

Probing the Boundaries
Innovative Dialogue



Edited by

Whitney Bauman

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Publishing Creative Research

Hope:
Global Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Papers Presented at the 3rd Global Conference
Hope: Probing the Boundaries

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Edited by

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Hope: Global Interdisciplinary Perspectives

Whitney A. Bauman

From September 17-19, 2007, around 25 people met at Mansfield College in Oxford, UK, for an interdisciplinary and international conference exploring the philosophical, religious, literary, psychological, and social implications of “hope.” The following papers represent the bulk of the papers that were presented at that conference. Few changes have been made from their original presentation format. Several of the papers were also selected for revision and publication in book form, which will be published in late 2008. In this brief introduction, I lay out some of the questions that arise in confronting the “issue” of hope and provide a summary of the four sections into which this e-book is divided.

What role does hope play in our daily lives at the beginning of the 21st Century? Living with the knowledge of the failures of the last century (such as the Holocaust, Rwandan Genocide, and Hiroshima) and facing the problems of this century (mass economic inequity, the AIDS crisis, global climate change, continuing racial and gender inequity) what reasons have we to hope for a better future? Furthermore, given the growing number of human beings that must deal with various diseases and mental illnesses, what role does hope play in our lives? Finally, when faced with our own eventual mortality and the overall mortality of the planet (when the sun dies out or an asteroid hits the planet), how can we even begin to hope? These and many other questions were the types of things we addressed at the 3rd Global Interdisciplinary Conference on “Hope: Probing the Boundaries.” In doing so, there were four primary categories into which our investigations fell: philosophical, psychological, literary/artistic, and engaged social projects. I will discuss each of these seriatim in this brief introduction.

1. Philosophical Perspectives

So much has been written on the topic of hope, that one wonders if anything new can be said. However, part of the purpose of this conference was to provide us with the philosophical/historical context out of which the question of “hope” emerges. Thus, part I of this volume begins with various philosophical and religious perspectives on “hope.” From Buddhist, Islamic, and Christian perspectives, from theories of Hope found in the works of Immanuel Kant, Miguel Unamuno, Ernst Bloch, Judith Butler, Hegel, and Bruno Latour, and from phenomenological, post-structural, scholastic, and other philosophical perspectives, this section analyzes how hope functions in the minds of human beings. If anything, this section asks the questions about

the ontological, metaphysical, and epistemological roles that hope plays in our lives.

Is hope merely the negation of despair? Is hope necessary for knowledge of the world? Is hope an ontological/metaphysical reality “out there” or is it a construction of human beings? What role does hope play in our understandings of past, present, and future? Readers interested in these questions will find much in part I of this volume.

2. Psychological Perspectives

This section of the book is not nearly as long as the first section, but it is just as, if not more, important. Unlike the first section of the book, these papers were grounded in actual therapy experiences or psychological tests. Whereas the first section deals more with “big” questions, this section asks how hope *functions* at various times in our lives. For instance, what role does hope play at the end of life when one is faced with death? If it is not mere denial of death, might it play an important role in human well being *viz. a viz.* confronting the end of life? Another paper in this section analyzes the role of theatre in therapy and how this increases empathy with the other and future possibilities for one’s own present, and thereby increases the hopefulness with which one confronts the future. Finally, the third paper in this section asks about the roles of optimism and pessimism in relationship to our experience of hope.

Together, these papers give us a fuller perspective of the roles that hope plays psychologically. Though the papers deal with widely different contexts, one thing is certain: hope plays a central role in the well-being of human life and human thriving. Regardless of the ontological/metaphysical reality of hope, it is an important part of the human experience and cannot be ignored.

3. Literature, Art, and Hope

Another important area in which the boundaries of human life are probed is literature and art. Again, this section is shorter than the first, but no less rich. Moving from the film, “The Departed,” to Wierszalin Theatre in Poland, and finally to a Quranic analysis of Hope, this section explores hope through cinema and literature. How do these media provide different lenses through which to explore “hope” than say, psychological or philosophical lenses? Might literary and cinematic sources provide hope in situations where all hope is lost? In other words, might literature and art (including cinema) be one of the last great oases for hope when the rest of the human experience of life seems like a desert of despair? These are some of the types of questions this section raises and explores.

4. Engaged Social Projects

Fourth and finally, the last section of the book deals with what I am calling “engaged projects” of hope. From Affirmative Action in South Africa, to HIV and hope, and NGO’s in Brazil, these papers look at the question of hope as it relates to societal issues. Furthermore, they all take data analysis seriously and in this sense “ground” our understandings of hope in the realities of peoples’ lives. After all, what good is all of the philosophy, psychology, literature and art about hope without evidence that it matters in the world and to people living lives in various communities around the world? If anything, these papers bolster the idea that hope does *matter* in and to the world. Perhaps this is an intuition for which you didn’t need proof, but these studies will give you tools for answering the critics of hope.

As you read through the papers in this volume you will find many places of agreement and disagreement. I hope that you will take them both as opportunities for expanding your ideas about humanity and life where possible, and respectfully disagree where that is not possible. As is the case with any interdisciplinary conference, these papers draw on some methods that may not be “conventional” in the sense of rigidly defined academic boundaries. Furthermore, as with other international, multi-cultural, and multi-religious conferences of this sort, one will inevitably find points of view that are unacceptable. As a whole, these papers are probably incommensurable in a systematic sense. However, taken as a variety of perspectives on something central to most human life - hope - I think it represents a vast swath of the spectrum of beliefs, methods, and ideas about hope.

Part I
Philosophical Perspectives

Moral Theory and Hope

Andreas Lind

Abstract: James Griffin argues that our human capacities, our 'human nature', impose constraints on the possible content of moral norms. As he says, "A moral standard that ignores human capacities is not an 'ideal' standard; it is no standard at all". He believes that utilitarianism is an example of a moral theory that disregards human capacities in this way (ignoring, for instance, cognitive and epistemic limitations that we all know we have as human beings). Yet he acknowledges that "This would be flatly denied by the sort of objectivist who would maintain that moral norms are independent of human capacities, that they are simply to be discovered by us, that we can hope that their demands will not outstrip our powers, but that this can only be a hope".

There is no doubt that Griffin, and many with him, think that this hope is slim. In this paper I argue that ideal standards (now without the scare quotes), *pace* Griffin, indeed are real standards. Furthermore, I argue that such standards function regulatively, that they are a kind of *focus imaginarius* for moral discourse, in such a way that they actually make sense of, and rationalize, the hope that Griffin thinks is a telling argument against them.

Key words: Utilitarianism, James Griffin, criterion of rightness, decision making procedure, regulative ideal

1. Introduction

Socrates to Cephalus:

What do you consider to be the greatest blessing which you have reaped from your wealth?

One, he said, of which I could not expect easily to convince others. For let me tell you, Socrates, that when a man thinks himself to be near death, fears and cares enter into his mind which he never had before; the tales of a world below and the punishment which is exacted there of deeds done here were once a laughing matter to him, but now he is tormented with the thought that they may be true: either from the weakness of age, or because he is now drawing nearer to that other place, he has a clearer view of these things; suspicions and alarms crowd thickly upon him, and he begins to reflect and consider what wrongs he has done to others. And when he finds that the sum of his transgressions is great he will many a time like a child start

up in his sleep for fear, and he is filled with dark forebodings. But to him who is conscious of no sin, sweet hope, as Pindar charmingly says, is the kind nurse of his age:

Hope [he says] cherishes the soul of him who lives in justice and holiness and is the nurse of his age and the companion of his journey; - hope which is mightiest to sway the restless soul of man.

Plato, *The Republic*, 330d-331a

In *Value Judgement: Improving Our Ethical Beliefs*¹, James Griffin argues that our human capacities, our ‘human nature’, impose constraints on the possible content of moral norms. As he says, “A moral standard that ignores human capacities is not an ‘ideal’ standard, but no standard at all”.² He believes that utilitarianism is an example of a moral theory that disregards human capacities in this way (ignoring, for instance, cognitive and epistemic limitations that we all know we have as human beings). Yet he acknowledges that:

This would be flatly denied by the sort of objectivist who would maintain that moral norms are independent of human capacities, that they are simply to be discovered by us, that we can hope that their demands will not outstrip our powers, but that this can only be a hope.³

There is no doubt that Griffin, and many with him, think that this hope is slim. In this paper I argue that ideal standards (now without the scare quotes), *pace* Griffin, indeed are real standards. Furthermore, I argue that such standards function regulatively. That is, they are a kind of *focus imaginarius* for moral discourse, in such a way that they actually make sense of, and rationalize, the hope that Griffin thinks is a telling argument against them. An example of an ‘objectivist’ that Griffin sees as his main opponent would be an act-utilitarian who argues (roughly) that what makes an action right is whether it actually produces at least as much pleasure as any other action open to the agent at the time of action. This version of utilitarianism focuses on the *actual* consequences brought about by our actions. Hence it disregards human capacities in the sense that an action can be right, say, irrespective of whether you or I or anyone else can know about this. There is, simply, a fact of the matter as to whether it is right or wrong. In this paper I will defend such a version of utilitarianism against Griffin’s criticism.

Another problem that I will address is what we might call Cephalus’s worry. One need not be an old man or believe in an afterlife to be worried about whether one has done many people great harm or to ask

whether the sum of one's transgressions is great. But had Cephalus been a utilitarian would he not be utterly filled with dark forebodings and constantly start up in his sleep due to the simple fact that it is so hard to know whether one has done the right things on this picture? Would he ever be accompanied by the sweet hope on his journeys? My answer is that whether Cephalus should worry about this has nothing to do with the question of whether he is a utilitarian or not. Utilitarianism is neither better nor worse than any other theory in this respect.

2. Moral Metaphysics and Human Capacities

One central claim that Griffin constantly revisits is that moral norms and standards must "be tailored to fit the human torso"⁴ and that the only way in which they can do so is if they tie in with a (psychologically, epistemically, motivationally and cognitively) realistic picture of human agency and human capacities. Such a picture of human nature and the facts about human agents that it makes possible will, he thinks, "undermine certain important ethical systems".⁵ So if a moral theory requires us, for instance, to make utility calculations about effects that potentially extend a hundred years or more into the future - calculations we can do, if ever, only in certain highly unusual circumstances - then we have a potential argument not only against its decision procedure but also against the criterion that sanctions such a procedure in the first place. Let us quote Griffin at length here to see why he is unimpressed by the utilitarian's defence of distinguishing between the theory understood as criterion of rightness and understood as a decision procedure:

Although criterion and decision procedure can indeed diverge, they may not, I think, get far apart from one another. Our decision procedure will, of course, be restricted by our capacities, but any criterion for a human practice cannot become too remote from them without losing its standing as a criterion. [...] What most promotes interests is often permanently beyond our reach. Then a would-be 'criterion' like that can play no role, not even that of a criterion. Our moral life cannot start from such an all-sanctioning background principle. We have to conduct it with what is within our reach. One might – and the capacity-blind objectivists...do – flatly deny my claim that there are knowledge constraints on a criterion. The criterion in morals, they say, is independent of human capacities; it is the sort of thing to be discovered by us; we may hope that it does not outstrip our powers of knowledge, but that can only be a hope. But this form of objectivism seems to

me to lack support. And if the criterion were to outstrip our knowledge, then it could play no role in our moral life, it would leave...utilitarianism in need of some new, yet unknown, standard for sanctioning the rules of our decision procedure. This objectivist move is so drastic that it punches a large hole in utilitarianism that the theory has no obvious resources to fill.⁶

And in relation to this he makes the claim that:

[N]orms and relations must be tailored to fit the human torso. They are nothing but what such tailoring produces. There are no moral norms outside the boundary set by our capacities. There are not some second-best standards, standards made for everyday use by agents limited in knowledge and will, and then, underlying them and sanctioning them, true standards, standards that make no compromise with human frailty. A moral standard that ignores human capacities is not an 'ideal' standard, but no standard at all.⁷

According to Griffin, then, the only way in which we can keep the criterion and decision procedure within a tolerable limit is if the former is constrained by the latter. Moral norms must be determined, at least in part, by human capacities. But Griffin's somewhat vague remarks regarding the extent of the divergence between criterion and decision procedure are unfortunately not particularly helpful. What one would like to know is where the line should be drawn and why it should be drawn at that particular point, whatever it might come to. Furthermore, no one would deny that we must conduct our moral life with what is within our reach. And surely the utilitarian does not deny this. To suggest otherwise is to misrepresent his rationale for the criterion in the first place.

As I understand Griffin he is saying that *moral metaphysics* is constrained by *moral epistemology*. One important question in moral metaphysics is what *makes* actions right or wrong. The utilitarian argues, in the words of G. E. Moore, that "A voluntary action is right, whenever and only when no other action possible to the agent under the circumstances would have caused more pleasure; in all other cases, it is wrong".⁸ Causing more pleasure in this sense is what *makes* the action right. I will not here discuss how Moore actually reaches this position and thus I will not discuss whether it is justified in the first place. What is important to note, for our present discussion, is that there is no reference here to human capacities or human beliefs; in short, there is no knowledge constraint.

What does Griffin say about the utilitarian criterion? Well, like most of us he agrees that there are cases where we can do the requisite calculations. His worry is that there are not enough cases where this can be done.

The crucial question therefore is: 'How often would we fail and how central to ethical life would the failures be?' If utility calculations is beyond us fairly often and in fairly central parts of ethics, then utilitarianism is in jeopardy.⁹

But why would our failures to find out which action in a situation of moral choice would maximize pleasure constitute an argument against the idea that producing a maximum amount of pleasure is what makes actions right? If one feels the pressure of this question one need not immediately pledge a commitment to some form of robust realism.¹⁰ One need only admit that there is a crucial difference between the two alternatives in the following question: Should I take Anna to the hospital because she has a really bad allergic reaction or should I take her to the hospital because I believe she has a really bad allergic reaction? Well, I should probably take her to the hospital in both cases but it is only in the former, I would say, that I genuinely ought to do so.

Griffin says that 'ideal' standards are no standards at all. But what does he mean by that? Well, he says that such standards can 'play no role'. But what is this role that the utilitarian criterion is supposed to play? The utilitarian answer is simple: The criterion tells us what makes actions right and wrong. But utilitarianism is also a normative theory and thus tells us what we ought to do. What it says is that in situations of moral choice we ought to do the action that actually produces most pleasure. This is a normative requirement without much 'content' since it does not in any way indicate which action, in the situation I am in, I ought to do.

When Griffin says that the criterion can play no role in our moral life what he thus means is that since I cannot do the requisite calculations to a reliable degree (and there are no other substantial ways in which I am told how to act) the utilitarian criterion and thus the utilitarian theory fades out of the picture.

In the next section I will indicate how a utilitarian should respond to Griffin.

3. Justifying Our Actions

Griffin is, in one sense, right to say that we can only hope that the criterion in morals does not outstrip our powers of knowledge. In fact, most utilitarians readily admit that there are many cases in which we cannot know whether a particular action will maximize pleasure. In such cases it is correct to say that, strictly speaking, we do not know what we ought morally to do.

But this does not imply that we are always at a total loss about what we ought to do in another sense, namely, about what we ought to do based upon what we can justify to others.

It is regarding the interplay between what we ‘really’ ought to do and what we ‘justifiably believe’ we ought to do that Griffin and the utilitarian differ. The utilitarian agrees with Griffin that there can be and often is a great distance between what we really ought to do and what we justifiably believe we ought to do. Griffin sees this as a failure because he thinks that this distance makes the ‘real’ ought useless, where ‘useless’ more or less equals ‘ideal’.

But it is only on the assumption that moral epistemology can (and should) constrain moral metaphysics that such an inference is possible. If, however, one does not believe that moral epistemology plays this sort of role one is not likely to be impressed by Griffin’s arguments. The kind of utilitarianism I have in mind denies exactly this assumption. Because it is concerned with the actual consequences produced by our actions, it denies that an action can be right or better than another action if it produces less pleasure. Hence, there is no stopping-point short of defining the right or best action as that which produces the most total pleasure. Once again, this is to say that there is no knowledge constraint on the criterion.

For the utilitarian this is as real a criterion as one could get. Functional role in human moral life does not determine existence (as Griffin has it). Moral metaphysics is prior to, and independent of, moral epistemology. But there is nevertheless a way in which the criterion of rightness has a function in our moral life. One way in which the distinction between criterion of rightness and decision making procedure has been understood is that it makes it possible for the utilitarian to say that we should not always consciously deliberate about what to do. Were we to do this we would not only rely upon an overly intellectualistic (and thus false) picture of moral life and, furthermore, to constantly deliberate about what to do would most likely produce suboptimal consequences. The idea is that decision making procedures will be connected with questions of moral motivation and whether one should aim directly at producing the best consequences is something which, in turn, should be evaluated according to whether it produces the best consequences.

So even if one should not always deliberate in a ‘utilitarian fashion’, something which, according to Griffin, we cannot do anyways because “what most promote interest is permanently beyond our reach”¹¹, there is nevertheless room for the utilitarian to say that the criterion functions in a regulative way. For lack of space I can only say something very brief about *retrospective* deliberation and will have to leave my ideas about *prospective* deliberation for another occasion.

Retrospective deliberation is deliberation about what has happened; it is deliberation about how we deliberated and decided to act and about the actual consequences of our so acting. As I said above, it is hard for the utilitarian to say with certainty what one ought to do in a situation of moral choice. Regarding retrospective deliberation, when the ‘facts are in’, as we say, we are in a slightly better position to judge with confidence. But the effects of our action can extend very far into the future and it is likely that there is no point in time where I can say with certainty about a former action of mine that it was right. But we all know that there is a clear difference between the two. If Anna tells me that she was only faking her allergic reaction in order to play a trick on me, it certainly makes a difference for my evaluation of the situation. This goes for the original situation as well as for the situation when she has told me that it was all a joke.

Consider the following case to see more clearly how the criterion functions regulatively. Assume that Peter is justified in thinking that he should do X and so does X. The consequences of X seem at first to be very good but gradually it becomes clear that they are not very good at all. What Peter should conclude at this point is that X was probably not the right thing to do. There might come a time later when it becomes clear again that X does have good effects, but at this point Peter cannot tell whether this will happen. But the very fact that his future self will be able to pass judgement on his earlier self, and the fact that the earlier self is aware of this, is not only a sign that there is a fact of the matter as the criterion says (although it is extremely hard for us to tell what it really is) but that this is something of which Peter is aware when he acts, both now and in the future.

Much, much more needs to be said about this in order to make the regulative function of the criterion perspicuous. Once that fuller story is in, I believe, the utilitarian can respond to Griffin’s charge that the criterion has no function to play, or rather that it has a function, but a highly indirect one.

4. Cephalus’s worry

If Cephalus is a utilitarian of the sort that we have been considering would he have more reason to start up in his sleep than had he not been a utilitarian? That is, given the way utilitarianism deems actions right and wrong in relation to other moral theories, is it correct to say that he has done more wrong according to it than to any of the latter? In short, can the utilitarian hope for as much as, say, a Kantian or a virtue ethicist?

I think that Cephalus the utilitarian has a bit more reason to worry than the others due to the fact that it is so hard to tell whether an action actually is right or wrong according to utilitarianism. But Cephalus’s worry will only be a worry regarding justification. Whether he has *actually* done many wrongs to others is not a question that arises for him because he is a

utilitarian. If he has actually done many wrongs in his life, he has probably done so whether he is a utilitarian or a Kantian or a virtue ethicist.

When Griffin charges the utilitarian for relying merely on a hope that the criterion does not outstrip our powers of knowledge he is, in a sense, saying something which the utilitarian already affirms. It is just that the utilitarian is more hopeful than Griffin on this point. And rightly so, I think.

Notes

¹ J Griffin, *Value Judgement: Improving our Ethical Beliefs*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1996.

² Griffin, p. 47.

³ J. Griffin, 'Incommensurability: What's the Problem?' in *Incommensurability, Incomparability, and Practical Reason*, R. Chang (ed), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1997, p. 265.

⁴ Griffin, *Value Judgement*, p. 105.

⁵ Griffin, p. 103. In fairness to Griffin I think it is important to stress what he states explicitly, *viz.*, that attacking a rich tradition such as utilitarianism in a couple of pages with the aim of refuting it is not possible. At one point he says that "I want merely to explain the source of my own doubts about these three traditions [utilitarianism, Kantianism and virtue ethics] and why, on balance, I prefer to look elsewhere", *Value Judgement*, p. 104. I have my doubts about Griffin's alleged modesty but I will not press the point here.

⁶ Griffin, p. 105f.

⁷ Griffin, p. 105.

⁸ G. E. Moore, *Ethics*, Williams & Norgate, London, 1912, p. 19.

⁹ J Griffin, 'Reply to Critics' in *Well-Being and Morality. Essays in Honour of James Griffin*, (eds.) R. Crisp and B. Hooker, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 305.

¹⁰ For a brief discussion off this, see R. Crisp, 'Griffin's Pessimism' in *Well-Being and Morality. Essays in Honour of James Griffin*, (eds.) R. Crisp and B. Hooker, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 124., and for a longer defence of realism coupled with utilitarianism, see D Brink, *Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989.

¹¹ Griffin, *Value Judgement*, p. 105.

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Distinguishing Between Hope and Despair

Ariel Meirav

Abstract: According to a widely accepted view, hope can be adequately analysed in terms desire and partial belief. I argue that this view misconstrues the nature of hope and the essential difference between hope and despair. I propose an alternative view according to which hope depends on one's conception of the power (external to oneself) that determines whether or not one's desire will be fulfilled or not. Hope, in contrast with despair, involves a conception of the relevant power as good, that is, as operating in ways that the hoper considers to be good.

Key words: hope; despair; desire; probability assignment

If you look at (analytic) philosophical writing on hope in the last few decades, you come out with two strong impressions: First, *little* has been written on the topic, and second, there is a remarkably wide *agreement* between those few who have written on the topic, as regards the nature of hope. This justifies speaking of what I shall call the 'Standard Doctrine' regarding the nature of hope. A paradigmatic representation of the doctrine may be found in John Patrick Day's 1969 article 'Hope'.¹ The essence of the doctrine is that hope is a complex attitude consisting of desire and the assignment of probability (or partial belief). Thus, for example, Jacob's hope that Rachel will agree to marry him consists of two things:

1. His desire that she will agree
2. His assignment of *some* probability to this.

In the contrary case of *despair*, he still *desires* that she will agree to marry him, but fails to assign it probability - he disbelieves that it is probable.

Different versions of the Doctrine take different probabilities as minimal for hope. But nearly all agree that we may hope for things we take to be very unlikely. And all agree that what constitutes the difference between hope and despair is the probability we assign to the prospect. We despair simply because we think the prospect is too unlikely.

There is no doubt that this is an appealing theory at first glance. Nevertheless, I think it is fundamentally mistaken: The conditions it describes as constitutive of hope are found, I claim, in cases of despair - indeed in *typical* cases of despair - no less than in cases of hope. Thus I am

saying that in cases of hope and despair you may find the same desire *and* the same probability assignment. In this sense the theory *fails to distinguish between hope and despair*. It misses that crucial part of the nature of hope which transforms one who desires and assigns probability in despair, into one who does so in hope.

2.

Why do I say that the Standard Doctrine fails in this way? I am led to do so by considering examples such as the following.

Two men, Andy and Red, have been serving life sentence for murder in a brutal prison.² They are in many ways similar. They understand equally well the workings of the prison and the ways of the prisoners and guards inhabiting it. Neither of them has lost the desire to be free again. They have an equal grasp of the very small chances of escaping. And yet, Andy lives in hope, and Red lives without hope. Indeed, Red thinks that hope should be resisted, suppressed (and he succeeds in suppressing it). He thinks hoping in this virtually hopeless situation will threaten his sanity. You may recognize the outline of Frank Darabont's film, *The Shawshank Redemption*. It seems reasonable to say that the film suggests that Andy hopes and Red does not, in spite of their similar desire for freedom and similar assessment of the probability of attaining it, and to that extent it challenges us with a counterexample to the Standard Doctrine.

My second example is more mundane, perhaps trivial, but has the advantage of presenting quite explicitly the possibility that two people might desire something to the same extent and assign it *numerically* the same probability without differing with regard to their hope for that thing. Suppose I buy a lottery ticket, and come back home full of enthusiasm, showing the ticket to my wife and wanting to share with her my great hope in winning a sizeable monetary prize. But she is unconvinced. Her sceptical gaze expresses an amused indifference that is incomprehensible to me. Of course, she desires the extra income no less than I do. And we do not disagree in our assessments of the probability of winning. She entirely agrees with the content of my enthusiastic claim (though not with its enthusiastic form) that there is a chance of one in a hundred thousand of winning. In other words: We have the same desire for winning the lottery, and assign the same probability to winning it. And yet I am hopeful of winning, and she is not. And this, of course, is incompatible with the Standard Doctrine, according to which we should both have exactly the same hope (or despair) in these circumstances.

A defender of the Standard Doctrine might object to my examples or my interpretation of them in various ways (which I do not have the time to discuss), but I think these objections can be convincingly answered. My conclusion is that whether one hopes or despairs is not determined by such

desires and probability assignments. And so it cannot be correct to claim that hope is constituted by such desires and probability assignments. The Standard Doctrine must be rejected.

