeling cold, nor hot, the substance
around you is matching your body temperature, there is no one else.

A floatation room contains a whirlpool sized pool filled with water with a high salt content, that the client floats. The room is stripped away of all possible stimuli; light, smells, sounds and the client is completely naked in the tank and all alone in the room. Here the client can float undisturbed for 60 minutes^{62; 63}.

Studies on floating have provided evidence supporting this hypothesis. Disconnecting oneself from almost all stimuli can be beneficial to one's mental health: Floating lets the blood pressure drop, and lowers the heart rate^{64; 65}. The user is not "[...] asleep, but powered down to just a flicker"^{66; 67} says Neuropsychologist JUSTIN FEINSTEIN (2018). And "[b]y the end of the float, [the client] get down to about two to three breaths a minute. Which was incredibly low. [...] So low that there is a biological effect on the brain. Essentially telling it to quiet down."^{68; 69} he continues.

Thus *waiting*; doing nothing and disconnecting seems to be something good.

Is it a universal remedy? I believe it cannot be, neither should it be.

Comment: Self-imposed waiting; A universal remedy

Self-imposed waiting is not a universal remedy. I do not doubt that many issues need immediate actions. Keywords climate change, disaster-management, accidents,... In those cases any days, hours, or even minutes waited can cost lives. Sure, there are often comments on how something could have handled better. Or if one would have waited or thought about a decision slightly longer it would have been for the better. But exactly this kind of thinking is often confused with the hindsight bias. Nevertheless, I believe that, also in personal affecting cases, self-imposed waiting is not a universal remedy, but rather a form of art. An art about when to practise it and when not to.

Discourse: With good intent

I begin to see a trend towards filling up the waiting rooms with screens, advertisements, free wifi. I imagine the trend in which 'waiting rooms' become shopping malls - although I would argue this has already happened. In the form of our humanised digital personal assistants But perhaps there is a slight chance that this design choice; to fill any void of waiting, is with good intent.

The free wifi, magazines, shops,
toys and all of the internet.
Poured into vacant spaces.
Poured into waiting spaces.

In the hopes it will help us to
distract ourselves from the
unknown:

What we are going to be told
by the doctor,
by the pilot in their announcement.
What we are going to have
to go through.

The distractions help us –
make-believe us to worry less.
About the cancer therapy
awaiting us,
about the turbulence,
we are going to have to pass
through. The distractions help us to
neglect and distance ourselves
from our worries.

They help us to not think
about the risks.

For a moment.

Maybe the distractions are freedom.
Maybe they are not.
Some of them perhaps make it
more barable for us to be alone.
Some of them make it

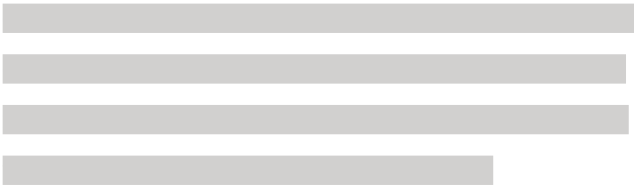
harder for us to be alone.
Some of them make it
impossible for us to be alone.

But at the end of the day,
we have to go through it,
no matter what,
by ourselves.

Even if our waiting clan is there,
perhaps even sitting right next to us
holding our hand.

Perhaps it is just hope, that this design choice is with
good intent. But it is in our hands to use neglecting,
distracting – to *wait* intentionally. When to do what?
Is a question to which I can not provide an ultimate answer.
I even doubt it exists: Enter the philosophy of waiting.

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08 BEING ALONE – BEING IN SOLITUDE: ON SAMUEL BECKETT'S PLAY 'WAITING FOR GODOT'

Towards the end of this essay, I want to bring many of the ideas and thoughts on waiting together by considering Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot* to provide a summarizing but also outlooking view on *waiting*.

The Plot:

"Near a roadside tree, two tramps meet as they meet daily: to wait for Godot. Estragon (Gogo) fusses with his boots. Vladimir (Didi) fusses with his hat. They discuss separation, but make up. Suicide, vegetables, religion, urinary troubles and Godot. Passing by are Pozzo (with a whip) and his slave Lucky (on a leash.) Pozzo, who owns everything around, talks of many things. Lucky cries, dances and thinks on command. Master and slave leave. A goat-boy brings a message: Godot will come tomorrow. Didi questions him about his brother, a shepherd. Night falls. Agreeing to leave, the tramps stand still. Next day, the tramps resume waiting with games and talk. Pozzo (now blind) and Lucky (now mute) return and collapse. Pozzo and Lucky leave. Didi soliloquizes. The goat-boy comes and says Godot will come tomorrow. Night falls. Agreeing to leave, they stand still. The End."⁷⁰

A description often used to summarise one of the most famous plays of the 20th century; *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett is: A play in which nothing ever happens. The audience watches the two main characters, the vagabonds "Vladimir and Estragon[,] pass the time on a country road as they wait for a man called Godot to arrive"⁷¹. Spoiler: He never arrives.

