Within much of classical Jewish and Christian discourses, hope is often articulated as a belief in super-ordinary interventions into the present order (i.e., supersessionist logic seen within much of Jewish and Christian religious thought). I argued in chapter 1 that Benjamin and Zizek (to some extent) tend to employ apocalyptic language in order to envision social transformation. They use supersessionist logic. I do not want to interpret hope through employing supersessionist logic, as it may not enable one to theorize the conditions under which hope is possible within the worlds we already inhabit. For certain, supersessionist logic such as apocalyptic language can be defiant and subversive to hegemonic structures. However, such logic does not attend to the complex, social practices that shape and inform what is possible in our neoliberal moment.

I advance that a pragmatic politics of hope emerges at the site of mundane and ordinary lived experience. Hope may be understood as a social practice. I employ the work of religious studies scholar Vincent Lloyd, as he helps one understand the importance of grounding a pragmatic politics of hope in mundane and everyday lived experiences. In order to demonstrate this argument, I turn to a feminist religious movement, Madres de Desaparecidos (Mothers of the Disappeared), as this movement embodies a pragmatic politics of hope at the site of everyday lived experience, being motherhood. This movement not only offers a thick description of hope as social practice but also demonstrates that both agapeic and erotic loves can ground practices of hope.

Hope Revisited

Hope might be understood as a social practice. In particular, black feminist and womanist discourses have emphasized social movements
among women of color who practice hope. For women of color around the world who lead social movements, hope is located in the ordinary and mundane practices of their everyday lived experience. Hope is not merely abstract theorizing but is rooted in the messiness, complexity and ambiguity of lived experience, practices, desires, and longings for alternative worlds located in the present. Religious Scholar Vincent Lloyd states “only once that complex texture of the social world is acknowledged can we understand the usefulness of religious language in naming practices of political significance.”1 One practice of political significance is hope. In order to understand hope, we must turn to how people live and actually hope (as a practice) rather than abstract religious theorizing about hope.

Understanding hope as a social practice is important because traditional theological discourse, such as Christian discourse, has articulated hope in ways that depend upon supersessionist logic. Supersessionist logic involves the idea that the world is made right from the outside rather than from within.2 Under supersessionist thought, there is an overturning of the old world with a new world, which communicates a radical break and discontinuity between the old and new world. According to this logic in much of Jewish and Christian theologies, the world is fallen and broken, needing a redemptive force from the outside in order to make itself right. Within supersessionist logic is the problem of enchantment, that there is a perfect world that completely breaks from the present world we possess.3 For certain, when re-envisioning new worlds, we must see and talk beyond the social worlds we inhabit. However, as argued in chapter 1, new possible social worlds are envisioned from within the present. We therefore do not need to turn to an abstract “perfect” future located outside our social contexts in order to experience hope. In fact, hope is the stuff of the present. It is how we practice commitment to projects of love and justice that offer us new visions of hope.

Understanding hope as a social practice oriented toward love and justice resonates with immanent theologies. I probed the limits of apocalyptic eschatologies within Christian discourses in chapter 1, arguing that womanist theologies posit a realized eschatology as a way of locating redemptive possibilities from within rather than outside the world. When one focuses on modes of redemption from outside the world rather than analyzing modes of religiously living and acting from within the world, one misses how people remain faithful through practices of hope within their complex daily hardships and struggles. In this instance, hope is not about metaphysical