This leaves us in the following position: We know that *something* distinguishes between hope and despair. But upon reflection we suddenly realize that this something is quite mysterious.

3.

I think the reason why both the Standard Doctrine and a few recent proposals to revise it (which, again, I do not have the time to present here) misconstrue hope is their assumption that it is exclusively a matter of the relations between the hoper and some desired prospect. I think the key to a more satisfactory theory lies in recognizing that hope inherently involves reference to a third factor, distinct from both the hoper and the desired prospect. The kind of hope one can have depends on one's conception of this third factor.

The first step in my argument is to notice that hope involves a rather special kind of desire. Hope involves desiring a prospect while viewing that desired prospect as *not within my causal or cognitive control*.³ I recognize that it is not within my power to guarantee the realization of the prospect, for I am neither able to bring it about, to cause it to obtain, nor possess the right sort of epistemic access to its obtaining. I can neither make it happen nor prove that it will happen. If you asked me whether I will return the book which I borrowed from you a while ago, you would be annoyed if I said in reply that 'I hope so', because this would imply that I take myself not to have causal control over its return, and therefore that I do not acknowledge my responsibility for returning it. It would be less annoying, but similarly inappropriate, for me to say that I *hope* that it will be the case tomorrow that two plus two will be four, because the insight I have into this prospect allows me even now to guarantee its obtaining. 'Resignation', as I am using the term, designates an acknowledgement of lack of control or power over something. In the context of desiring that some prospect be realized, it designates the acknowledgment that I do not have the power to guarantee its realization. Desire that is accompanied by such resignation may be described as *resignative desire*.

But despair too involves desire, and it is even more evident in the case of despair that the desire it involves is *resignative*. Think of Jacob and Rachel - if he despairs of her agreeing, he still wants her to agree, and still thinks he does not have causal control over whether or not she will agree. So we have still not found what it is that distinguishes between hope and despair. And yet, noticing that they both involve resignative desire brings in an additional factor into the picture. For acknowledging that the causal power to fulfil a prospect does not lie within me seems to be much the same as the

same as acknowledging that the power to fulfill it lies *outside* of me, in some factor *external* to me. It is *to* that external factor (i.e. in relation to it) that one resigns.

In many cases the external factor will simply be another person. Your resignative desire that I return the book you lent me is likely to involve *me* in that role of the external factor. It would then be in relation to me that your desire is resigned. In other cases it might be a group of persons, or an institution (e.g. the government, or the police). Less personally, the external factor might be conceived simply as chance, or fate, or law-governed nature. Finally, it might be conceived in religious terms, as the gods or God.

No matter what *sort* of factor it is taken to be, however, the question arises of the extent to which one considers that factor is 'on one's own side' or not, the extent to which it is a 'good' external factor or an 'indifferent' or 'bad' one. My proposal for distinguishing between hope and despair is this:

Hope involves probability assignment and resignative desire in relation to an external factor one conceives as good. Despair involves probability assessment and resignative desire in relation to an external factor one conceives as bad. Let me explain this distinction.

It can be more easily understood in case the external power is a *person* – though I think the distinction applies, in principle, also if the external power is conceived in non-personal terms. A good external factor is not necessarily one which fulfils my desires, even though it is (by definition) within its power to do so. It might not do so if, for example, it is mistaken about what I desire. Or, if it identifies my desires correctly, it might still not fulfill them because it considers their fulfillment to be against my own interest (even if I myself fail to see this). Finally, even if my desires agree with what the external factor takes to be my interests, it may still not fulfill them, because they conflict with other interests that are more pressing – ones that I myself *would* have preferred to my own in the circumstances, had I fully understood the situation.

Consider an example: I am in a desolate, cold street after a long day, waiting for my friend to pick me up by car. I hope she arrives at seven, as we arranged. Whether she does is largely under her control. I think she is 'on my side'. But this does not necessarily mean that she will come at the appointed time. My hope that she will come does not imply a *belief that she will come*. She might be under the impression that I wanted her to come at half past seven. Or she might think that in spite of my wanting her to come at seven, it is better for me if she came at seven thirty. Finally, she might think it would be better for me if she came at seven, but encountered a problem on the way which requires her attention – say, an accident in which a cat was hurt.

Hope enables me to feel reasonably happy about a prospect of which I am unconfident because, basically, I think that if my desires are not fulfilled, this will be *for a good reason*. Even if they were not fulfilled

because of a mistake made by the external factor, I would still have the consolation that it (she) was *striving* to benefit me. But if they were not fulfilled because this was better for me, or because there were more important concerns – concerns which *I* would judge to be more important than her being on time, I have the greater consolation of the thought that what did happen was *better* than to have my desire fulfilled.

What I take to be a crucial advantage of this account is the way it explains how hope encourages us without modifying our probability assignments. Hope and despair differ in respect of the way in which one accepts the possibility that one's desire will be frustrated, not in respect of how probable one takes that possibility to be. Hope, therefore, does not require evidentially unwarranted optimistic probability assignments, and need not involve self-deception or wishful thinking about probabilities.

Notes

¹ J Day, 'Hope'. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 6, 1969, pp. 89-102. Examples of other authors subscribing to the Standard Doctrine are: R Downie, 'Hope'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 24, 1963, pp. 248-251; H Price, *Belief*, Allen & Unwin, 1969, pp. 268-274; M Quinn, 'Hoping'. *Southwestern Journal of Philosophy*, vol.7, 1976, pp. 53-65.

² Luc Bovens discusses this example, though not to argue against the Standard Doctrine but rather to raise questions about the extent to which, and the contexts in which, hope is beneficial to the person who hopes. See L Bovens, 'The Value of Hope'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, vol. 59, 1999, pp. 667-9.

³ Victoria McGeer makes a related point in 'The Art of Good Hope', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 592, 2004, pp. 100-127.

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Transcendent, Sublime Hope as an Antidote to the Ethos of Pride and Commodity Culture

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Abstract: Utilitarian hope engenders an ethos of pride and commodity culture when socio-political structures depend upon hopeful manifestations of national pride for economic well-being. The triangulation of utilitarian hope, national pride, and economic well-being creates a formidable means of establishing a nation's global supremacy. Utilitarian, unilateral hope has the propensity to reap capital and ossify a nation within the magnitude of historical splendour. The palimpsest of utilitarian hope underpins the interaction of commodity culture and the ethos of pride through the ages. Nineteenth and twentieth century theorists explicate socio-political structures that embody a finite, cost-effective utilitarian hope. At the other end of the spectrum is transcendent, sublime hope, which isolates the individual from the group and enables ascension to unspeakable realms that compromise and thwart the ethos of pride and commodity culture. Although the transcendent sublime can invoke the beautiful or the horrific, it enables the individual to construct alternative paradigms that are indeterminate, infinite, and beyond the machinations of pride and commodity culture. This paper examines transcendent, sublime hope as an antidote that destabilizes the power structure of utilitarian hope and minimizes its ability to create an ethos of pride emboldened by commodity culture.

Key words: commodity exchange, social effectivity of the market, soft power, utilitarianism, transcendentalism, aesthetics.

Hope and the ethos of pride and commodity fuel a world-view that is as solipsistic as it is transcendent. The subtle underpinnings of commodity culture are entwined within most socio-political systems; thus, individuals cannot envisage hope without indicators of cost-effectiveness. Though unilateral, utilitarian hope, which is a false hope that engenders an image of pride, commodity culture, and socio-political well-being, is dominant in the Twenty-First Century, nineteenth and twentieth century theorists explicate socio-political structures that shape the systems that embody unilateral, utilitarian hope. A nation's educational system, government, and media representation create a hope that functions as a false sublime, as it were, with the propensity to reap capital. Deviation from the construct of unilateral, utilitarian hope elicits consequences that include ostracism, financial

reversals, and suspicions of loyalties. At the other end of the spectrum is transcendent, sublime hope, which isolates the individual from the group and enables ascension to unspeakable realms that compromise and thwart the socio-political ethos of pride and commodity culture. Transcendent, sublime hope articulates an ethos of silence and transformation. There is risk involved, for the sublime can invoke the beautiful or the horrid and either validate or compromise an ideological power structure. This paper delineates the structure of a unilateral, utilitarian hope and examines an alternative transcendent, sublime hope that is not without flaws and has the propensity to elevate an individual above the machinations of the ethos of pride and commodity culture.

1. The Palimpsest of Pride and Commodity Culture

Contemporary socio-political turmoil has its roots firmly ensconced within a palimpsest of pride and commodity culture. Since the onset of civilization, man has defined social good through a commodity lens, where everything has an extrinsic and an intrinsic value. Hope, the ability to anticipate positive imaginings, manifests a curious relation to commodity culture, for the imaginings are mired in the social effectivity of the market. The social effectivity of the market is a process that connects human activity to the market on condition that the individuals partaking in it remain unaware of its logic or existence.¹ Slavoj Žižek maintains that the participants' knowledge of the social effectivity of the market destabilizes the structure's projection of social reality; as a consequence, the anticipated reality dissolves.² Thus, it is imperative that the socio-political structure conceals its function and design from individuals in order to manipulate outcomes through abstract apparatuses. In this configuration, hope becomes a commodifiable entity that is inextricably linked to abstract exchange within market values. Sohn-Rethel examines the process of abstract exchange in *Intellectual and Manual Labour A Critique of Epistemology* and asserts that the market emanates from private consciousness that separates individuals from their actions as commodity projection develops.³

The ethos of commodity culture articulates the individual's hope, unbeknownst to the individual; hence, the individual's private consciousness expresses the commodity values of society. Louis Althusser argues that socio-political apparatuses engrain "acceptable" ideological representations into the individual's private imagination in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" and asserts that the immersion of ideological principles into consciousness allows a nation to perpetuate its socio-political goals.⁴ Althusser's assertion that ideology manifests "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence,"⁵ suggests that imagination, the market, and the nation's well-being form a triangulation that has the propensity to be rooted in commodity culture. Although Sohn-Rethel disputes

Althusser's premise that the individual's cognizance of the apparatuses helps to perpetuate its goals, both theorists acknowledge the importance of economic gain in the individual's thought processes. Once the economic foundation is secure, hope becomes entangled with the socio-political well-being of the nation, which engenders an ethos of pride.

2. Identity, Power, and Fiscal Prowess

A nation's well-being depends upon a unilateral image of global integrity, power, and fiscal prowess. In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, Edmund Burke affirms that the sublime is a modification of power.⁶ Idealism and hope have the potential to become commodities that compromise national image and priorities "within the realms of foreign policy and national security...where risks are great and the stakes are high."⁷ It is in a nation's best interest to monitor and manipulate conceptions of hope; additionally, Hegel articulates a theory that links the "history of the state" to ancestral achievements that essentialize the citizenry and fills their imagination with the laws and values of the country.⁸ Within this paradigm, hope becomes an entity that defines the ethics, the virtue, and the strength of a nation. Case in point, during the Eighteenth Century, some European nations tried to project an appropriate national character to thwart allegations of national inferiority. Europeans attributed excessive humidity in the New World to degenerate forms of life.⁹ Hope of a better life in the New World became entangled with hierarchal national identity. Pride, power, and economics underpin national identity, and nations strive to protect the national identity that guarantees the greatest fiscal reward. National identity evolves as a fluid organism that traverses clock and calendar boundaries. While unilateral, utilitarian hope seems to be an individual imagining, it is actually the product of an imagined community that informs a nation's past, present, and future. Benedict Anderson argues that the community is an active organism that reflects a nation's history in *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* and posits that community is "an idea of 'homogeneous, empty time,' in which simultaneity is...transverse, cross time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar..."¹⁰ The individual's hope represents the nation's historic achievements and global perceptions, which have the ability to influence the commodity culture that sustains the nation's economic and political well-being. It is imperative that individuals align hope with the national identity organism that reflects positive projections of the nation and the national goals. Deviation from the prescribed manifestations of hope can alter a nation's global power base; thus, it is imperative that a nation instils correct manifestations of hope within its value system. The Great Exhibition in Hyde Park in 1871 typifies this type of hope-filled value system.

The hope of the Anti-Corn Law League Bazaar was to “collapse consumption and politics together materially and symbolically and turn the whole world into a giant bazaar.”¹¹ Through this initiative, the well-being of the nation and the world-at-large was the primary focus. Commodities provided an aesthetic that was believed to provide a civilizing effect upon the world and created a new “morality of style.”¹² This morality was predicated upon an English value system that channelled its socio-political mores into a “cathedral of modern commerce.”¹³ Differences in class, religion, and gender were assuaged in an effort to create a common body of “believers” in the tenets of free trade. Interestingly, the political movement’s goals and objectives were an integral part of the aesthetic representations sold at the bazaar. London’s Covent Garden Theatre was a resplendent, sublime location for the bazaar, and the beautiful items displayed were enshrined within a cathedral-like setting that enhanced the ethos of the bazaar’s commercial and socio-political objectives. England’s commodity culture transformed The Anti-Corn Law League Bazaar into “a great and holy thing that ennoble the propagation of an idea.”¹⁴ The free trade/noble ancestry idea established a palimpsest of patriotism and national well-being through the ethos of commodity culture, from which citizens were unable to extricate themselves without denigrating their ancestors’ sacrificial efforts in establishing the nation. The cathedral-like setting with a religious aura exalts the “sanctity” of the sublime commercial endeavour. The Anti-Corn League Bazaar provides a model, from which modern nations can integrate aesthetics with commodity culture and national power.

The ensuing “soft power,” the ability to affect the behaviour of others in order to influence behaviour and achieve outcomes,¹⁵ not only manoeuvres global populations into desired behaviours, but also coalesces power, national identity, and commodity culture into a living entity that preserves the integrity and ethos of a nation. Within this structure, the individual’s deviation from acceptable forms of hope represents an act akin to political heresy. While this homologous relationship may seem reductive, it can be exhilarating. When socio-political systems flourish and become lucrative, the opportunity to disseminate ideologies portends massive investment and power potential. Power and fiscal gain act as addictive stimulants that transport individuals to seeming heights, but the “heights” are fleeting, communal, and finite. The transcendent sublime, on the other hand, enables the individual to imagine infinite possibilities that are the essence of hope.

3. Hope through Transcendence

Through the transcendent sublime, the individual “transcends the actual, the logical, and the linguistically lawful, verifiable, and comprehensible.”¹⁶ Transcendent sublime thoughts are beyond the realm of

commodification; they are inarticulable and promote an ethos of silence. The individual becomes more aware of infinitude rather than socio-political or economic endeavours. In the transcendent sublime state, the individual becomes awestruck and “ego-property, health, and even life itself – are reduced to the trivial...The individual gives his heart to Being.”¹⁷ The ethos of Being supersedes the ethos of commodity-culture, power, and pride. The individual experiences power internally through the imaginative powers of the sublime. This transcendent sublime is formless and boundless and present only in thought, which cannot be marketed; its “supersensible faculty” exists only to itself and not outside of itself.¹⁸ Within the aura of the transcendent sublime, the individual’s thoughts are non-communicable. Reversals occur when sublime, hopeful imaginings are dependent upon finite speech utterances that have the propensity to transform and shroud the individual within indeterminate spheres of thought and action. The perceived danger exists in that which cannot be interpreted, controlled, or commodified according to national interests; hence, the transcendent sublime becomes an “enemy of the state,” so to speak.

Transcendent, sublime hope evokes a palimpsest that exposes centuries of socio-political manipulation for the sake of power, national pride, and fiscal gain. As an immeasurable and inexpressible entity, transcendent, sublime hope shatters the illusion of community, the ethos of pride, and economic well-being and allows individuals to approach infinitude without the means to articulate the hope that inhabits the realm or the units of measurement that can transform the hope into a commodity. Individuals forego group connections and internalize transcendent, sublime hope, which supersedes standards of sensibility and defies quantification, community, and power. Without a measurable, articulate, and commodifiable hope, socio-political structures cannot establish a powerbase that facilitates an ethos of pride or a viable commodity culture. Transcendent, sublime hope is infinite and comprehensible only to individuals with the imaginative resources to transcend finite, sensible, socio-political structures in order to ascend to the infinite realms of transforming, incommunicable hope that fuels an individual’s passion, motivation, and courage to traverse a sphere of indeterminate, transcendent, sublime hope.

Notes

¹ S. Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Verso, London, 1989, p.20.

² Zizek, p.20.

³ A. Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and Manual Labour A Critique of Epistemology*, Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, 1978, p.19.

- ⁴ L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1971, p.133.
- ⁵ L. Althusser, p.162.
- ⁶ E. Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1968, p.64.
- ⁷ B. Jettleson, 'Tough Love Multilateralism'. *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 27, Winter 2004, pp.8-9.
- ⁸ G.W.F., Hegel, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*. Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 1988, p.55.
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- ¹⁰ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London, 1991, p.24.
- ¹¹ P. Gurney, 'The Sublime of the Bazaar: A Movement in the Making of a Consumer Culture in Mid-Nineteenth Century England'. *Journal of Social History*, vol. 40, 2006, p.387.
- ¹² P. Gurney, p.389.
- ¹³ P. Gurney, p.389.
- ¹⁴ P. Gurney, p.390.
- ¹⁵ J. Nye, p.1.
- ¹⁶ K.E. Lokke, 'The Role of Sublimity in the Development of Modernist Aesthetics'. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 40, June 1982, p.424.
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Modes of Hoping and the Utopian Impulse

Darren Webb

Abstract: The paper develops a conceptual framework for studying the different modes in which human hope can be experienced and the ways in which these articulate with the utopian impulse. The framework comprises three key concepts: 1) Modes of Hoping: Hope is a socially mediated human capacity. Different individuals and social classes, at different historical junctures, embedded in different social relations, enjoying different opportunities and facing different constraints, will experience hope in different ways; 2) Collective Emotional Orientation: The collective emotional orientation of a society is shaped, framed and organised by the dissemination of core ideas, beliefs, myths and collective memories through such channels as public political discourse, the education system, the media, art and literature. Different modes of hoping predominate within the collective emotional orientation of a society at different historical points; 3) Utopian Clusters: Utopian clusters are spatio-temporal concentrations of utopian activity characterised by a proliferation of utopian texts, some at least of which capture the public political imagination. When critical or transformative hope predominate within the collective emotional orientation of a society or social group, utopian clusters are likely to emerge as both a product and a source of hope.

Key words: hope; utopia; collective emotional orientation.

1. Introduction

Within utopian studies, the word 'hope' is used a lot. Utopian texts are variously described as "figures of hope," "visions of hope" and "objects of shared hope."¹ As a mode of praxis, utopianism is similarly described as "a movement of hope."² Kumar identifies hope as the source of the vitality of the utopian tradition, and Lasky sees utopia as a constant link in "the great chain of human hope."³ It has been argued that "all utopias are driven by hope" whilst at the same time functioning to "stir up" and "inspire" it.⁴ Some suggest that "political hope is always somehow utopian" and that "a world without utopias would be a world without social hope."⁵ For all these reasons, Desroche describes utopia and hope as "twin sisters."⁶

More often than not, however, the relationship between utopia and hope is simply assumed, and the dynamics of this relationship are left unexplored. A great deal of time is spent agonising over definitions of utopia, but little attention is paid to the question of human hope. It is almost taken for granted that we know what it is. In other areas, however, the past two decades have witnessed a renewed interest in hope as a category of human

experience. A large body of literature -contributions to what can be termed “hope theory” - has developed within the fields of philosophy, theology, history, anthropology, sociology, political science, psychology, nursing studies and neuro-biology. Within this literature, the nature and characteristics of hope are highly contested. It is certainly *not* something that can be taken for granted. The aim of the present essay is to begin - in an exploratory manner and in outline form - the process of integrating the fields of hope theory and utopian studies. I want to bring the two bodies of literature together and develop a conceptual framework for studying the different modes in which human hope can be experienced and the ways in which these articulate with the utopian impulse.

2. Modes of Hoping and their Utopian Configuration

An important initial distinction can be made between two sets of questions; those concerning the nature of hope (what hope *is*) and those concerning its characteristics (what it is *to* hope). Regarding the former, hope is variously designated an emotion, a cognitive process, an existential stance, a state of being, a disposition, a state of mind, an emotion which resembles a state of mind, an instinct, impulse or intuition, a subliminal “sense,” a formed habit, a “sociohormone,” some complex, multifaceted affective-cognitive-behavioural phenomenon, or, quite simply, a mystery. In reality here, there are two principal contrasting perspectives. The first sees hope as a human universal, an anthropological constant explicable in terms of evolutionary biology or divine grace. Schumacher, for example, argues that “the human being is incapable of not hoping,” whilst for Mandel, “hope belongs to the hard, unchangeable core of our anthropological specificity.”⁷ The second sees hope as a socially constructed pattern of behaviour. The notion that hope has any biological basis is rejected and evidence is cited to suggest that some humans are indeed capable of not hoping. For Snyder, hope is a learned thinking pattern and “people lack hope, therefore, because they were not taught to think in this manner.”⁸

A more nuanced approach would see hope as *both* biologically rooted *and* socially constructed. It is possible to accept without too much difficulty the claim that hope is a chemical reaction taking place in a neural circuit, the circuit having being selected for because it proved better than others at solving some adaptive problems faced by our ancestors.⁹ Whilst hope may well belong to our anthropological core, the form it takes - the mode in which it manifests - at any particular time, in any particular culture, within any particular group, is the result of a complex process of social mediation. In terms of the neural circuitry that makes it possible, hope is indeed an innate “human universal.” In terms of the specific mode of experiencing hope that manifests as a result of the interaction of this circuitry

with the human environment, it is also a socially constructed pattern of behaviour. Hoping is essentially and biologically part of what it is to be human, but our essential human capacities can be suppressed and negated and they can manifest in different ways.

This leads on to the second set of questions, concerning the *characteristics* of hope. Many theorists - Bernard Dauenhauer, John Patrick Day, Rick Snyder, to name but a few - strive to identify *the* defining characteristics of hope. For them, hope seems to be a singular, undifferentiated experience. As has just been suggested, however, it seems reasonable to view hope as a socially mediated human capacity. Understood in this way, different individuals and social classes, at different historical junctures, embedded in different social relations, enjoying different opportunities and facing different constraints, will experience hope in different ways. In short, there are different *modes* of hoping.

This idea in itself is not new. Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope*, for example, offers a lengthy meditation on the various modes in which human hope has become manifest. Bloch is right, furthermore, to characterise hope as an experiential process with differentiated cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions. Problems arise, however, when one considers the relationship between hope and utopia. For Bloch reads a utopian function into almost every act of hope. Even the weakest hope, he says, outstrips its mundane, limited content and "essentially refers" to the utopian All.¹⁰ A different reading is offered here, in which a clear distinction is made between utopian, non-utopian and anti-utopian modes of hoping.

This idea is best explored with reference to the taxonomy of modes of hoping (see Appendix). Broadly defined, hope can be seen as an active orientation toward some future good. Within this broad definition, however, the objective and activity of hope are open to various interpretations. Here, it seems to me that many of the *competing* conceptions of hope are in fact *complementary*. They are each in some sense right and each capture something about what it is to hope. Human beings have concrete experiences like those described by Marcel and they would rightly call them hope. Human beings have concrete experiences like those described by Moltmann and Snyder and Rorty and, in each case, they would rightly call them hope. Taken as a whole, then, the various conceptions constitute a kind of phenomenology of hope. They capture something of the range of conscious experiences that could, and do, go by that name. More than simply a variable concept, then, hope is seen as a highly differentiated experience, the characteristics of which the various conceptualisations each, in part, help us to grasp.

The five tables contained in the Appendix outline the utopian configuration of each mode of hoping. When people hope estimatively or resolutely, these modes of hoping will neither drive nor be carried by the

utopian impulse. The hopes of the estimative hoper are too much tapered to reality, too concerned with the question of what is possible within existing constraints. Whilst the word “utopia” may enter the language of estimative hope, the referent here will be nothing more than a set of “realistic” ameliorative reforms. The hopes of the resolute hoper, meanwhile, are too individualistic, too bound to a sense of personal self-efficacy. To hope in this mode is to perceive oneself as capable of achieving, sometimes against the odds but always within the existing order of things, personal goals such as academic, sporting or financial success. These hopes aren’t necessarily *anti-utopian*. It is more that utopia, understood in Levitas’ terms as the imaginary reconstitution of society, simply would not enter the cognitive, affective or behavioural radar of the hoper.¹¹

The case of patient hope is somewhat different. People hoping in this mode would actually resist and negate the utopian impulse. In both the religious sense described by Marcel and the secular sense described by Dauenhauer, patient hope dismisses utopianism as a species of presumptuous impatience. To hope in this mode is to take one’s time, to face the future with courageous patience, to stand firm and abide, securely confident that a solution to life’s trials will, through the agency of some trusted Other, be found. Only in its critical mode - in which hope is experienced as a passionate suffering and restless longing for that which is missing - and in its transformative mode - epitomised by Gutierrez’s claim that to hope is to experience the world as open to collective human design, and history as an adventure - only in these modes will hope truly drive the utopian impulse.