This is it! There is nothing more happening. This is all that happens in the play.

Beckett creates a void, a box, space – time that craves to be filled with something To be filled with meaning and countless interpretations. It mainly prompts two questions; “What is this play really about?” and “Who is Godot?”. In 1955 Beckett himself allegedly answered on the first question to Peter Woodthorpe (who played Estragon) in a taxi they shared: He asked what he should tell people what the play was about⁷². Beckett replied: “Tell 'em it's all symbiosis”⁷³. An answer as cryptic and absurd as the play itself. Nevertheless, for me, this is one of the most useful hints for interpreting the play for this essay.

Coming back to the countless interpretations. Here are a few: “It's been read as an allegory of the Cold War, the French Resistance, and Britain's colonization of Ireland. The dynamic of the two protagonists has also sparked intense debate. They've been read as survivors of the apocalypse, an ageing couple, two impatient friends, and even as personifications of Freud's ego and id.”^{74; 75; 76}

But are we getting the point, when we try to interpret the play? TED-ED (2018) put it quite well: “The lack of any clear meaning makes Godot endlessly open to interpretation. Critics have offered countless readings of the play, resulting in a cycle of ambiguity and speculation that mirrors the plot of the drama itself.”⁷⁷ °

I will point out one of these countless interpretations which will help us to summarise the play too: *The Myth of Sisyphus (Camus)*-interpretation:

The characters in *Waiting for Godot* are confronted with the *Absurd*. °°

° A quote from a high-school teacher which might actually be of good use when getting lost in the countless interpretations: “Don't interpret anything into it, only interpret out of it.”

°° The *Absurd* “refers to the contradiction between humanity's desire to find meaning in the universe and the universe itself, which is completely meaningless.”⁷⁸

They are, and effectively the audience is, presented with seven possible responses on how to cope with the *Absurd*:

(1.) Suicide; (2.) Distraction; (3.) Denial; (4.) Being an actor; (5.) Being another kind of artist; (6.) To get political and (7.) Acceptance.⁷⁹ All of these responses are examined by the characters during the course of the play. If we follow this interpretation, we could see Lucky as *Camus'* model of the absurdist hero. Lucky is the only character who accepts the Absurd. He keeps on going – keeps on going and picks up his master's baggage after being offered comfort and distraction. Lucky is "[s]omebody who knows that their life is a pointless, horrible chore but who gets on with it anyway."⁸⁰ Unlike everyone else in the play is he the only character who acts out desires instead of just desiring them.

Is *Waiting for Godot* a reminder for the audience to do anything but to wait? – Maybe; One might argue that doing anything is better than *waiting* for something or someone. Be that Godot or the future that never happens.

Let's come back to the question of who or what they, Vladimir and Estragon and the audience[°] are unavailingly waiting for? What are we actually waiting for? Sure; Some man called Godot. Are we waiting for God – GODot? Who is Godot? We never get to see Godot, as Godot never turns up.

In other words, we will never know who Godot is. But if we try to identify Godot in any way, we could define Godot simply as *the time to come* (ENGELHARDT (1979): "einfach die zukünftige Zeit"⁸¹)⁸².

ENGELHARDT (1979) interprets that Godot is one who arrives all the time, but as soon as he breaks the barrier between the future and present he is no longer Godot, but appearing as someone else; appearing as the antagonist(s). Which always differ from the expected idealised person or idea of Godot. Hence the protagonist's desires will never completely be fulfilled⁸³:

[°] Almost two hours; the duration of the play

Godot arrives for Estragon and Vladimir in the present as Pozzo and Lucky. Godot arrives for Pozzo in the present as Lucky; As Pozzo projects he desires on Lucky. Godot arrives for Lucky in the present in the form of the directions Pozzo gives. But Lucky acts out these instead of just desiring something else. And most interestingly for the audience; Godot arrives in the present, whilst watching the play, as the play itself. We, the audience, desire – expect something to happen. But nothing ever does.

ENGELHARDT points out that the awaiting, and by that hoping, which Vladimir and Estragon (and I believe Pozzo and maybe even Lucky do so too) exercise is indeed pointless and absurd, as it is the projection of their never fulfilled desires. In their case, the desire that someone is taking care of them, by providing them with shelter, food, and most importantly a sense of life and enlightenment. This brings us to the philosophical aspects of the play and of a essence of *waiting* and *awaiting*: Religious-essentialism (that there is always something bigger and awaiting for us) and (Non-religious-)existentialism. "Life is to be lived, and that is all. If life has no sense, then, because it is sense itself."⁸⁴.

A way to summarise this interpretation would be that Vladimir and Estragon are following the principle "Desire comes first, pleasure (in their case Godot or the fulfilment of their desires and with this pleasure) (hopefully) later.". Which would be a reverse of Foucault's existentialist principle: "[P]leasure comes first; desire (perhaps) later."⁸⁵

We have slowly gone down a path of an existentialist interpretation of the play: The characters 'have' no one else but themselves to wait for. Hence the only thing they could do apart from waiting is to act out their desires, following their pleasures or simply to live their life in symbiosis with their peers. Which brings me back to the answer Beckett gave in 1955 to Peter Woodthorpe: "Tell 'em it's all symbiosis" ⁸⁶.

As the future will never arrive in the way we desire it (like Godot always arrives, just different from the way he is desired), we are only left with and so harshly reminded of the fact that we too only 'have' ourselves. And that the act of waiting for a greater instance like an institution, a government, a god, a greater instance to solve it for us, to fully take care of us to fulfill our desires is pointless. The only meaningful act would be "symbiosis": "[the] state [of] living together" ⁸⁷ or "a cooperative relationship (as between two persons or groups)" ⁸⁸ instead of living together with a desired future.

So perhaps we should not wait for a COVID-19 vaccine; for the traffic light to turn red; for the male freer – the perfect man; for the unexpected delayed aeroplane. To have time to wait; to have time to live in a symbiosis, to have time for ourselves, to have time to act out desires – to follow pleasures.

CHAPTER THREE

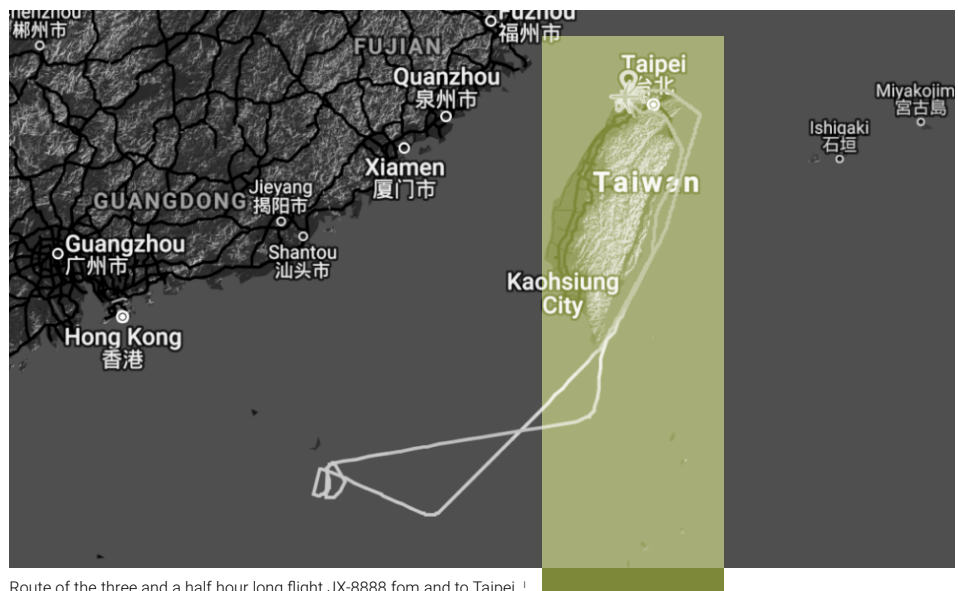
AHEAD OF US

HETEROTOPIA
AND CONCLUSION

In the prologue, I outlined the difference between waiting and awaiting. I introduced the topic of waiting and the structure of this work. This raised the questions if waiting is an indicator for something and if it could be a tool. I explained how we react differently to unexpected situations – like a pandemic. This brought me to the conclusion how vacant spaces are created. Upon this conclusion, I looked into the influence of religion on today's restlessness in Europe and my fascination with the moments of idling. Angela Merkel's call for pausing and thinking supported the idea that doing this will cause more truthfulness. Furthermore, I demonstrated how we wait differently depending on place and status and how this might result in marginalisation of the working class, but also how the design of public spaces has an effect. After looking outwards, I elucidated what is happening inside us once we feel uncomfortable waiting. But also how this might affect the surge for digital personal assistants. To combine the outside and inside perspective, I highlighted how letting someone wait can be used as a psychological tool in hierarchies and the effects of floating: Although I questioned if the practice of self-imposed waiting is a universal remedy. To answer i.a. this question I analysed 'Waiting for Godot' onto the concept of existentialism and essentialism. Lastly, I will show a recent waiting heterotopia

09 TAKING THE AEROPLANE – A HETEROTOPIA[°]

Interestingly weeks after writing the following essay, airlines all over the world were launching flights to nowhere⁸⁹. The idea is that the passengers enjoy all the same procedures and in-flight program as they would usually do on an actual flight. Some airlines operate these ‘flights to nowhere’ in a way that the aeroplane does not even leave the ground. Others are operating flights with the same destination as their departure. Thousands applied to take part in this experience and many were willing to pay for it⁹⁰. Raising the question, if it’s not about the destination of a flight, it’s maybe about something else.