Within utopian studies, it is common to distinguish between “blueprint” and “process” utopianism. Utopianism of the former kind is representational, prescriptive, and instrumental. Utopianism of the latter kind is heuristic and exploratory, more concerned with process than content, centred more around the wish-full act of imagining than the will-full act of political transformation.¹² Analysed in these terms, critical hope is commensurate with utopianism conceived as a deterritorialising exploratory process; whilst transformative hope is both grounded in and can serve to carry wilful, instrumental utopian praxis. Thus, when one looks behind, beneath and beyond the assumed correlation between hope and utopia, one finds that hope is a complex phenomenon which is sometimes divorced from the utopian impulse, sometimes negates it and sometimes carries it in different ways.

3. Collective Emotional Orientation and Utopian Clusters

The Israeli social psychologist Daniel Bar-Tal suggests that we can talk of “cultural-societal” emotions as well as individual ones, and he argues that “societies may develop collective emotional orientations.”¹³ His own

work focuses on the collective emotional orientation of Israeli society, which he argues is dominated by fear. Utilising and adapting this concept, it may well be that different *modes of hoping* predominate within the collective emotional orientation of a society at different historical points. It is well noted that some times and spaces have been, and are, more “utopian” than others. Utopian ideas and movements have thrived, and in some cases have had a profound social and political impact, in certain societies at certain times. I use the term “utopian clusters” to refer to spatio-temporal concentrations of utopian activity characterised by a proliferation of utopian texts, some at least of which capture the public political imagination. The spatio-temporal pattern of utopian clusters has never really been explored. The suggestion here is that a necessary, though not necessarily sufficient, condition for the emergence of utopian clusters is the inscription within the institutions of social life of the cognitive-affective dimensions of critical and/or transformative hope. When critical or transformative hope predominate within the collective emotional orientation of a society or social group, utopia is likely to operate as both a product and a source of hope.

Take transformative hope as an example. The existence of a liberating utopia would not be enough to mobilise this mode of hoping. Rather, the liberating utopia, were it to become an objective of hope, would emerge from and feed back into the collective emotional orientation of the respective society. According to Bar-Tal, the collective emotional orientation of a society is shaped, framed and organised by the dissemination of core ideas, beliefs, myths and collective memories through such channels as public political discourse, the education system, the media, art and literature. Through these channels, society members learn how to feel, appraise, express, and behave in accordance with, particular emotions. For transformative hope to predominate within the collective emotional orientation of a society, one would expect to find its cognitive-affective dimensions - a sense of possibility, and a profound confidence in human capacities - embedded in the institutions of social life.

The social embeddedness of the cognitive-affective dimensions of transformative hope may then serve to drive the instrumental, reterritorialising utopian impulse. If one looks, for example, at mid-seventeenth century England, early-nineteenth century France, late-nineteenth century America, these great utopian clusters were each preceded, of course, by decades of economic dislocation, social unrest, political upheaval. This factor alone, however, is not enough to explain why utopianism thrived to the extent that it did. A key additional factor in explaining why utopianism thrived in these periods is that each was preceded by decades during which a sense of possibility and a profound confidence in collective human endeavour had indeed become inscribed within the institutions of social life. Transformative hope had become an integral part of

the collective emotional orientation of these societies at these historical junctures. This then ensured that utopian ideas became shared utopian dreams and that large numbers of hoping subjects became committed, in the behavioural domain, to goal-directed social praxis.

Applying this conceptual framework would be a major undertaking. It would take a great deal of work properly to explore the collective emotional orientation of mid-seventeenth century England or late nineteenth century America and then to examine the way in which utopianism both emerged from and fed back into this collective emotional orientation. Nonetheless, looking at the relationship between utopia and hope in this way could, I think, prove useful. For example, it can help us understand the widely-noted exhaustion of utopian energies in contemporary life. This exhaustion has little to do with a lack of utopian ideas, for there are plenty out there. The problem is that these ideas singularly fail to capture the public political imagination. There are various reasons for this, but lack of hope is not one of them. For hope *does* still have a place in our collective emotional orientation, and necessarily so. Capitalism requires that individuals study, sell their labour power, consume, save and invest. The reproduction of capitalist relations of exploitation thus requires that individuals possess some form of hope.¹⁴ The important thing here is the *modes* of hoping that predominate within our collective emotion orientation. Even the most cursory analysis of public political discourse, media output and the education system would indicate that these are the estimative hope of the risk assessment, the resolute hope of the individual striving for purely personal goals, and the patient hope courageously directed toward the activities of some trusted Other. The revitalisation of utopianism may thus depend, not on more or better utopias being written and disseminated, but rather on the institutions of social life being reconstituted so that they once again foster critical and transformative hope. On this basis, a utopian politics would operate less at the level of propagating utopian ideas and more at the level of establishing the hopeful preconditions for utopian ideas to thrive.

4. Conclusion

Utopian studies is a vibrant, expanding interdisciplinary field of inquiry. A key motif within the field - discussed repeatedly though only superficially - is human hope. Hope theory is a vibrant, expanding multidisciplinary field of inquiry. Research in this field has the potential to contribute immensely to our understanding of the cognitive-affective underpinnings of the utopian impulse. The present paper has sought briefly to outline how the two fields can be brought together in order to inform each other. Structured around three main concepts - modes of hoping, collective emotional orientation, and utopian clusters - the paper has attempted to

provide a framework for studying the dialectical interplay between hope and utopia.

Notes

¹T. Moylan, *Demand the Impossible*, London, Methuen, 1986, p. 1; E. McKenna, *The Task of Utopia*, Lanham MD, Rowman and Littlefield, 2001, p. 1; J. Cartwright, 'From Aquinas to Zwelethemba: A Brief History of Hope,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 592, 2004, p. 176.

²V. Fournier, 'Utopianism and the Cultivation of Possibilities: Grassroots Movements of Hope,' in M. Parker (ed), *Utopia and Organization*, Oxford, Blackwell, 2002, p. 192.

³K. Kumar, *Utopianism*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 1991; M. Lasky, *Utopia and Revolution*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1976.

⁴D. Halpin, *Hope and Education: The Role of the Utopian Imagination*, London, RoutledgeFalmer, 2003, p. 148; I. Sarakinsky, 'Utopia as Political Theory,' *Politikon*, 20, 1993, pp. 111-125.

⁵M. Zournazi, *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*, New York, Routledge, 2002, p. 38; M. Šimečka, 'A World With Utopias or Without Them?' in P. Alexander and R. Gill (eds), *Utopias*, London, Duckworth, 1984, pp. 174-5.

⁶H. Desroche, *The Sociology of Hope*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, p. 23.

⁷B. Schumacher, *A Philosophy of Hope*, New York, Fordham University Press, 2003, p. 147; E. Mandel, 'Anticipation and Hope as Categories of Historical Materialism,' *Historical Materialism*, 10, 2002, p. 247.

⁸C. R. Snyder, 'Hope Theory: Rainbows in the Mind,' *Psychological Inquiry*, 13, 2002, p. 253.

⁹S. Maier and L. Watkins, 'The Neurobiology of Stressor Controllability,' in J. Gillham (ed), *The Science of Optimism and Hope*, Radnor PENN, Templeton Foundation Press, 2000; L. Tiger, *Optimism: The Biology of Hope*, London, Secker and Warburg, 1979.

¹⁰E. Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Cambridge MA, MIT Press, 1995, p. 112.

¹¹R. Levitas, 'The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society: Utopia as Method,' in T. Moylan and R. Baccolini (eds), *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming*, Oxford, Peter Lang, 2007.

¹²R. Levitas, 'For Utopia: The (Limits of the) Utopian Function in Late Capitalist Society,' in B. Goodwin (ed), *The Philosophy of Utopia*, London, Frank Cass, 2001.

¹³ D. Bar-Tal, 'Why does fear override hope in societies engulfed by intractable conflict, as it does in the Israeli society?' *Political Psychology*, 22, 2001, pp. 601-627.

¹⁴ J. Braithwaite, 'Emancipation and Hope,' *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 592, 2004, pp. 79-98; G. Hage, 'On the Side of Life—Joy and the Capacity of Being,' in M. Zournazi, *Hope: New Philosophies for Change*, London, Lawrence and Wishart, 2002, pp. 150-171.

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Appendix: A Taxonomy of Modes of Hoping

Table 1. Patient hope

Representative theorists and texts	1. G. Marcel, <i>Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope</i> , New York, Harper and Row, 1962. 2. B. Dauenhauer, <i>The Politics of Hope</i> , London, Routledge, 1986.
Objective of hope	<i>Unrepresentable</i> : hope directed toward an objective that is so open and generalised - in the end all shall be well, our status as wayfarers ultimately makes sense - as to defy any attempt to map it.
Cognitive-affective dimension of hope	<i>Secure trust</i> : hope is a basic trust in the goodness of the world, which affords a sense of safety and security.
Behavioural dimension of hope	<i>Courageous patience</i> : hope is other-directed. To hope is to be patient and stand firm, to place one's trust in the behavioural activity of an Other, and to await an unforeseen future.
Utopian configuration of hope	<i>Anti-utopian hope</i> : hope transcends desire and imagination and rejects all modes of utopia as species of presumptuous impatience.

Table 2. Critical hope

Representative theorists and texts	1. E. Bloch, <i>The Principle of Hope</i> , Cambridge MA, MIT Press, 1995 2. J. Moltmann, <i>A Theology of Hope</i> , London, SCM Press, 1967.
Objective of hope	<i>Negation of the negative:</i> hope directed toward the ultimum novum of a world without hunger, oppression and humiliation but which defies the hypostasis of 'closed' or 'final' representation.
Cognitive-affective dimension of hope	<i>Passionate longing:</i> hope is a passionate suffering and restless longing for that which is missing.
Behavioural dimension of hope	<i>Social criticism:</i> the forward pull of the ultimum novum is experienced as the compulsion to critically negate the conditions giving rise to present misery and the sense of unfulfilment.
Utopian configuration of hope	<i>Critical utopian hope:</i> a deterritorialising processive hope which emphasises future-oriented critical thought but refuses to focus on a static final goal.

Table 3. Estimative hope

Representative theorists and texts	1. J. P. Day, <i>Hope: A Philosophical Analysis</i> , Helsinki, Philosophical Society of Finland, 1991. 2. L. Bovens, 'The Value of Hope,' <i>Philosophy and Phenomenological Research</i> , 59, 1999, pp. 667-681.
Objective of hope	<i>Future-oriented significant desire:</i> hope directed toward an object of desire which is future-oriented and deemed to be of significance to the hoper.
Cognitive-affective dimension of hope	<i>Mental imaging + probability estimate:</i> hope is the belief that one's desired objective is possible of attainment (probability $>0 < 1$), founded on a careful study of the evidence.
Behavioural dimension of hope	<i>Possible goal-directed action in some cases:</i> some hopes may be worth the risk of actively pursuing if, on the basis of one's probability estimate, these are deemed more than fair gambles.
Utopian configuration of hope	<i>Non-utopian hope:</i> hopes grounded in a careful study of 'the way things are'. Goal pursuit will tend to reproduce reality and is unlikely to be transformative, either personally or socially.

Table 4. Resolute hope

Representative theorists and texts	1. C. R. Snyder (ed), Handbook of Hope, San Diego, Academic Press, 2000. 2. P. Pettit, 'Hope and its Place in Mind,' <i>The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i> , 592, 2004, pp. 152-165.
Objective of hope	<i>Future-oriented significant desire:</i> hope directed toward an object of desire which is future-oriented and deemed to be of significance to the hoper.
Cognitive-affective dimension of hope	<i>Mental imaging + cognitive resolve:</i> hope is the resolve to set aside one's evidence-based beliefs and perceive oneself as capable of deriving pathways to desired goals and motivating oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways.
Behavioural dimension of hope	<i>Goal-directed action in cases of less than fair gambles:</i> the hoper strives to realise goals that the estimative hoper would have dismissed as less than fair gambles.
Utopian configuration of hope	<i>Non-utopian hope:</i> American Dream-like self-efficacious private hope. This may be personally transformative yet socially conservative.

Table 5. Transformative hope

Representative theorists and texts	1. G. Gutiérrez, <i>A Theology of Liberation</i> , London: SCM Press, 2001 2. R. Rorty, <i>Philosophy and Social Hope</i> , London, Penguin, 1999.
Objective of hope	<i>Shared utopian dreams</i> : hope directed toward a historical plan for a qualitatively different society, a liberating utopia shared by members of a collectivity.
Cognitive-affective dimension of hope	<i>Mental imaging + profound confidence</i> : hope is a sense of possibility grounded in a profound confidence in the capacity of human beings to construct, both imaginatively and materially, new ways of organising life.
Behavioural dimension of hope	<i>Mutually-efficacious social praxis</i> : hope is a commitment to goal-directed social praxis through which human beings become the agents of their own destiny and willfully strive to create a new and better society.
Utopian configuration of hope	<i>Transformative utopian hope</i> : a reterritorialising hope which moves beyond open-ended critique and emphasises the necessity of transforming society in light of the liberating utopia.

The Spirit of Hope and Its Near Enemy Indifference: A Phenomenological Continuum

Janette E. McDonald

Abstract: A juxtaposition of hope and hopelessness is evident in our contemporary lived experience. Regardless of what part of the world we live in, what social class we belong to, whatever our gender, age, religious or spiritual convictions, there are places where we experience hope, hopelessness, and indifference. Hope and hopelessness are close and intimate companions. To borrow from Buddhist thought the near enemy of hope is indifference.¹ Utilizing phenomenology as a method for understanding one's life-world this paper explores the phenomena of hope, hopelessness, and indifference. Questions addressed: What are hope, hopelessness, and indifference? What motivates people to be hopeful? What are some consequences of indifference? Is it possible to sustain hope? As a way to grasp these phenomena I suggest they are part of a continuum. This paper explores their placement on that continuum and attempts to provide a contextual reason for that placement. Through an etymology of the words *spiritus* and *pneuma*, I suggest that all people are *spiritual* because of their necessity to breathe. The breath or *spirit* that resides within each of us is suggested as the rudimentary seed for hope. Attention is given to Frankl's work on meaning and connections are given to Buddhist thought.

Key words: hope, indifference, meaning, phenomenology, Four Noble Truths, spiritual

1. Introduction

Few might question that our world is in a sorry state of affairs and that the prospects of a better and brighter future seem dim in light of our world's challenges, not the least of which include famine, armed conflict, environmental devastation, and a general erosion of our moral compasses. Indeed there is suffering and despair in our contemporary world. To suggest an alternative, yet cautious view, Viktor Frankl poses the Latin term, *argumenta ad hominem* or an argument for tragic optimism, and he attributes such optimism to the "...defiant power of the human spirit".² For many, the defiant power of our human spirit is where we find our quintessential seeds of hope for a better and more humane future.

Through a phenomenological lens this paper investigates three experiences endemic to the human condition; the state and human experience of being hopeful, hopeless, and indifferent. Furthermore, these phenomena will be explored as a continuum of human experience. Frankl's classic works on meaning and the Buddhist teachings of The Four Noble Truths serve as

the theoretical foundations of my three major premises: 1) to be hopeful is a natural human phenomenon with spiritual implications; 2) a hopeless situation often although not always serves as an impetus for human hope, and 3) indifference, hope's near enemy, may be the greatest way to diminish humanity and human dignity. To provide a contextual understanding of this continuum the following questions are addressed: What are hope, indifference, and hopelessness? What part does spirituality play in one's hopefulfulness, hopelessness, and indifference? Is it possible to sustain or learn these? How does one change her place on the continuum? And why is hope worthy of further dialogue?

2. **Being: a Phenomenological Perspective**

Phenomenologists are interested in the essence of one's subjective lived experience, directly within the context of one's conscious being in the world. Being then is a part of each phenomenon I mention on my continuum. If one describes herself as hopeful, indifferent, or hopeless, she is describing her way of being in her lived world. Heidegger,³ in his classic philosophical work, offers a more detailed discussion on being-in the world which far exceeds the limited intentions of this paper. Heidegger, however, renowned for his rigorous and arduous philosophy on being, also included among his personal readings the works of Zen masters.⁴

This is worthy of one's attention because all practicing Buddhists place an emphasis on meditation, and the practice of meditation in the Zen tradition is intended to bring one closer to full awareness of being, whatever that moment of being is – sitting crossed-legged in the lotus position in a temple, driving a car, cutting vegetables for a meal, or whatever. Beingness here is about full attention and for the enlightened person this being becomes a way of life. I specifically connect Heidegger's writings with classic Zen teachings because Heidegger spent the better part of his philosophical pursuits attempting to address the question, what does it mean to be in the world? In referring to the monumental Japanese scholar and Zen master D.T. Suzuki, Heidegger stated, "If I understand Dr. Suzuki correctly, this is what I have been trying to say in all my writings".⁵ In Suzuki's collected writings, *Zen Buddhism*, the opening chapter begins with the following:

Zen in its essence is the art of seeing into the nature of one's own being, and it points the way from bondage to freedom. By making us drink right from the fountain of life, it liberates us from all the yokes under which we finite beings are usually suffering in this world...This is what I mean by freedom, giving free play to all the creative and benevolent impulses inherently lying in our hearts. Generally we are blind to this fact, that we are in

possession of all the necessary faculties that will make us happy and loving towards one another. All the struggles that we see around us come from this ignorance...when the cloud of ignorance disappears, the infinity of the heavens is manifested where we see for the first time into the nature of our own being.⁶

3. The Continuum

I place the state of indifference in the absolute centre with a quantitative and sole value of zero. Hopelessness would begin to the left of zero with negative one and would continue for infinity. Hope begins to the right of zero with positive one and also continues for infinity. While such an image is much too concrete and simple for the true meaning I wish to convey I find it appropriate that both hopelessness and hope have infinite qualities and indifference remains at the stagnant mid-point with no apparent potential for movement. Obviously, the place that seems most attractive is anywhere to the right of zero in a state of hope. But even a hopeless state has some kind of energy or concern. I see the place of indifference as having none of these.

Furthermore, I have referred to indifference as hope's near enemy because on my continuum it falls closer to hope than does hopelessness. Generally enemies that are near us can cause more destruction and harm as opposed to our enemies that are far in distance. Because the beginning of hopelessness appears at a greater distance from the beginning of hope and continues in an opposite direction it could be called, hope's far enemy.

I have shared this image of a line with several colleagues and some have suggested a different shape to represent the content of each phenomenon. For instance an inverted triangle and a spiral have been mentioned. While I am not particularly wedded to the image of a line as my continuum, my initial thought was that it was the simple and easiest way to explain my ideas, hence thus far in the development of my thinking I have remained with this image.

What is hope?

To have hope is to have a human quality that illuminates meaning and decency regardless of the situational outcome. I define hope as an inner desire, wish or knowing that is often unexplainable and has the potential to improve the situation or future ones for the benefit of others. Where this desire, wish, or inner-knowing of hope comes from is not always clear or of import to the knower, yet the knower knows that somewhere within the deepest fibre of her being hope exists and can even flourish.

Vaclav Havel, the former leader of the Czech Republic states that hope is

...a dimension of the spirit, an orientation of the heart. It transcends the world that is immediately experienced and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizon. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense regardless of how it turns out⁷

Inherent in both our definitions is belief in potentiality and meaning. I use the word belief to mean a thought that holds value, meaning, or significance. Belief is often associated with theological or religious meanings and here my intention is to broaden the definition of hope in a way that transcends specific religiosity. Nonetheless, like Havel, I imply a general spiritual overtone in my definition.

4. **The Etymology of *Spiritus* and *Pneuma***

The word spirit and its derivative, spiritual, come from the Latin *spiritus*, which holds as one definition, the breath of life. Breath is often associated with breathing in. Moreover, the Latin *spiritus*, can trace its origins to the Greek, *pneuma*. I once was taking a graduate course from a catholic priest who noted *pneuma* emphasized both the inhalation and exhalation of breath. In artful and poetic language the priest described the beginning of human life as God's exhalation of breath or spirit in rhythmic motion with human inhalation of that same breath or spirit. The priest noted that the significance of this circuitous rhythm offered a more complete understanding of life's breath because it placed an active role on both God and human kind. A breath is not complete if it is only exhaled. It must also be inhaled. Also according to the priest the image lacks richness if it only accentuates God's exhalation thereby placing the human being in a passive role. In other words, the human inhalation has equal import and completes the circularity of the breathing process. One could argue then, that all human beings are spiritual in the sense that we all breathe in and out the breath or spirit of life. This spirit within each of us is what I suggest is the rudimentary seed for hope and vivifies that quality of potentiality I mentioned a moment ago. Through connecting Frankl's work to this concept I will further emphasize an interrelationship between one's hopefulness and spirituality.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that all Buddhist meditators are first encouraged to place their conscious attention on their breath, and to simply follow their natural breathing pattern by counting their breaths. It is believed that one's concerted attention on the breath can eventually bring one to full awareness of the present and ultimately to the state of enlightenment.

5. **What is Hopelessness?**

I define hopelessness in comparison with hope. Quite simply,

hopelessness is an utter lack of hope. In this human experience one is full of emotions and feelings of anguish and despair. Where having a sense of hope may be unexplainable, one can usually articulate precisely why one is in a hopeless state. Something very bad has happened to them or to someone or something they care about. Often there is an overwhelming sense that nothing humanly possible can be done to ever assuage this feeling or circumstance. When one is hopeless, one is also suffering. One could conclude that there is a deep intensity to hopelessness. It is not lacking in emotions or feelings, as I suggest of indifference, but rather it is thoroughly fraught or laden with them.

A common question asked in the state of hopelessness is why? Why did this happen? Specifically, why did this happen to me? These questions are almost always not helpful in the final resolution of the situation and are often directed toward one's personal God, who or whatever that may be. This question why, can also be paralyzing because there are few if any solid answers. Furthermore, this why question places a focus on events of the past and nothing can be done to recreate one's history. According to Frankl however, one does have some choice about how one responds to the current situation, thereby impacting one's future. By comparison, those who feel hope seem less apt to ask the why question. For them, why does not matter so much, rather they seem to move beyond why to how they might make meaning in life. Moreover, one who is indifferent does not have awareness or care to even ask the question. Interestingly enough, it is often a hopeless situation which precipitates one's movement to a state of being hopeful. Frankl's research and writing seems to affirm this.

6. Frankl's Message of Hope

While Frankl does not offer a detailed explanation or definition of what he means by spiritual, he does imply that one's inner life is a base for one's hope. He writes:

As the inner life of the prisoner tended to become more intense, he also experienced the beauty of art and nature as never before. Under their influence he sometimes even forgot his own frightful circumstances. If someone had seen our faces on the journey from Auschwitz to a Bavarian camp as we beheld the mountains of Salzburg with their summits glowing in the sunset, through the little barred windows of the prison carriage, he would never have believed that those were faces of men who had given up all hope of life and liberty. Despite that factor—or maybe because of it—we were carried away by nature's beauty.⁸

Frankl suggests that through a deepened inner life the prisoners were able to transcend their physical predicament of despair and instead bring their attention to the current moment where they could see and appreciate the stunning beauty of snow capped mountains. Through this description of personal experience Frankl implies that human beings often appear to have a natural or inherent predilection to be hopeful creatures even during times of despair because we seem to have the capability to rise above our own potential for no immediate or explainable reason.

Additionally he notes that survivors of these concentration camps who were able to find meaning in their suffering and forgive their offenders were also able to live more fully once they were liberated. Frankl intimates that prisoners who sustained their hope and maintained their sense of spirituality were better equipped to withstand the atrocities of the camps. Those who lost hope were among the first to perish either by the hands of the SS Soldiers or because of their own physical and emotional demise.

Here I do not mean to suggest that all individuals who had some sense of a spiritual life survived the camps because history tells us this was not the case and Frankl himself admits that "...the best of us did not return".⁹ But according to Frankl, if one did not have this, if one was unable to find some kind of meaning in their experience no matter how horrible, the person was almost certain to die.

In the preface of the 1984 edition of *Man's Search for Meaning*, Frankl explains his purpose for writing his classic work:

I simply wanted to convey to the reader by way of a concrete example that life holds a potential meaning under any condition, even the most miserable ones. And I thought that if the point were demonstrated in a situation as extreme as that in a concentration camp, my book might gain a hearing.¹⁰

I might add that in 1984 his book was in its 73rd printing and had been published in 19 different languages. Those statistics suggest that millions of people around the globe have read Dr. Frankl's words and for me those numbers render a sense of hope simply because they imply that some people appear to have an interest in learning from past tragedies.

7. What is Indifference?

Where hope and hopelessness are full of emotion, indifference lacks it. Where hope and hopelessness often demand some kind of human action, indifference stifles it. Where hope and hopelessness are heartfelt, indifference has no heart. Where hope and hopelessness epitomize our deepest humanity, indifference diminishes it. Its qualities are carelessness,

thoughtlessness, mindlessness, feelinglessness, and perhaps even, humanlessness. It is this diminished human state that creates the potential for personal and global catastrophe because indifferent people standby idle and do nothing, often with callousness and cowardice. Therefore, I suggest that one's state of indifference is an ignorant intersection of vacuity and numbness which reveals itself most conspicuously as apathy.