Route of the three and a half hour long flight JX-8888 from and to Taipei. ¹

[°] A *Heterotopia* (a term coined by philosopher Michel Foucault) lays between a *utopia* or *dystopia* and reality. It is a space which can not be permanently inhabited. Also often referred to a transitional space or a world within a world. "[M]irroring and yet distinguishing themselves from what is outside. Foucault describes a bewildering set of examples, including utopian communities, ships, cemeteries, brothels, prisons, gardens of antiquity, fairs, Turkish baths and many more" ⁹³

Discourse: In-flight

Imagine yourself sitting on a cloud. Looking into the night sky. What you see, is an aeroplane cruising by. You can distinguish each and every window of the aeroplane.

Coming from darkness, flying into the darkness. The row of oval-shaped windows are the only source of human-made light. The stars in the background are too far away to grasp. The clouds just beneath and above the aeroplane lit by the shrouded moonlight. There for context, but impossible to grasp, too.

I often depict this image in my head. It symbolizes being alone, but being in transition. Being in a liminal phase. I don't know where the aeroplane originated or where it's heading. I only know it's going somewhere. Now imagine you are in that aeroplane.

At some point, I began to feel a sense of sedation taking the aeroplane. I jetted several times a year. I literally moved so fast, but it felt like the world around me moved figuratively faster and I had to keep up with that pace. In-flight, I was able to hold on for some time. To press pause for the duration of the flight.

An aeroplane cruises fast, indeed. But inside the cabin, rarely anything and barely anyone moves at all.

This was and still feels sedative.

I feel safe. I have a designated seat and space. My belongings are stowed away safely. I don't have to speak; I can just sit there. I must not do anything. I am detached from the fast-moving world.[°] I will not starve, there is food even being served. I am being taken care of. For the duration of the flight.

Perhaps this is also a reason why we see a trend in the rise of passenger numbers every year⁹¹, despite a consciousness on environmental issues⁹².

Perhaps some are seeking places where they can rest, without being judged for resting – For escaping and distracting from the fast-moving world. For not working, being productive or consuming for a moment in a neo-liberal society.

Even if this is at the cost of the stress of travelling.

Even if this is at the cost of our planet.

Even if this place – this heterotopia: the aeroplane, hosts us for just a few hours.

[°] Being disconnected from the internet is changing rapidly, as more airlines offer in-flight Wi-Fi⁹⁶.

In the prologue, I outlined the difference between waiting and awaiting. I introduced the topic of waiting and the structure of this work. This raised the questions if waiting is an indicator for something and if it could be a tool. I explained how we react differently to unexpected situations – like a pandemic. This brought me to the conclusion how vacant spaces are created. Upon this conclusion, I looked into the influence of religion on today's restlessness in Europe and my fascination with the moments of idling. Angela Merkel's call for pausing and thinking supported the idea that doing this will cause more truthfulness. Furthermore, I demonstrated how we wait differently depending on place and status and how this might result in marginalisation of the working class, but also how the design of public spaces has an effect. After looking outwards, I elucidated what is happening inside us once we feel uncomfortable waiting. But also how this might affect the surge for digital personal assistants. To combine the outside and inside perspective, I highlighted how letting someone wait can be used as a psychological tool in hierarchies and the effects of floating: Although I questioned if the practice of self-imposed waiting is a universal remedy. To answer i.a. this question I analysed 'Waiting for Godot' onto the concept of existentialism and essentialism. Lastly, I will show a recent waiting heterotopia and provide a conclusion on the seemingly ungraspable topic of waiting.

10 CONCLUSION

Is waiting graspable? I wanted to find out if there is more than the waiting that is imposed by external nature; if there is more than the waiting as a negative side effect. On this journey, I came across many facets of waiting and awaiting: Transitional spaces such as airports and train stations; waiting rooms; the way I used to wait when I was a child and the traits I developed that originate in the culture I was raised and still live in today. The different – monochrome and polychrome – concepts of time; Consumerism and marginalisation based on socio-economic status.