8. A Connection to Buddhist Thought

All Buddhists acknowledge the Buddha's teachings of the Four Noble Truths: there is suffering in life, suffering comes from our resistance to the natural flow of life, or our cravings; our sufferings can cease; and the Eightfold Path may lead to our individual awakening. The Buddhist path of enlightenment is an active one through meditation and embracing the everyday ordinary moment. Buddhism teaches that the only true reality is the present and that building our conscious awareness of this reveals the Buddha that exists in each one of us. Seeing the Buddha in ourselves allows us to behold the Buddha in others. From the works of Frankl and others, it is indeed difficult to imagine a Buddha in figures like Hitler, some of the SS Soldiers, Idi Amin, and Judas to mention only a few.

While I am not certain if most Buddhists would describe themselves as hopeful, I think most would agree that their way of life offers the potential for hopefulness. Similar to Frankl, Buddhists recognize that life is suffering and while they have no control over this they do have a choice as to how they respond to that suffering through a full presence of the current moment.

Some still may find it inappropriate that I have connected the phenomenon of hope with Buddhist thought since hope often is associated with futuristic tendencies. According to Buddhism, the future is an illusion. It is not real or certain and thinking about it only distances one from the current moment. For Buddhists thinking or desire for a certain kind of future can lead to attachment which manifests further suffering. Nonetheless the Buddha's message is one of intentional liberation and freedom from suffering, as well as compassion, and loving-kindness. For some, these too have futuristic qualities and I suggest that living with the intention to free and liberate oneself and others from suffering offers a more meaningful and hopeful life.

9. The Fading of Hope

Several years ago I heard my father make a cautious analogy that there is the potential for good or evil in most lived experiences. In his effort to impart some of his wisdom my dad asked me to remember that there is a little bit of Judas and Jesus in all of us. To demonstrate his point he then shared a poignant story regarding a legend about Leonardo De Vinci's painting, The Last Supper. Then as now, famous artists employed living

persons to model as figures in their paintings. The legend says the first person De Vinci painted in *The Last Supper* was the figure of Jesus. Evidently he found a handsome young man to model because of his pulchritude, innocence, and exquisite face. Several years later as De Vinci was completing his masterpiece, he was challenged to paint his last figure Judas, because he could not find a person whose face depicted the harsh and vitriolic character he believed Judas to be. Finally someone mentioned there was a criminal in a nearby prison that was of despicable character with an equally hateful face. De Vinci received permission to visit the prisoner's cell for several months as he completed his painting. The legend says that the two never spoke until De Vinci completed his work and was preparing to leave the cell for the last time. As De Vinci was clearing his artistic materials the prisoner is said to have asked the question, "Leonardo do you know who I am?" De Vinci is reported to have said, "Of course I don't know you. I just met you a few months ago when I began painting you in this cell." The prisoner replied, "Leonardo, I am the man you painted several years ago as Jesus."

I do not know if the legend holds any truth, but my father's story has left a lasting impression on me: one's potential for anything is very real. If there is any truth to the legend we can only imagine that something happened to the once graceful young man that allowed him to choose a dark and acrimonious path. I might suggest that something caused his hope to fade in himself and in others, and the result was his own personal tragedy. His placement on my continuum had changed over time and experience.

10. Placement on the Continuum

Placement on the continuum is not a progressive pattern like many developmental stage theories where final stages represent more sophisticated levels of growth. One's personality and disposition coupled with life experiences, societal, environmental, and familial influences all affect one's placement. As noted then by the example of De Vinci's young model, one's placement on the continuum can clearly change and fluctuate in intensities throughout one's life, and I believe that it is possible and even probable to occupy each state at some point during our lives. For example, Frankl described himself as an optimist early in his classic work, yet through his own descriptions of concentration camp experiences he reveals his profound and fluctuating feelings of hopelessness.

What is significant about Frankl and so many others who have experienced tragedy and despair is that they do not remain in a state of hopelessness. According to Frankl, such people have an inner life and are able to see the meaning in all of life's verities and therefore, the meaning in their suffering. In addition, I suggest that one who is indifferent lacks this inner life and personal awareness and therefore cannot appreciate all of life's

meaning. For the indifferent person the way to move from the state of indifference is to develop a sense of personal awareness and self-knowing.

So a reasonable question to ask is how does an unaware person become aware of his being, his life, and his world? From my own experiences of working with dying persons and bereaved family and friends I can attest that some kind of tragedy or loss is often what shakes the very fibre of a person's beingness and moves one toward a personal questioning of what is most significant and important in life. Such questioning can precipitate a profound awareness.

11. How is Hope Sustained?

Hope, like enlightenment is not something one can direct oneself to have, rather hope is recreated and re-lived time and again, moment by moment, breath by breath. Hope is not sustained because hope does not have that kind of directionality. In offering advice to both his American and European students about success and happiness Frankl shares a similar sentiment that could also be said of hope. He states:

Don't aim at success—the more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side-effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person other than oneself.¹¹

12. Why Is Hope Worthy of Further Dialogue?

I return to Heidegger's provocative question of what does it mean to be. As a phenomenologist I see the answer as a subjective and intimately personal one. For many of us, perhaps we could say that our beingness is wrapped in some kind of unique hope and meaning. For me at least part of what it means to be is to hold hope for our world, for each other, and for our future. I see Frankl as suggesting that hope is worthy of further dialogue because it allows us to transcend our individual being to a cause greater than ourselves thereby illustrating the intrinsic dignity of human kind. My intention is not to be overly optimistic or sentimental for even Frankl uses the term, "tragic optimism" yet he clearly states that all of life has meaning and every person holds "unconditional value".¹²

Frankl's message like the Four Noble Truths, is not erudite or illusionary. Rather it is ordinary and simple with indelible and penetrating insight that paves the juxtaposition of both good and evil and mercy and malevolence as potentialities of each moment. As noted earlier in the paper the potential to be hopeful is natural for all human beings, just as the Buddhists believe the potential to be enlightened exists for everyone. I have

attempted to connect these two ideas because both intersect with the phenomenon of a human breath and serve what I have referred to as the quintessential seeds of hope. The individual spirit or breath within each of us determines the choices we make and when we behave in hopeful ways or when we meet our far and near enemies of hopelessness and indifference.

Notes

- ¹ A. Khema, *The Four Highest Emotions*. Shambhala Sun. May, 2001, p. 53.
² V. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Washington Square Press, New York, 1984, p. 171.
³ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, HarperSan Francisco, New York, 1962, p. 17.
⁴ P. Kaplau, *Three Pillars of Zen*, Anchor Books, New York, 2000, p.14.
⁵ D. T. Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism*, Three Leaves Press, New York, p. xii.
⁶ *ibid.*, p. 3-4.
⁷ M. Wheatley, *Finding Hope in Hopelessness*, Shambhala Sun, March, 2004, p. 23.
⁸ Frankl, *op. cit.*, p. 59.
⁹ *ibid.*, p. 24.
¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 16.
¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 17.
¹² *ibid.*, p.176.

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The Scandalously Impure: Hope for Transcending Cultural Norms

Ariella Linovski

Abstract: In Judith Butler's *Antigone's Claim*, Butler makes a distinction between two uses of language to critique discourse, *oppositional purity* and the *scandalously impure*. Oppositional purity suggests a way of critiquing discourse without harming one's self, while the scandalously impure implies that the critiquing of discourse might result in a scandal, a radical transfiguration of the law by refusing to operate within it. In this paper, I suggest that challenging pre-existing discourses from within can be equally dangerous as putting one's self outside of discourses altogether, although there is less hope of reconstructing cultural norms. I use the example of the *Free Muslims Coalition Against Terrorism*, an organization of American Arabs and Muslims who disassociate themselves from "radical Muslim fundamentalists", to illustrate the implications of oppositional purity, including its negative implications on individual's civil liberties. Operating within the confines of the law, the Free Muslims Coalition accepts their position as a racial subject by failing to recognize that the symbol of the terrorist, the word terrorist itself, is related to a predetermined ethnic hierarchy. The theoretical framework of this paper critiques Lacanian thought because although it recognizes the function of language, it causes difficulty in conceiving a past and a future where the roles of terrorists have been or will be defined as inconsistent to the Free Muslims Coalition's description. In contrast, Butler's conceptualization of Antigone's politics as scandalously impure, illustrates that reconstructing cultural norms is possible. Antigone's reconfiguration of the institutions of kinship and gender provides hope in transcending structuralist universality, which assumes cultural codes can't be altered. As such, I place kinship and terrorism alongside each other in order to demonstrate that adopting the language of institutions can be used to critique institutions themselves, thus widening the potential for challenging oppressive discourses.

Key words: Judith Butler, Antigone, Sophocles, cultural norms, terrorism, gender, institutions, post-structuralism

The Free Muslims Coalition believes that:

Fundamentalist Islamic terror represents one of the most lethal threats to the stability of the civilized world. The existence of Islamic terrorists is the existence of threats to

democracy. There is no room for terrorism in the modern world and the United States should take a no-tolerance stance on terrorism in order to avoid another tragedy, along the lines of 9-11. With the added threat of biochemical weapons, the call to defeat terrorism has never been so urgent.

This quote taken from the Free Muslims Coalition's website is a clarification of their position towards terrorism. Is the Free Muslims Coalition, a group of American Arabs and Muslims, at risk for disassociating themselves from Islamic militant terrorism? Are they at risk of being labelled Anti-Islam by the Muslim community?

In *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death*, Judith Butler makes a distinction between the uses of language and their different outcomes. Language can be used to either challenge the rule of the law or challenge the rule of the law by assuming sovereignty through radical means, thus replacing the law itself. Butler's argument assumes however, that we can trace all networks attached to a given discourse to determine whether we are rebelling from within it or outside of it. Starting with her assumption however, I would like to suggest that challenging pre-existing discourses from within can be equally dangerous as putting one's self outside of the discourse altogether, although there might be less hope for re-constructing cultural norms. In addition, I would like to support a second articulation by Butler, that not all forms of critique have the potential of re-constructing cultural norms. Butler's very notion that re-construction is possible however, transcends structuralist universality that assumes cultural codes can't be altered, based on the premise that rules themselves are fixed. This raises a question, if Antigone were fully accepting the language of the state to challenge gender and kinship norms, what value would this act have? I will use the example of the Free Muslims Coalition to explore this idea.

Butler writes of Antigone's heroism that, "She speaks, and speaks in public precisely when she ought to be sequestered in the private domain."¹ Similarly, the Free Muslims Coalition claims that they are speaking out in public against terrorism. They claim that they are being sequestered by the Muslim community but what would be the reason for threatening the Free Muslims Coalition? The Free Muslims Coalition argues that "the message disseminated by radical Muslims is that merely discussing Islamic terrorism is to be construed as an attack on Islam."² The Free Muslims Coalition addresses one discourse that they are challenging, the discourse of Islamic fundamentalist terrorism, but they begin with many assumptions which come from other discursive practices.

In stating that, "terror represents one of the most lethal threats to the stability of the civilized world" and that "there is no room for terrorism in the

modern world and the United States should take a no-tolerance stance on terrorism,”³ The Free Muslims Coalition begins with a multitude of constructions that were developed through an authoritative discourse, not through natural law. This leads to a series of assumptions. The Free Muslims Coalition assumes that the United States is civilized and the Muslim world is not. They assume that the United States would otherwise be “stable” without the existence of terrorism. They assume force must be used by the state to control terrorism. They assume that this terrorism does not come from the state itself. They assume immediacy is necessary to prevent future suffering. And lastly they assume that there is a single type of terrorism, a radical one that is a threat to the United States.

While this rhetoric comes from the Bush Administration’s post-September 11th discourse, it should not be explained according to a Lacanian interpretation. A Lacanian configuration of terrorism would provide a similar outcome to Butler’s account of Lacanian kinship where the symbolic account of kinship is “severed from the social, thus freezing the social arrangements of kinship as something intact and intractable.”⁴ The relationship between terror and the state would be merely a function of language. This suggests there is no hope for a transgression of the current social relations of terror. Although the function of language is recognizable, it is difficult to conceive a past and a future where the roles of terrorists have been or will be defined as inconsistent to the Free Muslims Coalition’s description.

According to Brigitte Nacos however in *Mass-Mediated Terrorism: The Central Role of the Media in Terrorism and Counter-terrorism*, terrorism was originally conceived in the 18th century as actions by the state against its citizens. For example, its usage was applied to the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution, when terrorism meant mass guillotining the nobility who were considered a threat to the state. During the 19th century this definition expanded to include violence against the state, such as the assassination of politicians by anarchists. It was only in the 20th century that terrorism came to mean political violence by non-state actors.⁵ This most recent definition of terrorism is how the Bush administration and the Coalition conceive it, not as merely a threat to the state but also as a threat to the mass public. But not any mass public, as the Free Muslims Coalition writes, “a threat to the civilized world.” The order of this civilized world is defined and controlled by an authority, an authority similar to Creon’s character in *Antigone’s Claim*. Creon attempts to maintain his definition of civilization by prohibiting the burial of Polyneices, who defied civilization by leading an army against his own brother’s regime in Thebes.⁶

The Coalition adopts a 20th century definition of “terror” as a cause to call for action. Action would result in security, a hopeful feeling that the threat is controlled. Perhaps the Coalition’s intent is to reject the discourse that all Muslims are terrorists, but most evident is their attempt to distinguish

themselves from the bad apples. Rejecting this claim will save them; rather than cause them to comply with the discourse of Islamic terrorism. Compromising sovereignty and civil liberties is well worth the sacrifice, as protection by the American state is guaranteed. Police protocols for interrogating suspects will save the Free Muslims Coalition along with other civilized Americans from the imminent threat of terrorism.

The reality of what such state protection might entail is disregarded however. Codes for racial profiling, as identified by the American Civil Liberties Union⁷, the practice of searching for suspects who are DWB, driving while brown for example, does not discriminate between good Muslims or bad Muslims, let alone different religious or cultural groups at all. Perhaps sacrificing civil liberties then, along with the willingness to face so-called threats is equally harmful to the Free Muslims Coalition as a statement which would refuse the existence of terror altogether.

Operating within the confines of the law, the Free Muslims Coalition accepts their position as a racial subject, given their failure to recognize that the symbol of the terrorist, the word terrorist itself, is related to an ethnic hierarchy constructed by the law. In addition to reinforcing the power of the ethnic majority, the state's concern is with security rather than the protection of individual civil liberties. The promotion of a "no tolerance policy" towards terrorism by the Free Muslims Coalition then results in the ethnic minority's promotion of stereotyping, exploiting, abusing and committing acts of violence against themselves. Adhering to structuralist thought is particularly problematic here because the Free Muslims Coalition produces the state's power and disallows themselves to have any individual capacity to dissent against it.

But are these perceived consequences of the Free Muslims Coalitions statement, not a product of another discourse that assumes subjects have the power to control their own civil liberties? Does this idea of critique not come from a discourse which abides by the rules, or non-rules of radical feminist theory, post-structuralism or post-colonial theory? This aside, it cannot be denied that the Coalition's adoption of state language may be a tactic for future rebellion and a means to eventually step outside of the discourse. For we can only see what is spoken and we can not predict the deed. Butler's description of Antigone's act as political is useful for understanding how one might adopt repressive language for the purpose of deconstructing norms. Specifically, Butler writes that Antigone "absorbs the very language of the state against which she rebels, and hers becomes a politics not of oppositional purity but of the scandalously impure."⁸

Butler's distinction between oppositional purity and the scandalously impure implies that there is a way of critiquing discourse without harming one's self, oppositional purity. In contrast to oppositional purity, the scandalously impure suggests that the critiquing of discourse

might result in a scandal, a radical transfiguration of the law by refusing to operate within it. According to Butler then, Antigone's politics are not noteworthy because she merely opposes the state from within its acceptable discourse, but rather, her rebellion, her self-desubjectification is a politically sovereign act that defies norms of gender and kinship.

Antigone rejects her gender and kinship roles through language in two ways: by not denying her act of burying her brother and by not claiming it either. Butler argues that Antigone refuses to be forced into denial through the other's language.⁹ While Antigone refuses to be forced into denial, the Free Muslims Coalition flat out denies any affiliation with terrorism. Perhaps Butler would view the Free Muslims Coalition as a form of oppositional purity and as such, having minimal potential to change the Bush Administration's construction of terrorism. If this is the case, would it be possible to redefine terrorism, while refusing to be part of it or admitting to it altogether? It seems this would be unachievable, unless the language of authority was used to change conceptualizations of the terrorist.

While Butler does not explain the consequences of oppositional purity, she explains the consequences of Antigone's scandalous impurity. Not only is Antigone's gender role reversed as an outcome, but so is Creon's, as indicated by Butler.¹⁰ Creon becomes unmanned when speaking to Antigone and Antigone becomes manly for asserting herself. Butler thus argues against Hegel's argument that Antigone's deed represents kinship and Creon's deed represents the state because Antigone and Creon both experience a change in gender roles. More specifically, the way the characters are gendered are in relation to each other and are co-dependant on one and another. The characters' genders are both malleable, and if Creon's manliness would be fixed as a representative of the state, then his manliness would not be displaced in the play. This is not the case however and gender becomes radically independent of sex and dependant on power instead.

Butler's examination of Antigone's masculinity and Creon's unmanning is demonstrative of Butler's argument in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, that "man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one."¹¹ Similarly, it is conceivable that terrorism might just as easily signify the state as it might Muslims, and democracy might as easily signify Muslims as it might the state. In Antigone's claim, Butler's choice of language is an attempt to broaden such possibilities of signification. Butler's choice to use "unmanning and manly" for example, avoids the implication of unmanliness and femininity as binary opposites, where each word is culturally linked to only one out of two types of bodies. Avoiding this binary allows Butler to avoid the assumption that Creon is feminine when being unmanned. Instead, it asserts that another

gender might exist altogether and that it is indeed possible for each person to have multiple genders.

Meanwhile, the Free Muslims Coalition works within a binary identity of being Muslim. That binary identity is to be a terrorist or not to be a terrorist. There is no suggestion that every person might in fact be a terrorist in some way, that no Muslims are terrorists, or that terrorism is a discursive or cultural means by which Muslims are produced. In other words, just as Butler suggests that gender is a discursive practice that produces sex, the way we know Muslims can only be understood as a result of our knowledge of terrorism.

To value the Free Muslims Coalition's rejection of terrorism is unsettling because it is ultimately self-destructive. Its tragedy is that it doesn't challenge oppressive law, (from the limited portion of the discourse that is observable to us) and it produces a Muslim identity that can be only understood by its relationship to terrorism. As the end product, the Free Muslims Coalition faces "a social death," what Butler describes as "the status of being a living being radically deprived of all rights that are supposed to be accorded to any and all living human beings."¹² While Antigone ultimately faces death for operating outside of the boundaries of gender and kinship, it is a death that is welcomed based on principle. In addition, it is comforting to know that her deed and her language rejected the constraining institutions of kinship and gender. If then, both modes of opposition, oppositional purity and the scandalously impure, result ostensibly in tragedy, the tragedy which has the potential to re-configure structural norms in the process seems to be no tragedy at all.

Notes

¹ J Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*, Columbia Press, New York, 2002, p. 4

² Free Muslim Coalition Against Terrorism, *Our Positions: Terrorism*, 2007, last viewed on August 23, 2007

<http://www.freemuslims.org/issues/terrorism.php>

³ Free Muslim Coalition Against Terrorism, op. cit.

⁴ Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*, op. cit., p. 14

⁵ B Nacos, 'Mass-Mediated Terrorism in the New World (Dis)Order,' *Mass-Mediated Terrorism: The Central Role of the Media in Terrorism and Counter-terrorism*, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, 2002, p. 17

⁶ Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*, op. cit., p. 6

⁷ American Civil Liberties Union and the ACLU Foundation, *Racial Profiling: Old and New*, last viewed on August 23, 2007

<http://www.aclu.org/racialjustice/racialprofiling/index.html>

- ⁸ Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship* ⁸ Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*, op. cit., p. 5
- ⁹ Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*, op. cit., p. 8
- ¹⁰ Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*, op. cit., p. 10
- ¹¹ Butler, 'Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire,' *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, New York, 1990, p. 6
- ¹² Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*, op. cit., p. 73

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The Rationality of Hope

Nancy Mardas Billias

Abstract: Kant followed Aristotle in the conviction that what distinguishes humanity from other animals is our capacity for rationality. Thus, Kant frames the fundamental concerns of philosophy as three central, rational questions. The critiques of judgment and of pure and practical reason treat these questions as parallel. However, only the first two are, properly considered, rational. In fact, the relationship between the questions is paradoxical, a point which Kant does not address. I argue that what actually qualifies us as human are three primarily non-rational modes of being: faith, hope, and love. That is, our identities are formed by what we believe, whom we love, and what we hope for. Badiou maintains that “hope is the name of a subject which remains,” that which perdures beyond desubjectification, betrayal, and falsehood, in the “event” of a unique ongoing presence: not the ‘free,’ ‘rational’ myth of the Kantian/modern individual, but an interdependent, transcendent desire. It is my hope that this reframing may be of some use in the post-modern conversation concerning the possibility of ethical agency.

Key words: Badiou, Kant, rationality, ethical agency, identity formation, desubjectification, freedom

As we know, Immanuel Kant followed Aristotle in the conviction that what distinguishes humanity from other animals is our capacity for rationality. This capacity gives humans a unique value, for Kant, and thus renders us worthy of respect. Kant frames the fundamental concerns of philosophy as three central, rational questions:

What can I know?
What ought I to do?
What may I hope?

The critiques of judgment and of pure and practical reason treat these questions as parallel. However, only the first two are, properly considered, rational. In fact, the relationship between the questions is quite paradoxical, a point which Kant does not address. It is this distinction on which I would like to focus today.

The first two questions establish and then justify the limits of reason. They set the boundaries of cognition and then provide their *raison d’etre*. In so doing they hew to a strictly Aristotelian and progressivist

understanding of the world: the purpose of knowledge is action, aimed at a more effective manipulation of the environment by the individual on behalf of society.

But these two questions alone do not begin to answer ontological or metaphysical questions, the 'why' questions. Why are things the way they are? Why is there evil? Why should knowledge motivate us to action, and why should one desire the betterment of society? Kant famously attempts to answer these questions in the second formulation of the Categorical Imperative: "Always treat humanity, whether in your own person or that of another, never simply as a means but always at the same time as an end." This principle is, of course, merely a restatement of Aristotle's understanding of happiness (as an end in itself). In this formulation, Kant does not move beyond Aristotle in any substantive way. The principle of 'the end in itself' is, for Aristotle and Kant, both compelling and satisfying. Things are the way they are because for them to be otherwise creates too many logical inconsistencies. Things are as they are by virtue of the demands of reason. Logically, there must be an Unmoved Mover. Equally logically, there must be a goal which is worth pursuing for its own sake. Reason demands that there be a parallel between the life of the cosmos and our own life. Thus, reason demands that we fall in with the principle of the end in itself in our own lives and actions.

And yet Kant cannot stop there, for he must take into account somehow both the reality of evil and the event of Christianity. So he must go beyond reason, and ask the third question. Thus he begins to wrestle with the problems of moral activity in the context of religion. While he makes a valiant attempt to argue for religion as a rational necessity and moral impetus, most notably in *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, and the *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, ultimately, I think, most contemporary scholars would admit that Kant fails to satisfactorily square the phenomenon of metaphysical longing with a rational standpoint. And this is a major flaw in Kant's otherwise beautiful philosophy.

For whether it is rational or not, hope we do. This paper is part of a larger project in which I want to argue that what actually qualifies us as human are three primarily non-rational modes of being: faith, hope, and love. That is, our identities are formed by what we believe, whom we love, and what we hope. These three modes of being neither begin nor end in rational cognitive processes, but they do result in much or even most of our moral activity. I would like to think a bit more about how and why this is so, and its implications for ethical agency today.

To help me with this task, I turn to the contemporary French philosopher Alain Badiou. Strikingly, Badiou has chosen to swim against the currents of post-modern philosophy by concentrating on questions of ontology, ethics, and universal truths. First, a word on three of Badiou's most

fundamental terms: being, event, and counting-for-one. Like any post-modernist, Badiou speaks primarily not in terms of abstract meta-concepts like God or Being, but rather in terms of ‘what is’ and ‘multiplicities.’ For Badiou, ‘being’ is what is, phenomenologically and/or conceptually, what is currently unfolding in the realm of time and space. Being is not a unified whole, but a multiplicity of possibilities, only one of which is apparent and possible at a time. As Jared Woodard helpfully points out,

Multiplicities are organized in sets, which in turn compose a “situation”. A situation can be anything from the type of cloud cover in Beijing last Friday to the state of affairs immediately preceding the French Revolution.¹

Bypassing Heidegger’s paradox, Being need not be thought of as having or expressing consciousness but rather as containing elements which may be conscious. Humans, for example. Within the multivarious phenomena of multiplicities, events occur. As Woodard succinctly explains:

An event is an unexpected occurrence that exposes an element of a given situation that that situation had previously refused to consider. More specifically, by exposing the void on which every situation (and indeed all of being) is founded, the event reasserts those elements which being had previously consigned to the void.²

That is, an event – which may happen with reference to a rational concept (like a moral imperative) or a non-rational occurrence (like a hurricane) – brings about a new reality, a new shaking-together of the elements in the sets (think of a kaleidoscope). The idea that the situation ‘previously refused to consider’ that element does not imply rationality or will on the part of the situation, rather that the situation was previously lacking that factor, which could thus not be considered. For Badiou, being is continually occurring against the backdrop or background of the void – the zero which forms the basic differentiation between what currently is and what is not. Thus being is founded on the premise of not-being. (This is in fact quite Aristotelian, too, but I’m not going to go into that here.)