I found out that not everyone waits in the same way. Some experience it as agony, others as divine. The way we wait is shaped by urban design, the design of the systems and objects around us, by culture, history and situational circumstances. Perhaps such unprecedented times like the COVID-19 pandemic came just to the right time. To make many people wait and rest for a moment; to get to know their gremlin inside themselves. The gremlin that can make us uncomfortable whilst waiting. The gremlin that is usually making many choose the way of the least resistance – distraction – to not feel alone. We are used to being constantly connected. Hence I do not judge anyone for this behaviour at all. Neither the individuals nor the people in charge or the ones designing. I believe we are not the side effect who is sometimes doomed to wait. But waiting itself is unfortunately stigmatised as the ugly side effect.

A side effect that can actually be beneficial for mental health, truthfulness to others and ourselves – especially when it is self-imposed.

But therefore it needs freedom and spaces that cultivate such practise. I think it is crucial to see such unexpected times that make us wait not as a solution but as a wake-up call. A wake-up call that decelerates current systems and effectively accelerates reflection.

Hence we certainly need a change in paradigm on how we think about waiting.

In my work, I highlighted just a fraction of the situations and effects of waiting and I answered some questions but probably – hopefully raised and provoked even more in the mind of the reader. That is why I believe that this topic needs – especially nowadays in a such globalised and fast-moving world more research, exploration and conversations than ever before.

I am sure that we have the capacity to make this change. For this, we should stop waiting and begin to see the gremlin inside us perhaps as a friend who wants to remind us that we are not alone and that we don't have to do this change by ourselves. To say it with Beckett: Waiting is about symbiosis with others but firstly with ourselves.

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FIGURES

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout the writing and working on this project I have received a great deal of support and assistance.

I would first like to thank my supervisor Prof. Annette Geiger and Prof. Asli Serbest. I would also like to thank Prof. Cornelia Lund and heads of all the workshops I worked in; especially the Alexandra Portele for the advice in the video studio and Karl Robert Strecker and Nicolas Friedrich Hohlt for the help with the construction of the film set. The filming would not have been possible without the help of Enly Gabriela Valdespino Prieto at the camera and Josefine Kröll for being the the most "disinterested" and "friendliest" Waiting Coordinator. I highly want to thank Christian Brill, Leonie Heise, Joren Finke and Brigitte Stadler for participating and allowing me to film them whilst waiting self-imposed.

In addition, I would like to thank my parents for all the freedom they give me, and my sister Katerina Kagioglidis for all her advice. But not to forget my friends that supported me in so many ways. Especially Judith Bürger for being such care taking flatmate, Famkje Marijka Elgersma and Sarah-Lea Langner for clearing the video studio in my absense due to illness, Dasol Lee for the spontaneous cutter plotting and Erika Lobo, Nadine Numrich, Leonie Hönekopp, Michael Dornheim, Milena Vogt, Marco Simioni, Ewan Batty and Marc Stig Sørensen for proof-read and endless conversations on the topic.

EIGENSTÄNDIGKEITSERKLÄRUNG

Hiermit erkläre ich, dass ich die vorliegende Arbeit selbstständig verfasst und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt habe.

Alle sinngemäß und wörtlich übernommenen Textstellen aus der Literatur bzw. dem Internet wurden unter Angabe der Quelle kenntlich gemacht.

Bremen, den 22.10.2020

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized, flowing script that starts with a large, sweeping 'M' or 'H' shape and ends with a long, horizontal tail.

PRACTICAL PART
DOCUMENTATION

A SPECULATION

TRANSNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION
AND CULTIVATION OF WAITING

EXPERIENCE SESSIONS ON SELF-IMPOSED WAITING

TICC_W – TRANSNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION AND CULTIVATION OF WAITING



ticc_w logo and favicon

The Transnational Institute for Conservation and Cultivation of Waiting attempts to conserve a waiting culture that seems to vanish in neoliberal societies. The ticc_w was initiated on the basis that waiting spaces are increasingly filled with input, such as advertisement, consumerism and productivity. The ticc_w tries to conserve the idea of waiting spaces which are not merely filled with input. The cultivation of a healthy relationship between conscious waiting and how our society and economy works today is one of the main objectives of the ticc_w. As waiting is something that concerns everyone the ticc_w constitutes itself as a transnational institute. The exploration of concepts to cultivate a conscious waiting culture in today's systems is one key ambition. To do this, the ticc_w debuts in 2020 with a

Experience Session on the concept of self-imposed waiting.

In this session, participants can experience self-imposed waiting. They can choose how long they intend to wait; between 1 and 60 minutes. And what they need to wait self-imposed; Nothing, a proof in the form of a paper receipt, money (the German hourly average net wage) or attention in the form of a social media post.

The Experience Session consists of six stages.

- (1) SELF-IMPOSE: Taking one Experience Session paper slip.
- (2) DURATION: Marking the intended duration on the paper slip by cutting it.
- (3) NEED: Marking one of the above-described NEEDS. This is done by hole punching the paper slip.

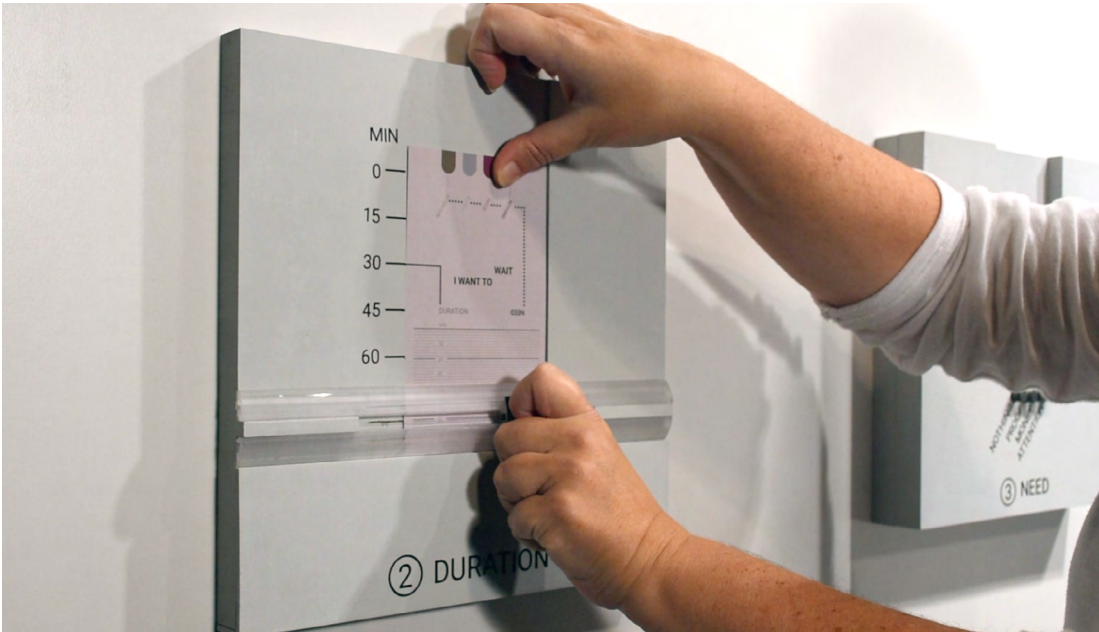


Film prop: Uniform Waiting Coordinator

- (4) CHECK-IN: Handing the paper slip to the Waiting Coordinator and depositing all personal belongings, distractions, electronic devices, timekeeping devices and shoes in a tray.
- (5) WAIT: The Waiting Coordinator brings the participant to their Waiting Booth. Here they wait self-imposed by themselves. They may abort the session early and leave any time before their intended time, in case they feel uncomfortable. The Waiting Coordinator will pick them up after their intended waiting time.
- (6) CHECK-OUT: The participants get their deposited items back and their Need paid-out by the Waiting Coordinator.



Film still: Cover Waiting Sessions



Film still: Participant deciding for intended duration by cutting paper slip



Film still: Participant hole punching paper slip

ATTENTION

MONEY

PROOF

NOTHING

WAIT

I WANT TO

DURATION

MIN

NEED

55

50

45

40

35

30

25

20

15

10

05

Film prop: Blank Experience Session paper slip (front and back)

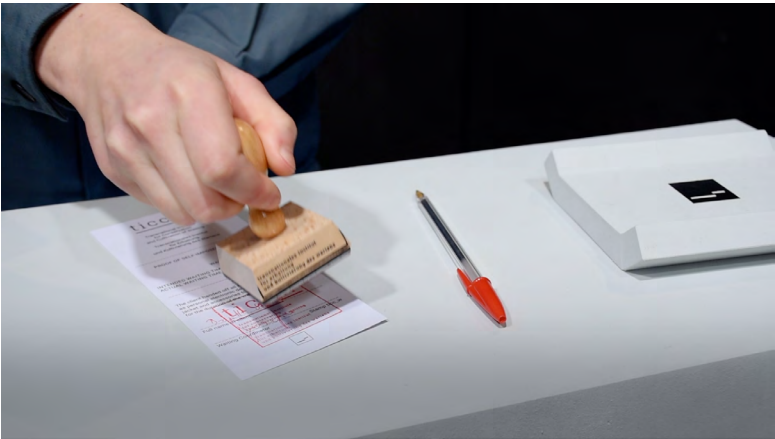
CCW

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Film still: Participant waiting