Any element that currently exists within the multiplicity of being is a factor which must be considered in the cognition and appraisal of the situation as it is now and as it may possibly be in the future, in terms of the situation’s relation to truth. An event, by contrast, is something else, it is “supernumerary – it exceeds the count.”³ An event is a new element, a new creation that holds within itself new possibilities for being. (Thus one plus one does not equal two, it equals more than two: it equals both the process of

the addition of the two units and the product of the new unit of two. If you think this is merely a matter of semantics, think of marriage.)

Counting-for-one, though, has an ethical dimension. While it is possible for non-conscious elements to evoke or give rise to an event, only conscious beings can participate in truth-events, events that have significance beyond the possibilities they imply. Counting-for-one is biased on the side of being, against the void. It is also biased, as it were, on the side of truth. Thus, as I have argued elsewhere, in Badiou's system an action that promotes more potential for action is inherently more ethical than an action that forecloses or prevents potentiality.⁴

For Badiou, counting-for-one is essential to subjectivity. Badiou calls the subject the 'locus' of truth, a finite instantiation of truth. The process of truth, Badiou writes, brings about the subject (his term is 'induces'). As a truth that has some transcendent unique presence comes into being, the subject is realized, begins to count-for-one. Thus, for Badiou the subject is both the one who acts in an event and the one acted upon for whom the event has a uniquely transcendent significance – this is what separates the subject from the non-conscious elements of a situation. A cloud cannot count-for-one even if it heralds the beginning of a catastrophic hurricane that will have tremendous significance in the lives of thousands of subjects, for the cloud itself cannot participate in the awareness of that significance (it is thus removed from truth, though not from reality). Counting-for-one is the prerogative of the subject, in the original Latin meaning of that term, that which makes a request of the subject and thus distinguishes it from the rest of what is, by virtue of the subject's response to that request, its proclamation to being; as Levinas put it, '*me voici*,' here I am.

The process of the subject takes place, like everything else, in relation to the void. Since

every event happens only as the exposure of the void of a situation, or what that situation refuses to count, the event is inherently polemical. Besides the inherent resistance of the situation itself, Badiou speaks of subjects who are not faithful, who therefore fall away from subjectivity. There are three possible modes of de-subjectivation, which Badiou names as the three sources of Evil: simulacrum, betrayal, and disaster.⁵

To Badiou's way of thinking, the subject is always at risk of being erased as it struggles its way into being. The forces of resistance (both internal and external) may overwhelm and annihilate it at any moment. It may even erase itself, through what Nietzsche might have called falling in with the herd, what Sartre might have called inauthenticity, what Badiou terms infidelity.

Faithfulness to a situation requires an openness, a willingness to be vulnerable to the possibilities inherent in the situation, and to its risks.

I said at the outset that faith was one of the three non-rational modes of being that, in my opinion, serve to distinguish humanity from other forms of being. Leaving aside the question of love (which will have to wait for another occasion), I would like to conclude by looking at the interplay between faith and hope. And by faith I also want to leave out any question of deism or theism, focusing instead, as Badiou does, on the question of ethical agency.

What, then, of hope? What place does hope have in building an understanding of being, truth, and the subject? And what do these questions have to do with my initial quarrel with Kant? Badiou maintains that "hope is the name of a subject which remains," that which perdures beyond desubjectification, betrayal, and falsehood, in the "event" of a unique ongoing presence. The first-century writer of the Letter to the Hebrews tells us that "faith is the reality of things which are hoped for, the evidence of things not being seen."⁶ The Greek term υποστασις (hypostasis) literally means "what lies beneath;" it is the term Aristotle uses to denote the reality beneath the appearance of things. The term, therefore, means the fundamental substance of the subject which exists *in potentia* beneath the appearance of the present situation.

Bear in mind that Badiou sees "faith, hope, and love" (especially with reference to Saint Paul) as a direct parallel to Lacan's formulation of psychic truth, the scheme of the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic. For Badiou, the real is that which threatens to break in on us from without, into our carefully constructed conceptual framework – often a disaster. The real is that which we cannot control, and which submerges us in the grip of need. The real is the present, and is all about the individual. The symbolic is the province of the past, of history, of narrative, of language and community. The symbolic is about desire, love, and ultimately, about society. The imaginary belongs to the present, and as such is the most complex of the three (none of which, of course, exist independently of one another; it is their interaction that Lacan – and, ultimately, Badiou – sees as producing the self). The imaginary is about the acknowledgment of a fundamental lack or absence, rooted in the primal narcissistic wound of recognition that one is separate from the mother. Hence, for Badiou, it is easy to see how the imaginary is the understanding of the void; that separation or lack which brings the subject into being. There is no true 'thou' in the imaginary; there is no conception of 'we,' only a conviction of the fantasy that I am defined overagainst the other who is not-me, and with whom I endlessly strive to reunite myself, even as I understand that fulfilment of this impossible fantasy would mean the death of my individual subjectivity.

Badiou draws a direct parallel between Paul, Lacan, and his own philosophy:

PAUL	BADIOU	LACAN
Faith	Event	Real
Love	Truth	Symbolic
Hope	Fidelity	Imaginary

Much more needs to be said to explain the significance of this parallel, but time is running short. Let me sum up by saying that for Badiou, hope does not have to do with looking to the future. Rather, it is that activity of the present by which the subject responds to the demand of the situation. It is, he says,

the subjectivity of a victorious fidelity, fidelity to fidelity, and not the representation of its future outcome. Hope indicates the real of fidelity in the ordeal of its exercise, here and now.⁷

Hope, then, is a substance that provides the foundation for the subject. It is ethical because it consists in my having to deal with the phenomenon of the other in my here-and-now, whether I like it or not, as the one who is not-me and who demands a response from me. Hope does not make an appeal to me on epistemological or axiological grounds; rather, it says “here I am, what are you going to do about it in order to prove that you are here too? What evidence of your unseen ‘self’ can you provide?”

Badiou’s hope is not that different from Nietzsche’s revaluation of value. Badiou too wants to move beyond good and evil, beyond the constricting duality of alterity towards a new form of subjectivity altogether. Hope, Badiou maintains, is an activity of transcendence, specifically the transcendence of alterity (which also serves a purpose in the Lacanian economy). This is the only understanding of ethical agency which Badiou feels makes sense in the post-modern era. We can neither maintain nor jettison the subject. Instead, we must see it for what it is: a unique fragment of the ever-changing flow of being. Understanding the subject as an ethical agent in this way allows what was lacking in Kant: a way to bridge the gap between the rational and non-rational questions of philosophy, and a compelling reason why - phenomenologically and psychoanalytically - I *can* know that what I *should* do is hope.

Notes

¹ Jared Woodard, "Faith, Hope, and Love: "the Inducement of the Subject in Badiou," *Journal of Philosophy and Scripture*, 3:1 (Fall 2005), page 2.

² Ibid.

³ Loc. Cit.

⁴ See my article "Terrorism Within and Without," in *Territories of Evil*, forthcoming from Rodopi Press.

⁵ Woodard, op. cit., 5.

⁶ Literal translation of the Greek.

⁷ *Saint Paul and the Foundation of Universalism: Cultural Memory in the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 95.

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Hope and Reason: The Desire of Immortality in Spanish Philosophy

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Abstract: In this article I compare the idea of hope in the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and in the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno. First I defend the idea that hope performs one important role in the Kantian moral philosophy. Although pure reason is unable to demonstrate the existence of God and the soul's immortality, the practical use of reason postulates the existence of both. This is because humans are also concerned about the consequences of their actions and hope to achieve the highest good.

Miguel de Unamuno is one of the most important Spanish philosophers about hope. In the second part of my paper I explain his conception of hope. From the Kantian approach, Unamuno says that reason is opposed to hope. Humans have one essential desire of immortality, which arises from instinct, while reason is sceptical about the immortality and the existence of God. This antagonism between reason and hope is what Unamuno calls the "tragic sense of the life".

Key words: Hope, Reason, Highest Good, Immortality, God, Desire, Tragic Sense of the Life.

1. Hope and Reason

Hope has been a main subject of reflection throughout the history of the Philosophy of Religion. In this paper I want to deepen the relation between two approaches on hope: the Kantian one, and hope in the theory of the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno.

To understand the role of Kantian hope, first we should clarify the Kantian concept of morality. Kant defends a deontological morality as opposed to theological ones. So, Kant stresses that the moral rightness of our actions doesn't depend on the obedience to external orders, but on the obedience to the categorical imperative, which is within our reason.¹ This imperative doesn't say to us what to do, but whether the things we want to do are moral or not. On the one hand, the categorical imperative orders us to consider others as moral beings, not only as means for us. On the other hand, this imperative shows us how to maintain our moral autonomy. If we obey external rules, such as clerical orders, we aren't autonomous. We only maintain our autonomy, our liberty, following the categorical imperative, the moral rule inside us. For instance, one churchman can say to us: "you should help your friends if you want to go to Heaven". This is a hypothetical imperative, because the source of the action is external:² we obey the norm to obtain something, here Heaven. However, Kant maintains that, and it's the

important subject here, humans must obey the norm by itself and not seek to obtain external aims to maintain autonomy. If we obey something to obtain another thing we are heteronomous, not autonomous, because we then place our will in the natural order. We have to remember that Kant separates drastically the moral and natural. The natural order is subject to the Newtonian system of laws. So, the natural order is subject to necessity. All the events are the consequence of others. Here liberty doesn't exist. However, the moral order is different. This is the order of liberty. But this order is subject to the categorical imperative, which orders us to act out of respect to the law, not according to external cause.³ If one person helps his friend because of the promise to achieve Heaven, the source of the action is external from him. He doesn't actuate by himself. Thus, his will is subject to the natural law not to the moral rule, and he loses his autonomy.

As it follows from the Kantian approach, we shouldn't pay attention to the consequences of our acts. To attend to the consequences is to submit our will to the natural law. We must follow the categorical imperative always, without considering its consequences to our happiness. So, we should help people always because this is our duty, not to go to Heaven or to achieve the other's friendship.

But the Kantian moral deliberation has one problem. It's difficult to be indifferent to our behaviour's consequences. It's difficult for one person to behave morally, to be a virtuous, when he or she is unhappy doing it.⁴ In Modernity to be virtuous and to be happy are different things. In Ancient Greece, the virtuous or the wise (*sophos*) is the happy one because he or she is the person who knows what to do.⁵ However, in Modernity usually the virtuous are not happy. This problem is present among, for instance, Jewish scripture and in the Enlightenment. For instance, it appears in the Bible, in the book of Job. In Modernity it is developed by philosophers such as Leibniz. Kant also treats this question in his works about morals and philosophy of religion, such as the *Critique of Practical Reason* or *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason*.

So the question is: why be virtuous if I would be happier if I were bad? The concept of hope appears here to answer this question. Hope links the moral with happiness and religion. Although Kant excludes happiness from the categorical imperative, he isn't indifferent to it. He understands that the virtuous has a desire for happiness. The virtuous doesn't behave to be happy, but according to the categorical imperative itself. However, the virtuous also wants to be happy. So, Kant speaks about "the highest good", that is, the proper proportioning of happiness, to accord with the measure of the virtue each person acquires in willing right moral actions.⁶ The realization of the highest good consists in the connection between virtue and happiness and it is one requirement of the practical reason. But this connection has two main problems. The first problem is that the virtuous can't achieve happiness

alone. As I said above, the perspective on our actions in terms of their causal efficacy within a space-temporal framework is the proper domain of the theoretical use of reason. If one action implies happiness it is one part of the causal process of the natural world, but the rightness of the action doesn't seem to have a role to play in such causal process. We thus seem unable to meet in full the demand of practical reason, that we make the highest good (which necessarily includes happiness) the object of our willing. The second problem is that even the sustained moral effort of a lifetime doesn't seem sufficient for us to form the good will operative in our moral efforts into a "holly will", the term Kant uses to designate the attainment of complete human moral perfection.⁷ We thus seem unable to meet in full the demand that practical reason, in the categorical imperative, makes upon us to be moral.

With respect to the requirement that we attain the moral perfection of a holly will, Kant holds that we are justified in affirming that we will have an unending and enduring existence after death, outside the framework of spatio-temporal causality in which to continue the task of seeking moral perfection. He holds a similar view with respect to the requirement that the highest good be the object of our willing. Even though our moral actions don't seem to have the efficacy required in a spatio-temporal framework to produce the happiness that is necessary of the highest good, we are justified in affirming that there is a supreme cause of nature (i.e., God) that will bring this about, not merely for ourselves, but for all moral agents. So, the soul's immortality and the existence of God are the two postulates of practical reason.⁸

Two other issues appear here. First, we should distinguish the Kantian approach about God within the *Critique of Pure Reason* to his approach in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. In the former, Kant denies the possibility of demonstrating the existence of God by the arguments of Ontotheology, such as in the ontological argument of Saint Anselm of Canterbury.⁹ Kant acknowledges that our reason has the tendency to expand beyond its bounds, but it's impossible to know anything beyond the spatio-temporal dimensions. So, we are unable to affirm the material existence of God.¹⁰ However, the practical postulation of the existence of God doesn't imply the possibility to make it an object for theoretical knowledge.

Secondly, the two postulates don't pretend to be a reason to follow the moral rule. The human must obey the categorical imperative by itself, not by its consequences. If we follow the categorical imperative because we believe that God will assure our immortality, then we are heteronymous because the source of the action is our desire of immortality and not the moral rule alone. The Kantian approach is otherwise. We must follow the categorical imperative by itself even if we think that it's impossible to prove the existence of God and the highest good. The idea is that if we follow the

imperative by itself we are legitimated to believe in the achievement of the highest good in other life. This is clear in the beginning of the first Preface of *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason*. He says that morality doesn't need an external aim to guide the will. However, morality can have a relation with that external aim, not as the foundation of the will but as the consequence of the will. The representation of the external aim shows the happiness that we can achieve if we obey the categorical imperative.¹¹ But, I repeat, this representation doesn't work as the source of our behaviour, rather as the consequence that we can hope if we follow the moral rule by itself.

So, we can see the role of hope in Kant: hope links the moral with the desire for happiness. The virtuous can't be happy by alone, so he or she hopes to have an immortal soul to achieve full happiness and virtuosity. And the being that can realize this is God. Thus the virtuous person postulates also the existence of God as the being that can assure the link between virtue and happiness, the highest good. Hope is not only compatible with the reason, but even a necessary component of practical reason. The postulates of practical reason are one proof of hope. Maybe the virtuous person is unhappy now but obeys the moral rule and hopes to achieve the highest good. For that reason, he or she postulates the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.

Also, religion is not the basis of the moral, but one representation linked to it. The representation of religion is one consequence of human hope to be fully happy and virtuous. One is not indifferent to the consequences of moral behaviour. One is virtuous and wants to be happy. So, as a virtuous person, he or she can hope to achieve deserved happiness through his or her behaviour. However, the Kantian idea of religion differs from the historical religions. Kant sees a significant negative feature in the concrete, historical character of the human reception of religion through revelation. It is subject to one dynamic of corruption. Kant articulates in Book Four of *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason* his strongest criticism of the organizations and practices of Christianity that encourage what he sees as a "religion of counterfeit service to God". Among the major targets of his criticism are external ritual, superstition and a hierarchical church order. In distinction from this conception, the Kantian idea of religion consists in the representation of one ideal of virtue: to follow Jesus Christ. This ideal can be realized in the moral content of the Bible. All the virtuous persons form the "moral commonwealth", not a historical and hierarchical one. He rejects any form of historical church, such as the Catholic or Lutheran Church. This is also the only way we can find one form of religion "within the bounds of mere reason." The historical religions are irrational because they don't defend the moral message of the Bible but rather the material power of their leaders. Hope consists here in the desire of the virtuous commonwealth to achieve moral perfection, the highest good, while obeying the categorical imperative.

So, we can find one answer to the third question that Kant makes in his *Critique of Pure Reason*: “what may we hope for?” Hope consists in the desire to achieve the highest good. One has the expectation to achieve it because he or she obeys the moral rule. For this reason, one postulates the existence of God and the immortality of soul. Finally, hope is linked to the moral and to reason.

2. Hope against Reason

However, this is not the only approach to the relation between hope and reason. We can find a different approach to this one. Other philosophers understand that this relation between hope and reason is one of confrontation, rather than conjunction. Here the most representative thinker is the Spanish philosopher Miguel de Unamuno.

Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936) is one of the most important philosophers of the last century in Spain. He was the main member of the “Generation of 98”. This was a group of Spanish writers and philosophers concerned about the agonistic situation of Spain after the loss of the colonies of Cuba and The Philippines in 1898. Unamuno was influenced by Kierkegaard and is considered one of the founders of the existentialism. Like Kant, Unamuno was a religious person. Although he was Catholic, he maintained a peculiar faith far from orthodoxy. His main subjects of thought were religion and philosophy. He also wrote a lot of novels, such as *Peace in War* (1879), *Abel Sanchez* (1931), and poetry such as, *The Christ of Velazquez* (1928). He was also very political.

The chief characteristic of his life was contradiction. He supported different opinions about some subjects, such as religion or politics. For instance, he supported the right and the left in politics, and he maintained faith and doubt in religion. This element of contradiction of his life is essential to understanding his work. His novel *Saint Manuel Good, Martyr* is about one priest that maintained the faith of his parishioners while he didn't believe in God. Also, in *Aunt Tula* he describes a woman that brought up the children of her dead sister, but she was a virgin; that is, Tula is mother and virgin like the Lady Mary.

The philosophy of Miguel de Unamuno is characterized by contradiction too. Here the main contradiction remains in the antagonism between reason and life. Unamuno argues that what characterizes the human being is not language or thought, but sense. The human being has two main instincts too. The first is one of preservation. This is the instinct that manages knowledge. Unamuno defends the idea that we don't know the world as it is, but we only know what we need to live. So, language and reason are only products of the society used to solve its problems. The second instinct is one to continue existing. This second instinct is more important than the former because it contains the chief human concern, the desire of maintaining being

forever. His main influence here is Spinoza and the *conatus*. The human being not only wants to preserve his or her life in each moment, as other animals can do, but her or she wants to persist in being forever. The human being doesn't want to end his or her own existence.¹²

This second instinct has to face up to one fact: death. As Heidegger said, "the man is the being that lives for the death". Against the position of Heidegger we find to Unamuno. He says that the fact of death doesn't annul the instinct of immortality. Rather, this phenomenon opens the door to hope. Although humans are aware of death, they hope to still exist after that moment. And it's the instinct, the sense, that leads one to believe in personal immortality. Thus Unamuno speaks about the "hungry of immortality",¹³ because the source of this belief is sense, not reason. A person wants to be convinced of his or her own immortality, because he or she needs it to live.

According to Unamuno this instinct of immortality was expressed in several forms throughout history. Against the common opinion, the former expression of this instinct wasn't to believe in a future life after the death. This is so because the belief in a future life appeared, at least in the West, no more than four centuries before Christ. For instance, people from the Middle East around five centuries before Christ didn't believe in the *other* life. This can be supported if we look at the Bible. In the Book of Genesis God says to Adam: "You are powder and you will be powder."¹⁴ That is to say: you come from the earth and you will return to the earth; there is not another life. Also, when one Biblical celebrity dies, the Bible doesn't say that he resuscitates and he goes to Heaven with God. Really, he is buried and no more because there is neither Heaven nor other life. The *Legend of Gilgamesh*, circa the second millennium before Christ, is one Babylonian text that neglects the existence of other life after death too. Then, in the culture of Middle East the only forms of immortality, that is of hope, present were to live a lot of years, and then live on in the memory that other persons have of us after our death. For this reason the most important celebrities of the Bible, like Adam or Abraham, lived several centuries and had many children.

The idea of immortality arrived to the West from Asia around the fourth century before Christ. Since this belief was expanded, the concept of hope had a different meaning within religion. Now it incorporated the idea of a new and a better life after the current one. From this moment hope was understood as the desire to live that new life. And for this reason appeared the belief in the soul's immortality. It is on this belief that Unamuno focuses his theory, and also on the belief in God as the guarantor of our personal immortality in another life. Immortality is the main subject of his book *Tragic Sense Of The Life In Man And In Peoples* (1912). An important subject within this work then is the existence of God. This is his most important philosophical work.

Unamuno maintains that immortality is the main problem that philosophical reflection is concerned about. As a consequence, one of the philosophical questions for Kant, “what may we hope for?” becomes the main subject of philosophy. Philosophy is after all one means to solve our chief concern, our desire for immortality.¹⁵ So, the relation between philosophy and hope is essential. Philosophy has the function of justifying our desire for immortality.

The chief point here is that the philosophical reflection about hope arises not from reason, but from feeling. But if philosophy arises from sense, where is reason in Unamuno’s philosophy? I said before that reason isn’t essential to the human, and that it carries out one function, to solve problems. So, reason arises from sense, but more precisely from the imagination. And the source of the imagination is our desire to still exist. Reason has the function of rationalizing this desire. The problem is that reason is skeptical of our desire for immortality.

Reason’s skepticism is shown by Unamuno through a relationship of antagonism: the antagonism between reason and life. He says, “The life is irrational and the reason is counter-vital”.¹⁶ This is one chief point that underscores the confrontation between Kant and Unamuno. First, we have to say that when Unamuno says that reason is counter-vital this doesn’t mean that reason is a suicidal faculty. The chief point here is that when Unamuno speaks about life, he referees not to the current one, but to the eternal life after death. This “life” is what our instinct desires, immortality. However, reason is skeptical about immortality, and thus it is skeptical about hope. But reason’s skepticism is vital, not epistemological. Reason is monist, that is to say, materialist: there is only the body. The idea of dualism, the conjunction of body and soul, the immortal soul, is one consequence of the belief in immortality. From a monist perspective, our consciousness dies with the body, so, we shouldn’t hope any form of life or happiness after death.¹⁷

According to Unamuno, there have been intentions to rationalize faith, for instance in Theology through the distinction between the irrational and the counter-rational. The former is the absurd and the latter is what can be reasoned. But this had two consequences: first, the people that don’t rationalize their faith believe all without thinking about it. In theology and philosophy this phenomenon is named “the coal merchant’s faith”. But the people that pretend to rationalize their faith lost it. As Martin Luther said, the intention to rationalize faith leads to atheism. It’s impossible to find reasons for belief in immortality. All the rational intentions fail to demonstrate the soul’s immortality.

So, reason and life maintain one antagonism. Our sense leads us to believe in immortality and in God, while reason gives us arguments about the irrationality of this belief. And this antagonism between life and reason is the “tragic sense of the life”.¹⁸ It’s a sense, because belief in immortality is a

sense and not a reason, and it's tragic because posits an experience of contradiction inside us: we want immortality, but reason says that this is impossible.

Therefore, in spite of the skeptical arguments of reason, desire is stronger than reason because people want to believe in order to satisfy their desire for immortality. This is the strength of hope. For this reason Unamuno rejects reason as the essential faculty in human beings. Sense is stronger and if reason were prior to sense it would imply destroying the most important human instinct. This priority of sense over reason is shown by Unamuno in one clear sentence: "We don't hope because we believe, but we believe because we hope".¹⁹ That is to say, we don't hope for immortality because we have one coherent set of rational beliefs; rather, we articulate our beliefs to satisfy our hope for immortality. The prior is the sense, the hope, and this leads us to believe. It's our "hunger for immortality" that leads us to believe in God, not our reason. To understand this we have to quote one play of words in Spanish. Unamuno says that "*creer es crear*", in English, "to believe is to create".²⁰ Our hope, our desire for immortality leads us to *create* our beliefs and our knowledge, as we said above. This hope leads us to create what we need to believe. But if it is so, to believe in God means to create God. Our beliefs are our creations. They have reality for us, but they aren't real by themselves.

Finally, we can find some connections between Kant and Unamuno. First, both think that religion is one individual representation and that representation arises from our hope – this is the question about the consequences of our actions. The human desires immortality because this is the only way to achieve perfection. Kant thinks that immortality gives us our complete virtue and happiness; Unamuno maintains that immortality carries out our essence, the desire to exist forever. So, hope performs a chief role for both philosophers. Second, both conceive God as the guarantor of hope. According to Kant, God is the guarantor of the achievement of the highest good, the linking between virtue and happiness. Thus, we need to postulate its existence. According to Unamuno, God is the guarantor of human immortality. One hopes for immortality, and for this one believes in God. One needs God to assure it.