Film still: PROOF paper receipt stamped by Waiting Coordinator



Film still: Handing PROOF paper receipt to participant



Film still: Personal belongings tray



Film still: Participant waiting



Film still: Superimposed Instagram story of ATTENTION NEED



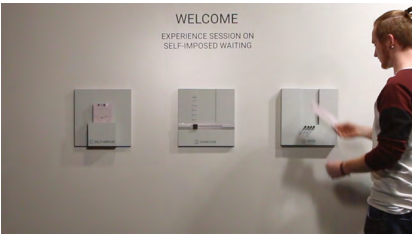
Film still: Check-In instructions given by Waiting Coordinator



Film still: Check-in procedure



Film still: Participant waiting



Film still: Participant at NEED board



Film still: Check-In procedure

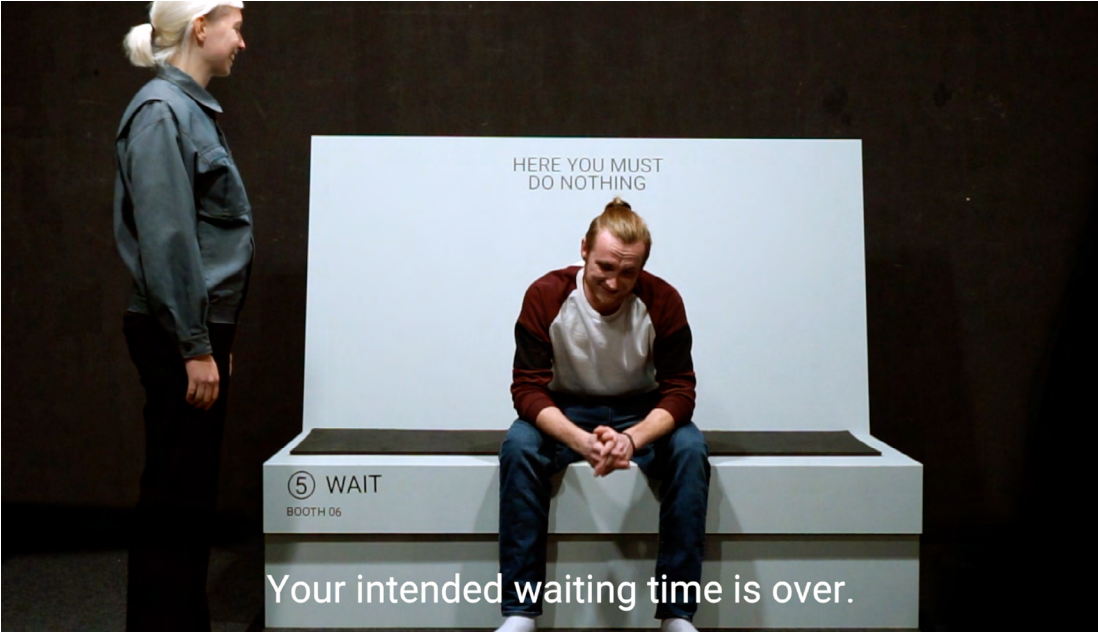


Film still: Waiting Booth introduction





Film stills: Participant waiting



Film still: Waiting Coordinator picking up participant after intended waiting time



Film still: Waiting Coordinator at Reception

STAMP FOR
(3) NEED = PROOF

Official use only!
The Waiting Coordinator stamps the PROOF slip at the
Check-Out of the client.



Film prop: Rubber-stamp pad lid inlay

ticc_w;
The institute that
appreciates the
value of waiting...

ticcw

Transnational Institute
for Conservation
and Cultivation of Waiting

Transnationales Institut
für Erhaltung
und Kultivierung des Wartens

PROOF OF SELF-IMPOSED WAITING

DATE __/__/____

TIME __:__

WAITING BOOTH NR. __

INTENDED WAITING TIME MIN __:__

ACTUAL WAITING TIME MIN __:__

The client handed off all distracting items such
as personal electronic devices, time-keepers,
jacket and accessories to the waiting coordinator
for the duration of the waiting session.

Full name of client

Waiting Coordinator

Stamp ticc_w





COMPENSATION CHART FOR
(3) NEED = MONEY

The Waiting Coordinator hands the money to the client at Check-Out. The amount is calculated on the actual time waited. See the table for the correct calculation of the amount. No proof of the compensation can be issued. Proof may only be issued when the client chose (2) PROOF.

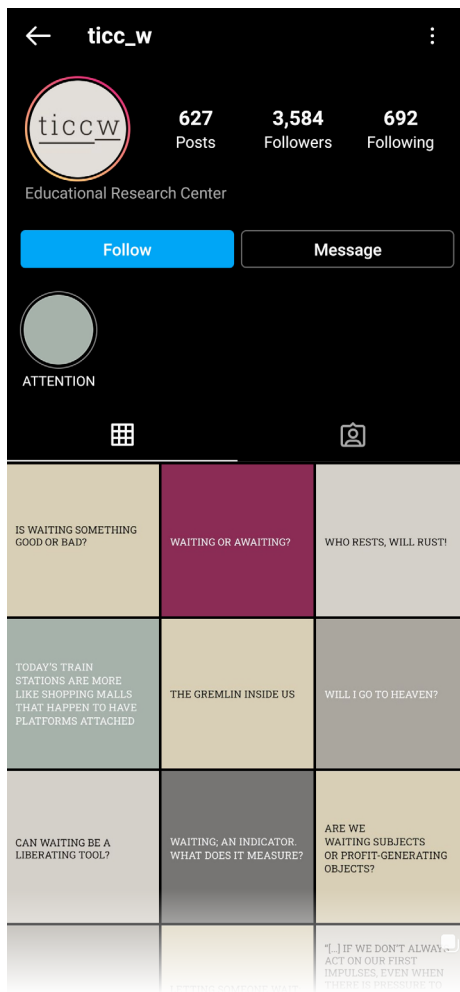
The amount is calculated based on the German (2019) monthly average net wage, divided by the average working days per month, divided by the average working hours per day.¹

$$€2075 / 25 / 8 = €10,375 \text{ per hour}$$

Sources:

1 STATISTISCHES BUNDESAMT (DESTATIS). 2020. VOLKSWIRTSCHAFTLICHE GESAMTRECHNUNGEN. FACHSERIE 18 REIHE 1.2. RETRIEVED 3 OCTOBER 2020, FROM [HTTPS://WWW.DESTATIS.DE/DE/THemen/WIRTSCHAFT/VOLKSWIRTSCHAFTLICHE-GESAMTRECHNUNGEN-INLANDSPRODUKT/PUBLIKATIONEN/Downloads-INLANDSPRODUKT-INLANDSPRODUKT-VIERTELJAHR-PDF-2180120.PDF?__blob=publicationfile](https://www.destatis.de/DE/THemen/WIRTSCHAFT/VOLKSWIRTSCHAFTLICHE-GESAMTRECHNUNGEN-INLANDSPRODUKT/PUBLIKATIONEN/Downloads-INLANDSPRODUKT-INLANDSPRODUKT-VIERTELJAHR-PDF-2180120.PDF?__blob=publicationfile)

MIN	€	MIN	€
1	0,17	31	5,36
2	0,35	32	5,53
3	0,52	33	5,71
4	0,69	34	5,88
5	0,86	35	6,05
6	1,04	36	6,23
7	1,21	37	6,40
8	1,38	38	6,57
9	1,56	39	6,74
10	1,73	40	6,92
11	1,90	41	7,09
12	2,08	42	7,26
13	2,25	43	7,44
14	2,42	44	7,61
15	2,59	45	7,78
16	2,77	46	7,95
17	2,94	47	8,13
18	3,11	48	8,30
19	3,29	49	8,47
20	3,46	50	8,65
21	3,63	51	8,82
22	3,80	52	8,99
23	3,98	53	9,16
24	4,15	54	9,34
25	4,32	55	9,51
26	4,50	56	9,68
27	4,67	57	9,86
28	4,84	58	10,03
29	5,01	59	10,20
30	5,19	60	10,38



Film prop: Instagram page and story for ATTENTION NEED



... And the idea where one can feel
the warmth of the feeling of pure
waiting whilst moving in the realm
of awaiting closer to waiting.

VIDEO: EXPERIENCE SESSION

- 01: 20 min (1920x1080, Video only) available at <https://youtu.be/OqKmPWrsSyA>
- 02: 32 min (1920x1080, Video only) available at <https://youtu.be/-udoufTEjAs>
- 03: 17 min (1920x1080, Video only) available at <https://youtu.be/tt70MkCgrw0>
- 04: 28 min (1920x1080, Video only) available at <https://youtu.be/LeQ4rtC9T5g>
- 05: 3 min (1920x1080, Video only) available at <https://youtu.be/IFK3KVU-cWc>

Direction, Concept, Story, Script, Set and Post-Production: Marko Alexandros Kagioglidis

Waiting Coordinator: Josefine Kröll

Camera: Enly Gabriela Valdespino Prieto

Participants: Joren Finke, Brigit Stadler, Christian Brill and Leonie Heise