But the difference between Kant and Unamuno remains in the relation between the belief in immortality and reason. Although the former rejected the arguments for the existence of God in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, he defends the postulations of God and the soul's immortality in his *Critique of Practical Reason* as one part of practical reason. In its practical use, reason is not skeptical about the existence of God; rather, it postulates God's existence. However, Unamuno has a different approach. He starts from the antagonism between reason and immortality. Far from postulating immortality, reason neglects it because reason is monist. With regard to God,

it is our desire for immortality that leads us to believe (*to create*) in God. The human believes in God because he or she needs God. To believe in God is to want its existence. Also, to postulate the existence of God is against reason because, as Kant demonstrates, reason can't find arguments to demonstrate its existence.

If the theory of Miguel de Unamuno is correct, we could explain the failure of secularization in the West. In spite of the advancements of the sciences and atheist theories in Philosophy, Sociology or Psychology, the religions still continue within our societies. Perhaps it is because of the human desire for immortality expressed by hope.

Notes

¹ I Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Bobbs-Merril, Indianapolis, 1969, p.58

² Ibid., p.48

³ I Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1985, pp.215-23

⁴ I Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, 1998, p.224

⁵ Aristotle. *Nichomachean Ethicss*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002 , p.134

⁶ I Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p.152

⁷ ibid., p.174

⁸ ibid., pp.237-51

⁹ St Anselm. *Proslogion*, Hackett Publications, Indianapolis, 2001

¹⁰ I Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp.478-90

¹¹ I Kant, *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason and other writings*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, pp.2-3

¹² M de Unamuno, *Tragic sense of the life in men and in peoples*. Macmillan, London, 1921, pp.47-55

¹³ ibid., p.124

¹⁴ Gen. 3:19

¹⁵ M de Unamuno, *Tragic sense of the life in men and in peoples.*, p.62

¹⁶ ibid., p.85

¹⁷ ibid., p.115-17

¹⁸ ibid, p.153

¹⁹ ibid., p189

²⁰ ibid., p.133

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In Between Hope and Despair: Notes on the Dialectic Hermeneutics of 'Being'

Ruhtan Yalciner

Abstract: If ever the dialectical relation in-between hope and despair has been one of the most designative questions within critical continental philosophy, existentialist and hermeneutical readings of 'being' should be mentioned as the complementary point of interests on the very perception of 'thinkability' and 'Reality' within this query. Dialectical interpretation of hope and despair, accordingly, can not be separated from its reflexive dynamics on the understanding of 'the political' today. This paper posits its major emphasis on three critical questions: (i) The question of the thinkability and Hegelian 'necessity' of hope and despair within the dialectical identification and alienation of 'selfness' and 'otherness', (ii) Critical 'perception' of subjective-objective Reality in the course of modern 'human condition', (iii) Possible contributions of the 'thinkability of despair and hope' on the agonistic and hermeneutical reinterpretation of today's politics. Via the critical reading of Kant, Hegel, and Bloch's perspectives on the 'thinkability' and 'reality' of hope and despair, this paper intends to interpenetrate such categories within the dialectic entirety of 'being'. Accordingly, this paper aims to provide a hermeneutical reinterpretation of hope and despair with reference to the conceptions of 'weak thought', 'weak identity' and 'hermeneutic politics'.

Key words: Dialectics, Hermeneutics, Transcendence, Alterity, "Weak Thought", Weak Identity, Hermeneutic Politics, Hegel.

1. Introduction

Hope and despair have provided a critical realm for questioning human existence since the very emergence of philosophical questions on various aspects of 'being'. From Plato and Aristotle to contemporary political philosophy, questioning hope and despair has been associated with a wider assessment of understanding the nature of the human condition or mostly a critical interpretation of being and consciousness in the "world-process". Thinkability of both hope and despair, in this regard, can be seen as a fundamental point of departure in enhancing not only the existential reality but the daily ontology of human experience.

With regard to individual, social or political praxis of the *Self* in modernity, hope and despair can be seen as interpenetrative categories of a

dialectical tandem. Being associated with the perpetual questions of *transcendence*, *immanence* and *alterity*, the thinkability and reality of hope and despair has been closely related to an interdisciplinary framework. Yet, from the perspectives of philosophical anthropology to critical psychoanalysis and from continental analytical philosophy to contemporary political theory, hope and despair have been mostly conceptualized under the dichotomies of *object vs. subject* and *theory vs. praxis*.

Through a critical emphasis on these Janus-faced dichotomizations and dealing with the meaning of *being* in the modern human condition, this paper intends to reinterpret the negativity of the hope-despair relation by going through a quasi-dialectical hermeneutic understanding of *selfness*, *otherness* and *the world*. The following sections will posit three main argumentations. The first section will deal with a critical interpretation of Kant, Hegel, and Bloch's philosophical positions on the reality and thinkability of hope and despair. The second section of the paper on the other hand, intends to discuss quasi-dialectical hermeneutics of hope and despair with reference to their dialectical and interpenetrative characteristics. The final section of the paper, accordingly, will emphasize the possibility of applying dialectical and hermeneutical reinterpretation of hope and despair to the *praxis* of today's politics.

1. Three Systemic Questions of Hope and Despair: Thinkability, Reality and Negativity

Within the major manifestations of continental and analytical philosophy, the foundation of hope and despair has been correlated to not only physiological or emotional grounds but also psychological or rational postulates. As both a particular and universal apparatus of *becoming*, hope and despair can be seen as crucial categories of enhancing *subjective* or *objective reality* through the dialectical syntax of the *self*, *other* and the *world*. Because the self-referentiality of being can be mediated through hope and despair, the *thinkability* of such contradictory processes has been immanently relative and particular. Parallel with the questions of reality and thinkability, determining the *human condition* or enhancing the question of *ought* have also been critical while treating hope and despair.

Within continental and analytical philosophy, the claim of negativity depends on a grand *system*. According to the dialectical tandem of such a grand system, although hope and despair constitute the confronting sides of the negativity, the *necessity* argument for reflection inevitably provides an interpenetrative basis. Should we posit *negativity* and *interpenetrative necessity* as the fundamental postulates of identification or alienation in enhancing selfness and otherness? Then, the differentiation of *Dionysian* and *Appollonean* auras has become a critical motive of the thinkability and reality of hope and despair. Accordingly, a study of hope and despair can be best

characterized *vis-à-vis* the “*Is-ought problem*”. Below, the positions and arguments of three leading figures - Kant, Hegel, Bloch - on the systemic theorization of human intentionality will be discussed.

Kant’s emphasis on hope is strongly interconnected with his argumentations on reality, morality, virtue, happiness and absolute autonomy of the “self-being” (*das Selbstsein*). Considering the “ought-problem” of human-hope, the impartiality of the Kantian categorical “transcendent abstraction” is overturned by the employment of the morality claim. Yet, on the other hand, Kant’s transcendence argument as “the presentation of the possibility of an *a priori* understanding of being from the unified ground of the self”¹ inaugurates a main feature for his categorical understanding of becoming through the process of absolute reason and certainty. Accordingly, Kant’s theory of hope includes both speculative and practical forms of reasoning. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant combines such speculative but practical bases with three major questions: “What can I know? What ought I do? What may I hope?”² All of these questions are intimately related to a broader area of interest in Kant’s theory of hope: “*What is man?*”

Besides his interest in the relation of hope to the universal idea of human nature, Kant posits morality as the constructive basis for not only hope but happiness. Through the category of virtue, as a constitutive condition for the “hope for happiness”, Kant provides an ethos of absolute human satisfaction: the *summum bonum* of humanity. In the Kantian perspective, therefore, while happiness constitutes the object of human-hope, virtue symbolizes the ethical ground for its justification.

Inasmuch as virtue and happiness together constitute the possession of the highest good for one person, and happiness in exact proportion to morality (as the worth of a person and his worthiness to be happy) constitutes that of a possible world, the highest good means the whole, the perfect good wherein virtue is always the supreme good.³

“The realm of ends” underlines the Kantian ideal world.⁴ Human hope as the moral basis for happiness and virtue as its justification corpus are both indications and postulates of a “universal realm of ends”. In this universality claim, there lies Kant’s argumentation of “autonomous being” as an ideal theoretical and practical postulation of the maxims of life.

Because the *reason* provides “the world of experience” and *virtue* justifies the “hope for happiness”, in a Kantian understanding, thinkability and reality of hope and despair necessitates simultaneously mentioning but separating two sides of the individual-being: “*natura archetypa*’ as an intelligible realm of purely rational beings alone and a *natura ectypa*’ as a realm of rational beings existing in the sensible world.⁵ The differentiation of

individual being in Kant's perspective reminds one of Hegel's critique of "unhappy consciousness" which implies the doubled and contradictory being.

Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, depends on the mutual and interpenetrative determination of the subject and the object. At the very idea of such determination, there lies Hegel's systemic approach on both knowledge and recognition.⁶ Contrasting to *Faust's* dialectical correctional motion, Hegel's sphere of "systemic knowledge" underlines the dialectical perception of the *thing* and *being* with regards to the realm of systemic certainty. Unlike the "unhappy consciousness" which implies the "consciousness of self as a divided nature, a doubled and merely contradictory being,"⁷ Hegel's "superior knowledge of Being-For-Itself"⁸ necessitates an open and ongoing process of realization and becoming without satisfaction or without the fulfilment of the meaning.

The hope of becoming one therewith must remain a hope, i.e. without fulfilment, without present fruition; for between the hope and fulfilment there stands precisely the absolute contingency, or immovable indifference, which is involved in the very assumption of determinate shape and form, the basis and foundation of the hope. By the nature of this existent unit, through the particular reality it has assumed and adopted, it comes about of necessity that it becomes a thing of the past, something that has been somewhere far away, and absolutely remote it remains.⁹

Hegelian dialectics can be seen as a system of synthesizing universal and particular permutations or "moments" in the development of the consciousness. The Hegelian system approach constitutively depends on the process of "negation" within the contingency of the "world-process" of being. Neither the categories of hope nor despair or fear in Hegelian dialectics, therefore, can be separated from the course of the realization or recognition of consciousness through negation. Though the process of negation is abstract and universal, the moments of development and articulation are essential, particular, and immanent in Hegelian dialectic of being. Underlining "formative activity" and "negativity",¹⁰ and similar to his "systemic knowledge" argument, Hegel's consideration of hope and despair or fear inaugurates the dialectical interpretation of being through not only "self-certainty" but "essential reality". Though the cyclic tandem of the subject and object in Hegel's "sense-certainty" constitutes the dialectical postulate of "meaning", Hegelian considerations of hope comprise a historical assumption while fear or despair implies the interpenetrative permutation of necessary formative activity in dialectical negation.

The last figure to be mentioned here is Ernst Bloch. In *The Principle of Hope*, unlike Kant's and Hegel's argumentations, Bloch argues for an "all-embracing conception of reality putatively determined by the future rather than by the past" and insists on the "Front" or "Nova" of the future which implies the "categorical imperative of change" within the utopian tradition.¹¹ For Bloch, therefore, transcendent categories of *Front*, *Novum*, *Ultimum* and *Horizon* determine the designative postulates of not only the human experience but the "real possibility" of change. Thus, in Bloch's perspective, while the real underlines the "process" or the corpus of dynamic relationships, being posits the dialectical and moving locus of *becoming*.¹²

For Bloch, thinking inaugurates an interpretation of "venturing beyond" which "activates the tendency which is inherent in history and which proceeds dialectically".¹³ Unlike the zone of nothingness which is characterized through passivity, Bloch's "real venturing" indicates a "new relationship between the ego and the world...through the notion of a 'natural subject'".¹⁴ Accordingly, in Bloch's argumentation of "Not-Yet-Being" (*Noch-Nicht-Sein*), "anticipatory consciousness", underlines the not-yet conscious interpretation of the future postulates of being. Criticizing Hegel's position, he argues that the *Front* of the historical articulation of the human condition is pertained to the postulate of "anticipatory consciousness". The *Front* of the human condition for Bloch, accordingly, is not only related with "self-apprehension" but "corresponds to exact anticipation; concrete utopia as objective-real correlate".¹⁵

Therefore, the reality of hope according to Bloch reveals the ongoing existence in motion under the framework of the *New*. Thinkability of hope as an active process of being underlines the converse side of the fear and despair which are equalized to the passivity of nothingness in Bloch's perspective. For Bloch; "'emotion of hope' (*Affect des Hoffens*) precipitates activity that opens, broadens and frees; we are to throw ourselves into *what is becoming (ins Werdende)* and not merely be passively thrown in '*What Is (ins Seiende)*'".¹⁶

2. On the Quasi-Dialectical Hermeneutics of Hope and Despair: A Critical Perspective on *Self*, *Other* and the *World*

The question of the consciousness of being has been associated with not only the ideality or thinkability but the reality of hope and despair. Differentiating from the Cartesian paradigmatic declaration of consciousness and Nietzsche's "Dionysian vision of the will to power and the eternal return of the same",¹⁷ this section will discuss a critical synthetic understanding of hope and despair by designating those not only as main points of interest in tracing *hermeneutic consciousness* within the dialectic syntax of the *Self*, *Other* and the *World*, but also for the Lacanian symbolic reflection on the human condition in modernity.

Quasi-dialectical hermeneutics of hope and despair can be expressed as an attempt for synthesizing theoretical and practical positions and a *potentia* for the dialectical interpretation of *res extensa* and *res cogitans*. Therefore, both reductions through immanent substantiality or transcendent objectivity are rejected vis-à-vis the *irreducibility-of-being*. In this view, the perception of *thing* and *being* does not solely depend on the context of objectivity or conversely on substantive-subjectivity.

Hope and despair, as “expectant emotions”¹⁸ in Bloch’s words, symbolize an interpenetrative and dialectical *Gestalt*, a dialectical syntax of realization and thinkability of identification and differentiation through consciousness. The dialectic of hope and despair/fear, hence can be characterized as an active process of subjectification, an ongoing agency of being ‘I’ and being ‘we’ and an interpenetrative-hermeneutic explanation of consciousness as ‘I am’ and ‘we are’. Hope and despair can be understood as not only the *Front* of the knowledge of the Not-yet-being, but as the *Horizon* of hermeneutic understanding of particulars and universals within the Heideggerian how-question of “being-in-the-world”.

Quasi-dialectical hermeneutic readings of hope and despair posit an emphasis on two interrelated questions: the *is-ought problem* and the *ideal-real cleavage*. From this view, the understanding of “What is” is correlated with the subjective and immanent reality of not only the temporal-being but the not-yet-being. The consideration of “ought-to”, on the other hand, necessitates a form of abstraction and transcendence through thought and ideality. Because both the subjective-objective perception of reality and the ideality or thinkability of *hoping-in-the-world* is effectuated within a hermeneutic circle, ideal-real duality disappears within the dialectic context of *hermeneutic dependability*.

Unlike Kantian dualization of human nature vis-à-vis “*natura archetypa*” vs. “*natura ectypa*”, or Hegel’s determination of reality through history, or Bloch’s utopian conceptualization of reality in the future, here systemic reinterpretation of reality symbolizes the critical locus of dialectic-contingency for overturning the subject-object dichotomy through *hermeneutic consciousness*. In this view, neither subjectivity nor objectivity of human hope and despair can be separated. For *hermeneutic consciousness*, identification and alienation can be practiced through abstract and categorical idea-form or through contextual and substantive determination. Neither categorical nor essential permutations are commensurable. Rather, the relation of immanent essentiality and transcendent abstraction is synthetic and dialectically interpenetrative. Therefore, in-between hope and despair, there stands the dialectic negation. With reference to the ideality-reality question, hope can be posited as a potential for universal ideality or transcendence - like beauty -, while despair implies the substantive and particular category of immanence. In this view, hope can be seen as a

constitutive emotional character for thought and ideality. On the other hand, fear or despair can be primarily considered as an identity based emotional postulate for both identification and alienation through the perception of the substantive-reality of being.¹⁹ Yet, both hope and despair/fear are effectuated through identification and differentiation within the construction of Selfness and Otherness in the *Cosmos of being*.

Hope and despair are formed within the dialectical syntax of *ethnos*, *demos* and *cosmos* of the praxis of being. *Ethnos* implies the aesthetic nature or (intra-subjective) particularity and sensuous existence, or in Lacanian terms an initial phase of reality before reflection, alienation or alteration begins.²⁰ Although identification and differentiation of the *Self* exist in a relatively heteromorphic structure, its intra-subjective nature surfaces before “self-alienation” through abstraction and transcendence in which the *Self* encounters the ‘*Other*’ (in *Demos*) inter-subjectively. On the other hand, objectifying components of subjective experience in *Demos* can be characterized as inter-subjective components of being that are fundamentally structuralized in disengagement, transcendence and abstraction. Finally, the *Cosmos*, in which hope and despair are effectuated interpenetratively, implies a trans-subjective synthesis of both particular and universal permutations within the existential form of ‘being-in-the-world’. This cosmological realm can be called as the “life-world” in Husserlian terms, and characterizes the dialectical synthesis or irreducible *Gestalt* of agency and *Ego*, or, in general, the dialectical structure of *Subject’s becoming*. Hereby, as the last stance of quasi-dialectical hermeneutic analysis, the sphere of *Cosmos* consummates not only the intra-subjective immanent essence but also the inter-subjective, transcendent and objectified abstraction, and inaugurates the incommensurability of both particulars and universals within the dialectic and reflexive syntax of hope, despair and being.

3. Towards a Hermeneutic Politics of Being: Weakening Thought or Weakening Identity?

Hermeneutic interpretation of being is a multiple process which can not be detached from the co-existent nature of *the Political* and accordingly necessitates “an act of interpretation that is confirmed in dialogue with other possible interpretations”.²¹ After designating hope and despair as interpenetrative postulates of being in the previous section, the main interest of this section is to deal with the differentiation of two sorts of politics - *politics of thought* and *identity politics*- and discuss the possibility of weakening both thought and identity in politics by going through the *hermeneutic consciousness* of being. Such hermeneutic interpretation of being, on the other hand, necessitates not only a fundamental critique of modernity with respect to the concept of absolute-objectivity, but also its counter-politics demanding the total rejection of any sort of ideality,

abstractive-thought or universal *Idea vis-à-vis* the canonization of the particular substantiality of the *Body* by concrete subjectivism of the *res extensa*.

The socio-cultural essence and abstract political analogue of modernity by its symbolic structure inaugurates the dualization of the praxis of being. As a reflection of the separation of *ratio* and *body*, politics in modernity reflects a *dual ethos of power*. On the one side of this duality, particular references of being are seen as essential postulates. On the other side, *the political* depends on categorical abstraction. The reflection of power is essentially explicit in the first postulation while it is implicitly effectuated in the later model.

As a constitutive structure of identity, hope and despair/fear are separated in both permutations of *the Political*. From the perspective of a categorical stance, nothing but the absolutely rational and universally objectified consciousness of the self is (to be) in practice. Essentialist politics of the body, contrarily, is based on the total rejection of all sorts of categorical abstractions and posits its emphasis on the substantive and particular reality of embodied-subjectivity. Therefore, neither categorical nor essentialist consciousness are hermeneutic. Moreover, both particularist and universalist perspectives on *the Political* are antagonistic in their very idea rather than being agonistic.

In modernity, present entities of “to-have” are constructed within the temporal logic of the domination of nature. Universal abstraction of the essence of being in this process has been associated with the objective and rational experience of the being within the realm of *res cogitans*. Therefore, weakening identity is one of the major postulations of modernity. For the sake of the categorical or the universal, modernity has excluded the *res extensa* from *the Political*. In other words; “the forgetting of Being...transforms itself into Being’s wakening/exhausting, into Being’s dissolutive destiny, or, into modernity equated with the ‘long good-bye’ to Being”.²²

In Heidegger’s terms, “hermeneutics as the self-interpretation of facticity” is a response to the further meaning of the “*how of factual Dasein*” in modernity and necessitates the consideration of the “*self-encountering of Dasein*”.²³ Hermeneutic thinking is beyond both categorical thinking of universalism and genealogical thinking of particularism. Similarly, hermeneutic reality is a critical response to both foundationalist argumentation of universal objective-truth and essentialist postulation of substantive/genealogical-reality. Accordingly, hermeneutic politics refers to the *weakening* of both *thought* and *identity* within an attitude that every moment affirms a hermeneutic process. Therefore, hermeneutic concepts of *weak thought* and *weak identity* necessitates underlining the inner circle of

the *political* process or the ontological boundaries of social projects which depend on a conformist postulation of disengaged totalization in modernity.

For Levinas, “totalization is the history of humanity qua realization of rational universality in mores and institutions,...in which nothing remains other for reason”. Conversely, for the quasi-dialectic hermeneutic thinking of totality, “total presence of being to itself, or self-consciousness...is the reality in its concretization and most complete determination”.²⁴ Hereby, hermeneutic totality is to be differentiated from the Enlightenment projection of totality which has been designative in the construction of *the Political* and the public sphere. Unlike the Cartesian mechanistic version of the world or a Cartesian understanding which symbolizes a “moving from the simple to the complex, without the consideration of the light that the totality sheds on the comprehension of the simple”, hermeneutic totality represents a mutual presupposition of the synthesis and depends on the recognition of Heidegger’s “hermeneutic circle” in which “the whole and the parts determine one another...there are, in the understanding of the totality, progressive jumps”.²⁵

The conflictual nature of social projects, relations or situations not only results in contingency but within the framework of “discordant intersubjectivity” in which situatedness of the experience “lends itself to negativity and contradictoriness”,²⁶ and gives a contingent characteristic to both historical and socio-political experiences. Considering the confrontation of *difference* and *cohesion* within the course of public intersubjectivity in today’s democratic politics, both hope and despair/fear can be seen as the constitutive features of hermeneutic negation and postulates of *political potentia* for *dialogical democracy*. Therefore, the dialectic negation of hope and despair/fear entails the interpenetrative meaning of both particulars and universals for politics within *hermeneutic contingency* of *being-in-the-ethnos/demos/cosmos*.

Hope and despair/fear are accumulated through *being-in-the-ethnos* or *being-in-the-demos* interpenetratively. *Being-in-the-cosmos*, on the other hand, implies a singular syntax of both subjective and objective becoming and reality. Within this process, particular and universal intention of the *I* is self-referential and in motion and includes both identification and alienation. Therefore, hermeneutic interpretation of the *ethnos* and *demos* of hope and despair/fear would be only possible by not excluding the *cosmos* of hope and despair/fear. In this regard, hermeneutic and dialogical consideration of hope and despair/fear can be obtained through the irreplaceable singularity and totality of being.

For quasi-dialectical hermeneutics, the *totality of being* resembles the interpretation of the particular “sense datum” and the universal intersubjectivity of the relationship with the other, or “thinking-of-the-other”.²⁷ This reflexive process depends on self-referentiality and forms the

intention of the *I*. Accordingly, the totality of being or the singularity of the *I*, implies *multiplicity* between the reason and substance of *being*. Hermeneutic politics refers to this hermeneutic circle of being and becoming. It depends on multiplicity and justifies the unity of both *difference* and *cohesion* in modern democratic politics. Therefore, considering the hermeneutic conception of the being, “the totality cannot be reduced to a kingdom of ends”²⁸ or to any genealogical expression of the substantive nature of being.

Main ideas introduced in this study can be assembled within the critical spectrum of ‘hermeneutic politics’ which has become an alternative framework within the contemporary revisionism of the theories of difference and democracy. At the centre of this contemporary interest on the reinterpretation of politics, there lies the question of finding a way between a politics of difference/identity and the ideal of public impartiality through equal respect politics. According to this paper, hermeneutical study of hope and despair/fear may broaden our gaze on this reinterpretation through the systemic reading of *Selfness* and *Otherness* within the *cosmos-of-being*. Hermeneutic understanding of hope and despair/fear, hereby, can be best interpreted as an expression of the dialectic moving of being in the “*Fusion of Horizons*”.²⁹ I conclude that within the framework of hermeneutic politics a dialectic syntax of hope, despair/fear and being accumulates in the interpenetrative *potentia* for the disappearance of “the abyss between *res extensa* and *res cogitans*,”³⁰ which has arisen as the primary ideal source and potential discourse of restructuring today’s democratic politics in light of dialogical agonism rather than antagonism.

Notes

¹ I Görland, “Editor’s Epilogue” in M Heidegger, *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, Indiana University Press, Indiana, 1994, p. 152.

² I Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1998.

³ I Kant, *The Critique of Practical Reason*, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1981, p. 114-115.

⁴ I Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and What is Enlightenment*, Liberal Arts Press, New York, 1959.

⁵ C H Peters, *Kant’s Philosophy of Hope*, Peter Lang, New York, 1993, p. 45.

⁶ Recognition in Hegelian perspective is combined with desire. In Judith Butler’s words; Hegelian desire for recognition can be characterized as “a desire that seeks its reflection in the *Other*, a desire that seeks to negate the alterity of the *Other*, a desire that finds itself in the bind of requiring the

Other whom one fears to be and to be captured by; indeed, without this constituting passionate bind, there can be no recognition.” J Butler, *Antigone’s Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2000, p. 13.

⁷ G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Dover, New York, 2003, p. 119.

⁸ E Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Vol. 3, The MIT Press, Massachusetts, 1995, p. 1021.

⁹ Hegel, op. cit., p. 122.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 112.

¹¹ R H Roberts, *Hope and Its Hieroglyph: A Critical Decipherment of Ernst Bloch’s Principle of Hope*, Scholars Press, Atlanta, Georgia, 1990, p. x-xi.

¹² E Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Vol. 1, The MIT Press, Massachusetts, 1995, p. 196.

¹³ Ibid, p. 4.

¹⁴ G Vattimo, *Dialogue With Nietzsche*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2006, p. 94.

¹⁵ Roberts, op. cit., p. 108.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 27.

¹⁷ Vattimo, op. cit., p. 94.

¹⁸ Bloch differentiates two sorts of emotions: (i) *Filled emotions* like envy, greed, admiration, (ii) *Expectant emotions* like anxiety, fear, hope, and belief. According to Bloch, drive-intention of filled emotions is short-term and their drive-object is ready either in “respective individual attainability” or “in the already available world”. Expectant emotions, on the other hand, have a long-term drive-intention and their drive-object is not yet ready “not just in respective individual attainability, but also in the already available world”. E Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Vol. 1, p. 74.

¹⁹ M Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Routledge, New York, 2006.

²⁰ J Lacan, *Ecrits*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 2006.

²¹ G Vattimo, *Beyond Interpretation*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1997, p. 137.

²² P F D’Arcais, “Gianni Vattimo; or rather, Hermeneutics as the Primacy of Politics” in S Zabala (ed), *Weakening Philosophy: Essays in Honour of Gianni Vattimo*, McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal, 2007, p. 250.

²³ M Heidegger, *Ontology-The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, Indiana University Press, Indianapolis, 1999, p. 14-15.

²⁴ E Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999, p.48.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 49.

²⁶ H Feather, *Intersubjectivity and Contemporary Social Theory: The Everyday as Critique*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2000, p. 6.

²⁷ E Levinas, *Entre nous: On Thinking-of-the-Other*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1998, p. 26.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 27.

²⁹ H G Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Continuum, New York, 2000.

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The Phenomenology of Hope

Tanim Laila

Abstract: Hope is a characteristic that is intrinsic in the minds of all human beings; consequently, human beings are able to express and communicate hope in a manner that is unique to other beings. The profound prevalence of Hope in man allows them to strive for survival in dire circumstances. Hope implies a certain level of perseverance. Often in a crisis, communities who are of a certain Faith, religion or spiritual guidance apply their hope in the Divine to find peace and calmness. Human history has unfolded major success of leaders, communities and individuals: none of which would have been possible without the trace of Hope in those accomplishments. Hope has the power to heal and it guides humans through trials and tribulations and gives a sense of optimism in the midst of darkness. This paper attempts to define and elaborate the concept of hope and its many dimensions. It will discuss the sources of hope that human beings are inclined towards. Through examples, it illustrates how hope gives a sense of profound meaning to life and existence and displays its contrasting exceptionality with other beings.

Key words: Islam, motivation, faith.

1. The Omnipresence of Hope

Hope is a characteristic that is intrinsic to the minds of human beings irrespective of race, religion, gender and ethnic origins; consequently, human beings are able to express and communicate hope in a manner that is unique to other beings. This attribute given to humankind differentiates them from other species, and therefore, hope is a natural discourse of emotions that humans most conscientiously evaluate as a means of optimism and success.

If we adopt the notion of survival as the main strife for human beings, then it is Hope that is at the essence of that need to survive. Whether it be a success in overcoming distress and obstacles or hope for achieving something, hope prevails as the most tangible of sentiments. Hope is a form of positive anticipation that keeps the soul afloat amidst grief. When we as human beings, realize that we are not the owner of our fate, the source of hope is often found in Faith and a higher Being. If we believe in the fall of Adam and Eve, then we must also interpret hope to be a means of salvation towards the reconciliation of Adam and Eve, and thus, the birth of human civilization.

2. Driving Achievements & Overcoming Distress

Hope is the companion of power, and mother of success;
for who hopes strongly has within him the gift of miracles.
--Samuel Smiles

Human history has unfolded countless successes of leaders, communities and individuals: none of which would have been possible without the element of Hope in those accomplishments. As mentioned earlier, this derives from the intrinsic attribute that is unique to humans. Hope spurs creativity, the desire to innovate and discover. Hope has the phenomenal power to give strength in weakness. It is this very quality amongst characteristics such as patience, compassion, and forgiveness that allows us to be rational beings given the power to exercise free will through conscience.

The profound prevalence of hope in humans allows us to strive for survival in dire circumstances. It seems as though that the need to survive is so strong that hopefulness is the sole remedy from the fear of being extinct. If we speculate on the behaviour of war victims, we often find that those are the people that hope and work most for a better future. Thus it seems as though that the more calamitous a situation is, the more that hope thrives in those individuals to overcome these hardships. Therefore, Hope implies a certain level of perseverance. Often in a crisis, communities who are of a certain Faith, religion or spiritual guidance apply their hope in the Divine to find peace and calmness. In first world nations, there has been an inclination to turn towards psychology and psychiatry as an outlet for discontent and is viewed by many as a more concrete and scientific approach to building a sense of hope. Regardless of the many channels, whether it is Divine Faith or Science that are exercised to achieve contentment, Hope plays a powerful role in establishing that goal.

3. Essence of Religions

Hope is inherent in Religion. Humans can never be really fulfilled if they believe that after this almost-too-small-a-period called life everything will end. We need, almost demand, another life, an after-life where we will reap what we sow. All religions be it Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism or Islam, originated with a divine covenant that generated hope leading to building confidence in the minds of its followers from ancient to the modern eras. Hope inspires its followers to believe that even if the whole world embraces a lie, some higher force will nurture the truth in you.

4. **Hope and Islam**

Islam emerged and was bestowed to humanity in a time when there was a need to revive social, political and economic justice in societies that had been devoid of all three. So it is of no coincidence that when the Prophet Mohammad (SAW) brought the message of Islam and its inherent practice of justice, non-discrimination and equality for women, slaves, the poor and the disadvantaged of society, it was a revolutionary change that contradicted the ancient cultures and traditions of Arab tribes. It thus gave these oppressed groups a sense of hope, optimism and a rightful place in society.

The religion of Islam takes a systematic and comprehensive approach towards the nurturing of hope. Islam looks at the root causes of hopelessness and comprehensively addresses these issues. It engenders and encourages values that kindle the torch of hope and keep it ablaze. Accountability, Forgiveness, Compassion, Moderation in words and practices are embedded in the fundamental teachings of Islam.

Islam recognizes the differences among people and enjoins respect for the beliefs and values of different races and religions. Belief in the Prophets of other religions is an article of faith in Islam. The unity of the Creator and of humankind, call for love, patience, peace, justice and equality—these are the essence of all the religions which came through the Holy Prophets and Messengers of Allah starting from Prophet Adam (AH), Prophet Nooh (Noah) (AH), Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) (AH), Prophet Daud (David) (AH), Prophet Musa (Moses) (AH), Prophet Isa (Jesus) (AH), and the last Prophet Mohammad (SAW). Islam not only recognizes all the Messengers but makes no discrimination between them. The Holy Quran says:

The Messenger Mohammad (SAW) believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord and so do the believers. Each one believes in; (a) Allah, (b) His Angels, (c) His Books and (d) His Messengers. They say We make no distinction Between one and another of His Messengers. We hear and obey, oh! Lord and seek your forgiveness (Quran: Surah Al-Baqarah:Verse 285).

Islam attaches great importance to the concept of pardoning of sins by Allah thereby offering hope for the repentant sinner.

Allah, the Almighty, has said: O Sons of Adam, who have transgressed against themselves (by committing evil deeds and sins)! Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: verily, Allah forgives all sins. Truly He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Quran: Surah Az Zumar: Verse 53).

Islam engenders a system of life that encompasses the social, economic, political, judicial, and military aspects of a community. The concepts and practices of Islam are designed to systematically institutionalize hope in communities.

A. Social Hope. Justice is the pre-condition of peace among people, irrespective of creed, faith and colour. The Quran ordains: "Let not hatred of a people incite you to act unjustly". Forceful conversion from other faiths is strictly prohibited in the Quran: "There is no compulsion in religion": "For you, there is your religion and for me, mine." These sublime ideals and injunctions of the holy Quran were realized by Prophet Mohammad (SAW) and his faithful companions in addition to messages of fraternity, justice and peace to all regions of the world, thereby making this world a unique abode of human civilization attaining the pinnacle of glory.

Security, especially for the Muslim women, is guaranteed in Islam as per the code of the Holy Quran and the Prophet's last sermon. The Islamic dress code, particularly that of modesty in appearance, is yet another aspect of security for the Muslim women as it protects their selfhood, generating a hope that they are safe anywhere they remain.

B. Economic Hope. *Zakat* and *waqf*, two major sectors of Islamic endowments as implemented by Prophet Mohammad (SAW) and his virtuous companions, form the basis of an economic system which ensures economic hope through financial security and human dignity. Such funds are not only used to provide charitable assistance to the poor, but also as capital to start a business spurring gainful employment and economic progress.

Islamic banking enables all parties in a financial transaction to share the risk, profit, or loss of the venture. Depositors in Islamic banks can be compared to investors or shareholders who earn dividends when the bank makes a profit or lose part of their savings if the bank posts a loss. The rationale is to link the return in an Islamic contract to productivity and the quality of the project, thereby ensuring a more equitable distribution of wealth, generating hopes for the economically disadvantaged.

C. Political Hope. The principles of universal brotherhood and doctrine of equality of humankind represents one of the very great contributions of Islam to the social uplift of humanity. Miss Sarojini Naidu, an Indian Poet speaking about this aspect of Islam says, "It was the first religion that preached and practiced democracy; for in the mosque, when the minaret is sounded and the worshipers are gathered together, the democracy of Islam is embodied five times a day when the peasant and the king kneel side by side and proclaim, God alone is great." Another example on men's equality is witnessed in Hajj where men of all of all races, colour and ranks meet together in Makkah, as

members of one divine family, clad in two simple pieces of white seamless cloth without pomp or ceremony, repeating “Here am I Oh Almighty at thy command; thou art one and alone; Here am I.” Thus there remains nothing to differentiate the high from the low and every pilgrim carries home the impression of the international significance of Islam.

It is this same democratic spirit of Islam that emancipated women from the bondage of men. Sir Charles Edward Archibald Hamilton says “Islam teaches the inherent sinlessness of man. It teaches that man and woman have come from the same essence, possess the same soul and have been equipped with equal capabilities for intellectual, spiritual and moral attainments.” Islam came as the defender of the weaker one, women, to share the inheritance of their parents. It gave women centuries ago the right of owning property. Prophet Mohammad (SAW) in His last sermon proclaimed that “Women are twin halves of men. The rights of women are sacred. See that women maintained the rights granted to them”.

D. The Quran as an Embodiment of Hope. To claim oneself a Muslim is not sufficient without doing something for it. Islam is not the sum-total of worshippers and worship services attended. It has its own philosophy, socio-economic and political structure for the economic emancipation of the people and spiritual salvation in the Hereafter. The Quran has about 300 verses on economics, 300 on law, ethics and morality, 800 on science and technology and above 1000 on history making it a comprehensive guide for humanity.

E. Scientific Hope. Pursuit of science and reason is of paramount importance in Islam. The Quran says:

There are signs in the heavens and earth for those who believe: in the creation of you, in the creatures God scattered on earth, there are signs for the believers; there are signs for people of sure faith, in the alternation of night and day, in the rain God provides, sending it down from the sky and reviving the dead earth with it, and in the shifting of winds, there are signs for those who use their reason. (Quran: Surah Al Jathiyah: Verse 3-5).

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) reinforced these teachings, emphasizing that understanding comes through scientific endeavour. “*An hour’s study of nature is better than a year’s prayer*”, the Prophet declared. He directed his followers to listen to the words of the scientist and instil unto others the lessons of science’. In his time, China was considered a far off but scientifically advanced civilization. So he urged his followers to go in quest of knowledge even to China’. And the Prophet made the essential distinction:

the revealed Book, as well as his own teachings, were exhortations, an invitation to reason and study what exists and can be discovered not scientific pronouncements in and of themselves.

5. The Greatest Gifts from the Creator

The presence of hope and the right to choose are perhaps the two greatest gifts that our Creator has bestowed on us. Whereas all other beings on earth follow a cycle of life and death without individual hope or choice, humans have been given this opportunity on earth. The omnipresence of hopefulness in all human beings is proof that hope is not only an important means of survival, but also gives meaning and substance to life itself. Hope has the power to heal and it guides humans through trials and tribulations and gives them a sense of optimism in the midst of darkness.

6. Writer's Recommendations

A. Recognize Hope. Concerted effort should be made towards recognition of the all-important role of hope. Its power to move individuals and communities to overcome distress and achieve the impossible should be acknowledged with appropriate importance and emphasis.

B. Education on Hope. Due importance ought to be given to the thorough study of hope. Its sources and origins should be meticulously examined in addition to ways and means to keep the torch of hope burning. This also calls for analyzing, upholding and propagating the teachings of leaders and personalities who gave hope to millions over the period of human history.

C. Internationalization of Hope. There is no denial of the fact that the World Today needs hope. This leads us to the important corollary that Hope needs to be told to the World. Collective effort should be made towards internationalization of hope. The United Nations may play the unique and pioneering role of declaring World Hope Day and thereby instil a sense of importance and urgency on the conceptualization of hope in countries round the globe.

Why write about hope? There are a million things to write about, talk about and discuss. There is fuel to be discovered, there are genes to be duplicated, there are crimes to be solved, why spend time talking about something that is apparently so innate, so basic? Because we need to be reminded of hope. Hope needs to be remembered. We have hope. No matter how many wars have been fought, no matter how many lives have been mistaken for non-existence we have to remember that we have hope- to change it all. Hope can be our saviour because it is the last thing to die.

Author's Note

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Post-Foundational Hopes for Eco-Social Transformations in an Era of Globalization and Global Climate Change

Whitney Bauman

Abstract: Many ideas of hope have roots in our religious traditions. In the Euro-West, ideas of hope have been shaped by the Christian tradition in particular. In this paper I argue that most of these ideas of hope are “foundational” understandings of hope. That is, they are visions of hope for a better future that are made certain through understandings of a deity that will ensure that “everything will be alright” or, on the other hand, through an understanding of a lost, pure nature that we can somehow save or re-gain. This paper explores what happens to these ideas of hope when foundations in our understandings of God are challenged through globalization, and foundations in our understandings of nature are challenged through the process of global climate change. In order to maintain hope for a better planetary future, I argue that we need a concept of hope that emerges from the planetary present worlds, rather than concepts of hope that are based upon (false) foundations in the future. Using the work of Ernst Bloch, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and Bruno Latour, I argue that a post-foundational, planetary hope will be more useful in motivating actions to mitigate the damage done by global climate change.

Key words: Planetary, Spivak, Deleuze, Guattari, Latour, Bloch, Death of Nature, Death of God, Environmental Ethics.

In the future much more than the simple *defense* of nature will be required; we will have to launch an initiative if we are to repair the Amazonian ‘lung’, for example or bring vegetation back to the Sahara.¹

Claims about the “Death of God” and the “Death of Nature” suggest that secure foundations for ontology and epistemology in need of simple defense, such as “God-Given” or “Natural,” do not describe accurately the experience of being human in the evolving planetary process of which we are a part. The contemporary ‘cultures’ of post-modernity, brought on by the forces of globalization that began at least with the European era of exploration, is now matched by a contemporary, post-modern understanding of ‘nature’ brought about in part through the false modern, colonial assumptions about nature as “pure” and separate from culture. It is clear that foundations in both God/Culture/Thought and Nature/Material/Physical, have caused violence to human and earth “others.” Furthermore, hope based in

these “secure foundations” as “god-given” or “natural,” can aide in the daily thwarting of responsibility for our deeply embodied contexts. Through doing so, we are taken “out of the depths” of the evolving grounds in which we live.² Hope that is not tied to eco-social contexts then, serves to perpetuate foundational thinking.

Through closing off the future in a single vision, such hope can quickly become apocalyptic certainty (Catherine Keller) and aid in the process of assimilating differences into its own understanding of a unified “better” future.³ This type of hope is a colonizing hope that must assimilate all “others” into its own reality. In this brief chapter, I argue that re-locating Ernst Bloch’s understanding of open-ended hope into a framework of ecological (“The Not-Yet-Become”) and social/cultural (“The Not-Yet-Conscious”) contexts, may provide us with a version of hope that opens us onto the “others” of the world, and provides *grounds* (rather than eternal foundations) for working toward a different future while leaving the future (and our understandings thereof) open to adaptations as our ecological and social contexts require. This post-foundational understanding of hope, then, may mitigate violence toward the “other” that results in some *acontextual*, utopian visions of hope, and re-insert “hope” within the natural-cultural (Donna Haraway)⁴ worlds that we as human beings inhabit. In concluding, I argue that a postfoundational hope finds fertile grounds in Latour’s concept of “the collective”⁵ and in Deleuze and Guatarri’s understanding of “the rhizome.”⁶ From these grounds, hope becomes an emergent phenomenon that engages both past and future horizons of thought from the present “grounds” of change/natality that we experience in the world. Because it is not “out of this world,” because it is not secured through eschatology or eternal origin, it opens us onto the many possibilities of our meaning-full present historical, ecological, and cultural contexts. Human beings, as eco-social, meaning-making creatures, can thus begin to take responsibility for how our visions of hope shape the worlds in which we live.

1. Foundationalism: Hope as Apocalyptic Certainty

From at least the time of Hume (in recent Euro-western memory) the problems of foundational thinking in the West have become more and more apparent. Descartes’ Clear and Distinct thoughts *and* the subsequent critique of them began the dismantling of the attempts to place foundations for knowledge in either Ideas *or* Matter. Both divine revelation and natural law proved unstable in a world that was increasingly becoming pluralistic through exploration in the era of colonization. It is important to remember that Descartes wrote his *Meditations* only after extensive travel and observations of cultures and systems of thought different from his own. Furthermore, contact with human and non-human others set off reflection in the West about what human “nature” was, or what the “state of nature” might

be. Too often, the response was a foundational one: human nature is defined by the Euro-Western image and all “others” must be assimilated, silenced and/or “backgrounded”.⁷ The same was true for the different non-human natures encountered by the colonizer: whether seen as wasteland or paradise,⁸ natures had to be brought into the European understanding of “nature” or be destroyed, backgrounded, etc.⁹

I argue, along with others, that the foundational understandings of God, Truth, and Nature in the Christian West—the one, True, God, created all of the world out of nothing—accompanied by the hope that this God would fulfil the promise of a New Kingdom from the future—Christian Eschatology—provided a hope that became a source of strength for colonizing human and earth others. In other words, despite what theologians such as Jürgen Moltmann¹⁰ or Wolfhart Pannenberg¹¹ suggest still today, hope based upon such certain foundations indeed *does* become certainty.¹² Through having this type of certainty, based upon a past origin and future end that is “out of this world” the believer never has to pay attention to the claims of human and earth others. Rather, he/she mimics the omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence of the God he/she claims and believes to worship. The believer brings into embodiment, through hope in the certainty this type of foundation offers, the colonial attitude that wreaks havoc on human and earth others.

The problem is that genealogy and teleology claim to see too far into the past and too far into the future than is possible. We can never get out of the present point we are in to see a clear future or discern the definite past.¹³ In this emerging, evolving, nature-culture, there is only so far we can see, smell, taste, hear, and touch. This is precisely the implication of being contextual creatures. We can see, hear, taste, smell, and touch *nothing* beyond a certain point of the evolving spectrum of life. Foundations become a way of making *certain* and universal a specific contextual affirmation of the experiences of one people or even one person. If we were to acknowledge the limits to human horizons, in the sense I am describing here, then uncertainty and openness would replace the logic of domination that accompanies foundational thinking. In other words, rather than supporting one’s experience as Universal—through mistaking limit for foundation—the nothingness beyond our experiential horizons would open our epistemologies, our desires, and our hopes onto the mystery of that which is beyond our own limited conceptual and experiential capacities.

Though both past origins and future certainties lead to colonizing and violent understandings of hope, I deal in this paper with only the future aspect.¹⁴ Often the not-yet future is thought of in the same way as the distant, mysterious past: in a final, certain, foundational way. That is, too much is said past the experiential *nihil* of our horizons. This *nihil*, which theologian Gordon Kaufman refers to as mystery,¹⁵ is precisely not no-thing, it is

everything but not any one thing: the beyond which our language and concepts cannot go; the mysterious grounds of *creatio continua*. This nihil provides no foundation; rather it is an experiential description of what it is like to be becoming in an always embodied, always evolving nature-culture. What is needed is a recognition that we act daily from these contexts out of faith and hope, rather than certainty.¹⁶

Faith and hope are, as Paul Tillich and many other theologians and philosophers have noted, the opposite of certainty. Why, then, do so many people give up faith and hope for certainty in thought-systems? If faith is only tied to reason and certainty, then hope becomes subjective and anthropocentric. If, rather, faith as the grounds from which we live takes *place*, then hope for the future becomes hope for planetary becoming. Only with this sort of hope do we begin to envision the radically different ways that continuing creation can become.

2. Ernst Bloch: Not Yet Conscious, Not Yet Become

Ernst Bloch's *The Principle of Hope* is an effort from within a bio-historical moment to articulate this radically open future.¹⁷ His understandings of the "Not-Yet-Conscious" and "Not-Yet-Become" are helpful for understanding the way in which nature (the Not-Yet-Become) and culture (the Not-Yet-Conscious) describe a future that can be understood as emergent. Bloch famously critiqued western thought and philosophy especially for being trapped in the past. For Bloch, "previous philosophers went about" philosophy describing the future from the past "with their form, idea of substance posited as being finished, even postulating Kant, even dialectical Hegel."¹⁸ That is, reality was already fully formed in concepts when these philosophers approached a description of reality. In such a way, these philosophers approach the world as if their ideas shaped it *ex nihilo* from a foundation. The transcendent point re-capitulates the evolving process of reality into its own terms, in this way reifying all of life into static categories.¹⁹ Bloch argues that these philosophies never have room for newness, for the "not-yet" because everything that "arises" is described from the past: the future is cut through the application of concepts to the natural-cultural worlds as if that world were nothing outside of these concepts. Thus, the only form of "hope" here is found in the certainty of the past: the new is written, dictated, and understood from the past and is thus not really anything new.

Bloch's critique is waged at future as *futurum*, or that which comes from the past. Hope for change, for the future, from this perspective is hope that the past will remain the same, or worse, certainty in a concept that remains eternally "true." For Bloch, "Only with the farewell to the closed, static concept of being does the real dimension of hope open."²⁰

In refuting the “past-thinking” dominant at the turn of the 20th century, Bloch articulates a relational understanding of both knowledge and “nature.” “The supposed ‘nature of man’, in the sense rigid research into basic drives understands it, has been cross-bred and broken up hundreds of times in the course of history ... all definitions of basic drives only flourish in the soil of their own time and are limited to that time.”²¹ Both our “natures” and our histories exist together in context. It is from this context that we can stand and look backward and forward toward the horizons of our present experience. “The conscious field,” writes Bloch, “is so narrow, and on all sides it shades off into darker edges and dissolves.”²² However, beyond those edges is not empty “nothing;” rather it is in the meeting of these edges of experience and consciousness that newness emerges; newness is released into the evolving world. Bloch describes our awareness of it as a meeting of mind and matter: “The kindling place of inspiration lies in the *meeting* of a specific genius, i.e. creative propensity with the propensity of a time to provide the specific content which has become ripe for expression, forming and execution.”²³ There is then a meeting of human consciousness, human culture, and human history, with the evolving natures in which we live. Bloch truly thinks nature and culture together and in the process creates a space for real hope for the not-yet future.

This future is not totally acontextual nor is it re-discovery. Bloch does not reject *futurum* for its binary opposite, *adventus*. The spectrum of “the new” in Western thought has oscillated between these two extremes which, similar to the binary of universalism and relativism, are both acontextual. Bloch’s newness is emergent, in that it breaks open extant, static, categories we have for thinking of “life”, “reality”, “nature”, “culture,” and also contextual, arising out of and for contexts. This continuously creative process, not determined by any preordained future, but contextual and open toward the “Not-Yet-Become”, provides a space for thinking *with* the evolving nature-cultures in which we live. It provides a place where humans are really at home in the world, and, like all other life, are faced with an open-ended future. This is precisely not holism, because the future is open, there is nothing that contains the whole; rather there are mysterious edges beyond which we cannot see but from which, in contact with which, newness emerges. Thus it becomes much more difficult, even if more exciting, to articulate a vision of hope toward which we can move. This vision must be one open to change. This vision for the future, a birth pang of the not-yet-conscious, must be tested by the not-yet-become. The birth of newness, of a new creativity, of future coming out of the continuous creation is never clear-cut. “All beginnings are difficult ... all the more difficult in fact because the newness into which the productive pioneering effort goes is essentially also a newness of the matter in and for itself which is coming up.”²⁴

This understanding of “newness”, much like in the philosophy of science discussions of emergence, moves beyond the old spectrum of eternal return and discontinuous novelty. A major feature of this move is that hope becomes a function of contact between the ever-emergent “not-yet-conscious” and “not-yet-become.” Hope arises out of contexts and is therefore precisely not authoritarian and certain nor naïve and without context. Through our contact with emergent newness, the edges of our knowing and sensing, we can begin to trust that things are not “just this way” or “just that way.” Rather, things are ever open toward the future, toward genuine possibility. Bloch calls this “contact” with the “not-yet-conscious” and “not-yet-become” the utopian function. “The utopian function is ... transcendent without transcendence.”²⁵ It is always from within the process that we hope toward the future and work toward that hope and not from a transcendent space of removal, or from a future already determined by the present/past.

With this sort of hope, we recognize the possibility of failure, and the possibility that our visions will have to change when they are too far removed from the “not-yet” becoming. For it is precisely with, rather than against, the present that we hope. This open-ended understanding of the future of creation suggested through Bloch’s understanding of hope allows us to become within the evolving process of continuing creation. In concluding, I would like to bring Bloch’s understanding of hope into dialogue with a few post-foundational understandings of the relationship between nature/material and culture/thought. In part, this is important because the issue of global climate change more than any other in our time obliterates the distinctions between nature/culture, material/thought. Thus, if our motivating hopes have been placed in the foundation of one or the other, as an unchanging reality, we must begin to find new, non-colonizing sources for our strength/hope for change toward a better planetary future. I end here, then, with a brief discussion of Donna Haraway’s understanding of nature-cultures, Bruno Latour’s understanding of the collective, and Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of nomadic/rhizomatic thought. Bloch’s hope finds traction on the ground with these three thinkers in a way that I think could provide fruitful and hopeful reflections on how we might live into a future marked by the reality of global climate change.

3. Grounds for Hope within evolving, open nature-cultures

Theologian Catherine Keller argues that what we need in place of “foundations” are “grounds” for thinking, grounds for hope, grounds for living together in the world. Our epistemologies and ontologies do not need (and perhaps will never have) foundations in any sort of Ultimate Reality, but we can piece together grounds on which to stand, build, move, and live into the future. As she notes, these grounds are always shifting—something I am

always reminded of living in the San Francisco, CA area. Yet, grounds are all we have.

In many important ways, global climate change is forcing us to realize that we are indeed a part of this planet. What we can call ‘anthropogenic’ and ‘natural’ forcings of changes in the climate and ecosystems are no longer, if they ever were, clear-cut. This also means, much like the insight that all history is interpretation—the hermeneutic circle—that we can never get beyond culture to some sort of pure nature. In other words, there is no one idea of “nature” to save, defend, or champion. Rather, as part of nature, we exist as what Donna Haraway calls “natural-cultural” beings.²⁶ As such, we can never get beyond either side of the continuum. The two terms co-construct our reality as human beings. This has radical implications for epistemology, ontology, and ethics that I think are highlighted in the works of Bruno Latour, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guatarri.

Latour’s concept of “the collective” also collapses nature-culture together. In fact, he wants to get rid of these concepts altogether. He writes, “I use the word [collective] only to mark a political philosophy in which there are no longer two major poles of attraction, one that would produce unity in the form of nature and another that would maintain multiplicity in the form of societies.”²⁷ What he is getting at is the way in which these two terms have been sources of violence and colonization. The collective, brings these two terms together in an on-going process of continuous creation: the collective brings together information into a present, from the past, and for a future. It includes animals, plants, molecules, atoms, chemicals, stars, ideas, imaginations, etc. All of life can present “claims” to the collective. Claims that are ignored by the collective serve to destabilize it in the future, to open it up toward change. In this way, nature becomes as political as anything else. Nature has a say in the ongoing process of continuous creation of which we humans are a part.

Similarly, the concept of “the rhizome” in Guatarri and Deleuze’s work serves to trip up epistemologies and ontologies based upon foundations. Instead of a teleology or genealogy of ideas and materials, we should think of ourselves as parts of a rhizome: no origin and no end, only creative thrusts or off-shoots that lead in new directions. “Making a clean slate, starting or beginning again from ground zero, seeking a beginning or a foundation—all imply a false conception of voyage and movement.” A rhizome is “always in the middle, between things, inter-being, intermezzo.”²⁸ Thus, there is no possibility that a transcendent hope can “save” us through providing “right” thought and action; rather, as human beings, we must constantly “think on the go” as “nomads” in the rhizome. This brings us to reflect on the ever-emergent offshoots that can emerge from the rhizome without claiming one way as *the* way. In other words, hope becomes hope in the “not-yet,” in the

unknown of the future possibilities that human beings might co-create with the “not-yet” of life.

Hope from within this reworking of nature-culture, the collective, and the rhizome, is not the secure type of hope provided by foundations. Rather, it is hope in the present, continuously emerging, with each new possibility for life to live into different directions. Hope literally emerges from the grounds on which we stand. This is good news in light of the fact that our grounds will be changing in the future as a result of global climate change. The more we hold onto old foundational hopes, the more we will be disappointed and give into despair when there is less and less “pure” nature to save, conserve, or preserve. From this post-foundational hope, we can begin to act as “partners” with rather than arbiters of the natural-cultural worlds we hope to live into.²⁹ That is, we move in many directions toward many constructions of what our worlds might become; but always open to the claims that the non-human thought-world has upon our ideas. This “hope” opens us onto our eco-social contexts, and injects meaning into each and every moment of becoming. In this way, it provides motivation through the recognition of possibilities for change toward living *with* the rest of the world rather than outside of it.

Notes

¹ Felix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. by Ian Pindor and Paul Sutton, Continuum Press, London, 2000, p. 66 (emphasis mine).

² The metaphor of “grounds” vs. “foundations” used throughout is taken from Catherine Keller, “Talking Dirty: Ground is Not Foundation” in *EcoSpirit: Religions and Philosophies for the Earth*, Fordham University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 63-76. This edited volume was the product of a conference I participated in at Drew University in October 2005, “Ground for Hope: Faith, Justice, and the Earth.”

³ See Catherine Keller, *Apocalypse Now and Then: A Feminist Guide to the End of the World*, Beacon, Boston, 1996.

⁴ See, eg: Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, Free Association, London, UK, 1990, p. 150.

⁵ Bruno Latour, *The Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2004.

⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN, 1987, pp. 3-25.

⁷ Val Plumwood describes this process of “backgrounding” and the overall “logic of domination” well in: Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of*

Nature, Routledge, New York, 1993, p. 60; cf: Val Plumwood, *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason*, Routledge, New York, NY, 2002.

⁸ A good analysis of both views can be found in Carolyn Merchant, *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture*, Routledge, New York, NY, 2003.

⁹ In other words, colonized lands were made to mimic the colonizers understanding of what “nature” looks like. See, eg, Carolyn Merchant, *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender, and Science in New England* University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1989.

¹⁰ See Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, SCM Press, London, UK, 1967. Interestingly, Moltmann’s own “theology of hope” was very much influenced and inspired by Ernst Bloch. However, I argue that he misses the radical point of the “not-yet” in his affirmation of *ex nihilo* creation (foundational origin) and eschatological kingdom (future certainty).

¹¹ See Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, Macmillan, New York, NY, 1968; cf: Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1991-1998, vol 2, ch. 7, part 3; and vol. 3, ch. 15.

¹² Both argue that hope is not certainty, but neither delivers on this proclamation in the end. Recourse is made to the certainty of God’s future (already fully formed) and/or to the foundation *in* the One, True, God, Creator and Redeemer. Thus, hope becomes certainty that this God will save. Even the argument that the future is God’s and human beings can’t know the future still translates into something like: God secures the future, and we know something of it because it has been revealed by the same God. In other words, hope is certainty.

¹³ This is one of Gadamer’s great insights about hermeneutics in his *Truth and Method*. See especially Part II.II.

¹⁴ My dissertation, “From *Creatio ex Nihilo* to *Terra Nullius*: The Colonial Mind and the Colonization of Creation”, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CA, 2008, deals with the problem of “origins” in the understanding of creation as *creatio ex nihilo*.

¹⁵ See Gordon Kaufman, *In Face of Mystery: A Constructive Theology*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1993; cf: Kaufman, *In the Beginning ... Creativity*, Fortress, Minneapolis, MN, 2004.

¹⁶ This acting and deciding and knowing in uncertainty is nothing new, it is only recognized now. See, e.g., David M. Lodge and Christopher Hamlin, eds., *Religion and the New Ecology: Environmental Responsibility in a World of Flux*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, IN, 2006, p. 16: “Taking action in the face of uncertainty is the normal condition of

human decision making.” Thus, the “problem of action” in post-foundational thinking becomes the recognition that acting is and always has been in conditions of uncertainty.

¹⁷ I should justify my use of Bloch, who drew from the metaphors of Joachim of Fiore. Bloch’s understanding of Fiore was not totalized; he didn’t map it onto the world, rather it was the principle of existing toward an unknown future that Bloch capitalized on. Likewise, I should note that there has been feminist critique of Bloch’s “hope” for falling into the white colonizing mentality of frontier. I take those critiques to heart, but try to re-narrate Bloch’s “hope” from within the context of evolving nature-cultures. See, e.g.: Catherine Keller, *Apocalypse Now and Then: A Feminist Guide to the End of the World*, pp. 120-126.

¹⁸ Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans by Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, and Paul Knight, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1986 ed., p. 6.

¹⁹ Bloch sees Marx here as the first true philosopher in a long time; as one who thinks with openness that he suggests is required to be response-able to the world in which we live.

²⁰ Bloch, *Principle of Hope*, 18.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 68-69.

²² *Ibid.*, 114.

²³ *Ibid.*, 124.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 146. Again, Bloch notes here his high esteem of Marx: “The very power and truth of Marxism consists in the fact that it has driven the cloud in our dreams further forward, but has not extinguished the pillar of fire in those dreams, rather strengthened it with concreteness” (146).

²⁶ Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, Routledge, New York, NY, 1991, pp. 150ff.

²⁷ Bruno Latour, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences Into Democracy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2004, p. 59.

²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 25.

²⁹ Carolyn Merchant develops a notion of “partnership” ethics in *Reinventing Eden*. Similarly, Val Plumwood works out an ethic of “negotiation” with the rest of the natural world in *Environmental Culture*.

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Is Hope Culture Bound?

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Abstract: M.J. Abolghasemi and S. Naderi Farsani develop a theory on culture and cognition in 2004. Based on that theory all human beings living in different societies and cultures understand subjective and objective phenomena through five distinct windows: science, philosophy, religion, myth, and mysticism. These windows based on that theory are five different glasses that people depending on some determined variables have been wearing from the very beginning of the human history. Thus, to examine a concept such as "hope" under such theoretical framework, one expects people living in a society dominated with each of the above Meta- paradigms or worldviews to approach a concept such as "hope" differently both in theory and practice. In short, this article emphasizes that a concept such as "hope" is culture bound, since any culture is originated with a particular and dominating worldview and, also, any worldview has its own system of meaning construction. The article responds the following questions: 1. What is the Place of a Worldview in a Culture? 2. Do hope and the act of hoping/or the predisposition to hope differ from culture to culture? 3. What are those variances and what accounts for them? 4. How is hope differently instantiated among cultures? 5. What are those instantiations?

Key words: Concrete culture, cognitive culture, worldview, meta-paradigm, Ontology, Teleology, anthropology, axiology, hope, despair

“Hope” can be viewed from different macro or micro perspectives. We are going to approach it from a macro stance such as a worldview. It is from this place that we recognize why Francis Bacon declares: “Hope is a good breakfast, but a bad supper.”¹ Or why in a religious culture ‘hope’ is considered as a religious duty for the pious and “despair” as a sign of heresy.² From this point of view we can also explain and even predict why in some societies “hope” is dominant whereas in some others it is displaced by “despair”.

Every culture is originated with a particular and dominating worldview and, also, any worldview has its own system of meaning construction. Thus any mental entity or any manifestation of such conceptual entities is the outcome of a worldview or meta-paradigm that is in fact the heart of that culture³. Damen, L. in 1987 in this respect defines culture as humankind's primary adaptive mechanism:

Culture: learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day- to-day living patterns. These patterns and

models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind's primary adaptive mechanism.⁴

However, Kluckhohn, C., and Kelly, W.H., in 1945 view culture as a potential guide for behaviour.

By culture we mean all those historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, rational, and irrational, which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behaviour of men.

Culturally speaking, all concepts in general and a concept such as "hope" in particular are generated through a system of meaning construction that itself is produced based on the macro dictates of various macro beliefs of a worldview. At the same time, a worldview via its epistemological, anthropological, ontological, teleological, theological and praxiological presuppositions controls a culture.⁵ That is why we consider culture as the most prominent variable as far as a concept such as hope is concerned.

1. What is the Place of a Worldview in a Culture?

Worldview is a term for what is also called Cognitive Culture. This is the mental organization in each individual's mind of how the world works. Expressions of commonality in individual worldviews make up the cultural worldview of the group. This leads to the social culture, the way people relate to one another in daily activities, and how they cooperate together for the good of the group as a whole, called the society.⁶ Webster defines worldview as "a comprehensive, esp. personal, philosophy or conception of the world and of human life."

Weaver in 2003 believes worldview is the head of a culture. He adds:

This comprehensive philosophy is ultimately founded upon four institutions⁷. These four institutions are the elements of all-rational, intelligent thought. All deep, intellectual⁸ thought is rooted in one or more of these four concepts: Religion, Politics, Economics, and Science. An individual's worldview is based entirely upon his inclusive perception of these four concepts and upon his personal understanding of how society is best served by this perception.

In his article on the philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, H.P. Rickman writes:

[T]here is in mankind a persistent tendency to achieve a comprehensive interpretation, a Weltanschauung, or philosophy, in which a picture of reality is combined with a sense of its meaning and value and with principles of action...

F. Heylighen in 1996 advocates the same idea and believes that a worldview prepare such a framework through which the members of any society define reality and see a vision for their lives. He says:

What we need is a framework that ties everything together, that allows us to understand society, the world, and our place in it, and that could help us to make the critical decisions which will shape our future. It would synthesize the wisdom gathered in the different scientific disciplines, philosophies and religions. Rather than focusing on small sections of reality, it would provide us with a picture of the whole. In particular, it would help us to understand, and therefore cope with, complexity and change. Such a conceptual framework may be called a world view.

Some intellectuals concentrated on the integration of worldview as the necessity of modern societies for decades. The Belgian philosopher Leo Apostel in 1925-1995 and his colleagues have devoted their lives to the development of such an integrating worldview. In their treatise *Worldviews: From Fragmentation To Integration* in 1994 they define a worldview as follows:

A worldview is a system of co-ordinates or a frame of reference in which everything presented to us by our diverse experiences can be placed. It is a symbolic system of representation that allows us to integrate everything we know about the world and ourselves into a global picture, one that illuminates reality as it is presented to us within a certain culture.

Dr Ray Lubeck in 2007 adapted David K. Naugle view ⁹ and believes that the relation between culture and worldview accounts for all elements, components and institutions of a society such as education, policy, economy, communication, law, language and so on. He declares:

A worldview is the perspective from which I look at and make decisions about all the areas that make up my life. A

worldview is made up of all the things that I assume are true, and which seem to me to be common sense. Every person accepts certain beliefs which they cannot prove, and these beliefs will colour and shape the way that we view everything else in life.

James W. Sire, in *Discipleship of the Mind*, defines worldview as “... A set of presuppositions... that we hold ... about the makeup of our world.”

Funk in 2001 notes:

The meaning of the term worldview ... seems self-evident: an intellectual perspective on the world or universe. Indeed, the 1989 edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines world-view as a “... contemplation of the world, [a] view of life”.

The *OED* defines *Weltanschauung*¹⁰ as “... [A] particular philosophy of life; a concept of the world held by an individual or a group.”

Ken Funk studies worldview both in the context of the universe and in the context of the self and finally believes: “A worldview is the set of beliefs about fundamental aspects of Reality that ground and influences one's perceiving, thinking, knowing, and doing.”

After reviewing worldview elements and definitions presented by many investigators of the field such as Leo Apostel in 1930, and Funk in 2001 and others, Abolghasemi and Naderi in their book *Culture Recognition* in 2005 make the relation between culture and worldview more clear and advocate that to study any concept such as “hope” both in theory and practice, one should at first probe the seven vital elements of worldview that any member of any society may presuppose including ontology, epistemology, anthropology, axiology, teleology, theology, praxiology and other building blocks providing responses to macro questions of ones worldview.

Referring to figures 1 & 2 at the end of paper, we believe members of a society based on their worldview presuppositions provide a system of meaning construction that controls all their abstract and concrete affairs including hope both in theory and practice. Thus based on such a conceptual framework all domains of life such as economic, political, recreational, educational and religious institutions and systems are cognitive culture oriented.

2. Do Hope & The Act of Hoping / or The Predisposition to Hope Differ from Culture to Culture?

When a worldview is considered as the heart of a culture and while any system of meaning construction is driven from a worldview, as a consequence we expect different cultures dominated by different worldviews to manifest “hope” and also “the act of hoping” differently.

To scrutinize this difference in various concrete cultures, we need to observe different cognitive cultures carefully. After studying many cultures and also sub cultures in Iran, the Middle East, and some other parts of the world, we developed a view on culture and cognition in 2004 based on which all human beings living in different societies and cultures understand subjective and objective phenomena through five distinct windows: science, philosophy, religion, myth, and mysticism. These windows based on that view are five different glasses that people, depending on some worldview oriented variables, have been wearing from the very beginning of human history. Thus, to examine a concept such as "hope" under such theoretical framework, one expects people living in a society dominated with each of the above Meta paradigms or worldviews to approach "hope" differently both in theory and practice. In the following discussions we probe the concept of cognitive culture in more detail and show how “hope” and any “act of hoping” is already culture bound.

Through deep discussions at the Hope Conference we, nevertheless, arrived at a conclusion that a predisposition and potentiality to “hope” is universal, innate and shared equally by all humans all around the world. Some believe it is a biological capacity in the brain, others advocate it as a sort of energy that God has granted to all humans. We believe it is however the very machine of worldviews that manipulates this potentiality and predisposition.

3. What Are Those Variances & What Accounts for Them?

Cultures are more than language, dress, food and customs. Michelle LeBaron in 2003 says:

Cultural groups may share race, ethnicity, or nationality, but they also arise from cleavages of generation, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, ability and disability, political and religious affiliation, language, and gender - to name only a few... Since worldviews contain and shape cultures¹¹, working effectively across cultures requires some understanding of the soil from which cultures come - the seedbed called worldviews.

Our studies showed the analysis of a concept such as “hope” or “the act of hoping” proves some cognitive as well as concrete variances in a target culture. As a culture consists of two significant layers: worldview or cognitive culture and objective manifestations or concrete culture and as it is shown in figure 2 (below), a concrete culture includes the economic, educational, ... and political systems and social institutions of a society but the heart of a culture is worldview that is the system of meta beliefs that controls and also shape the concrete systems of culture such as economy, policy, education, and religion.

Therefore, the concept of “hope” or “the act of hoping” in any culture includes some worldview oriented variances, and also some concrete culture variances. We study, however, only cognitive culture variances in this paper. At the time being, some of the cognitive culture variances will be discussed.

A. Teleological Variances. That which fulfils material and spiritual needs of human beings is the controversial question of intellectual circles for all ages. Two classic examples of opposing views are found in Aristotle and Lucretius, the former a supporter of teleology and the latter a supporter of what is now often called philosophical naturalism, or accidentalism. Aristotle says: “Nature adapts the organ to the function, and not the function to the organ.”¹² Yet Lucretius believes: “Nothing in the body is made in order that we may use it. What happens to exist is the cause of its use.”¹³

Plato¹⁴, argues that it is error to fail to distinguish between the ultimate Cause, and the mere means by which the ultimate Cause acts.¹⁵ Democritus’ teleological view is rejected by Aristotle saying: “Democritus, however, neglecting the final cause, reduces to necessity all the operations of nature. Now they are necessary...”¹⁶

Extrinsic finality and Intrinsic finality are two other classification of teleological views of a cognitive culture. The former consists of a being realizing a purpose outside that being for the utility and welfare of other beings. For instance, minerals are "designed" to be used by plants which are in turn "designed" to be used by animals. The latter consists of a being realizing a purpose by means of a natural tendency directed toward the perfection of its own nature. In essence, it is what is "good for" a being. For example, physical masses obey universal gravitational tendencies that did not evolve, but are simply a cosmic "given." Similarly, life is intended to behave in certain ways so as to preserve itself from death, disease, and pain.

Over-emphasizing extrinsic finality is most employed in mythical cognitive cultures and is often criticized as leading to the anthropic attribution of every event to a divine purpose that some consider it as superstition. For instance, “If I hadn't been at the store today, I wouldn't have found that \$100 on the ground. God must have intended for me to go to the

store so I would find that money." Or, "We won the game today because of my lucky socks." Such abuses were criticized by Francis Bacon,¹⁷ Descartes,¹⁸ and Spinoza.¹⁹ At the same time, intrinsic finality, while more subtle, provides the basis for the teleological argument for the existence of God and or some supernatural force, and its modern counterpart, intelligent design.

The rationale of teleology was explored by Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgement* and, again, made central to speculative philosophy by Hegel and the various neo-Hegelian schools. According to Jean-François Lyotard in 1979 teleology and "grand narratives" are eschewed in a postmodern attitude. Teleology may be viewed as reductive, exclusionary and harmful to those whose stories are erased.²⁰ Against this, Alasdair MacIntyre has argued that a narrative understanding of one's self is liberatory in understanding one's capacity as an independent reasoner and also in understanding one's dependence on others and on the social practices and traditions in which one participates.

Morteza Motahari (1980) believes that a scientific worldview is not able to present a reliable and hopeful foundation for the teleological element of worldviews, consequently for members of a scientific community for whom something like the big bang theory is the dominant source of their teleological knowledge may tend to nihilism, since they see themselves doomed among two inevitable and pre-determined fates. For members in such a society life begins without any meaningful purpose at their birth and ends miserably at their death. At the same time a religious cognitive culture is pregnant with hope since for members in such a society life begins purposefully and will never end by death. However; the pioneers of scientific and empirical thought such as Backen and Hume attacked such a religious hope as superstition and invited members of society to avoid it. Since a cognitive culture or meta paradigm accounts for the future of world in general and the ultimacy of society and man in particular, and their macro presuppositions may construct hope and any act of hoping or in reverse it may destroy the hope and displace it with despair, different cognitive cultures are expected to approach hope or act of hoping differently.

The substance of teleological cognitive cultures include beliefs about purpose in the universe, life, society and human beings. People tend to know what the end of the universe is, and where it is going and whether it is accidental or based on a design.

B. Ontological Variances. Ontology in a worldview can be defined as the beliefs about the ultimate nature of Reality. By such a definition one believes that the universe consists, for instance, solely of matter, energy, and information or there is something outside the material universe. In a naturalist or materialist worldview there is no place for Mind, God, Spirit or any super

natural power. On the other hand, in an idealist Meta paradigm, reality is ultimately non-material and it is spiritual in nature. For such an ontological view there is a supernatural power outside and above nature as creator, designer, and guiding the whole universe. Moreover, there is a moral order to the universe: good is not only desirable but possible, achievable, perhaps even inevitable.

Under such a conceptual framework the meaning construction of 'hope' and any preparation for the act of hoping is already controlled by the ontological variable of the worldview and one expects variances of hope and any act of hoping in these different cultures. Based on the Motahari view the sphere of hope production in the former is limited, while the latter view offers a vast possibility for hope manoeuvre.²¹

Furthermore, there are two other important questions that must be answered as the ontology of a worldview is getting formed: 1) What is Truth? and 2) What is the ultimate test for truth? Regarding the first question there are three major theories with respect to truth: Correspondence, Coherence and pragmatic. Selecting any of these has impacts on the meaning construction in general and the concept of hope and any act of hoping in particular. Funk in 2005 declares:

If you subscribe to the correspondence theory of truth, you believe that truth corresponds to what really is, that there is a direct relationship between true knowledge in your mind or brain and what actually exists outside yourself. If you believe that such a strict definition of truth is unrealistic, you may believe that truth is merely that knowledge which is internally consistent. That is the consistency theory of truth, whose archetype is mathematical logic, where consistency is a necessary condition for any proposition to be considered valid. If you are a pragmatist, you hold to the pragmatic theory of truth: truth is what works. Whether or not knowledge corresponds to external reality and whether or not it is consistent with other knowledge is immaterial. What counts is that what you *believe* to be true leads to valued ends. If it works for you, it is true for you, though it might not be true for someone else.

We studied different cases falling in each of the three truth categories. We observed significant variances of hope and any act of hoping while controlling other variables through homogenizing the influencing factors of the studied cases.

To know what the ultimate test for truth is, a worldview claims to offer valid bases for knowledge based on which motor engine of meaning construction

one uses as well as where the conceptualization process starts. Ken in 2005 says:

You may hold that some authority - some book or person or organization - holds the keys to truth: whatever he/ she/ it says is true. As an empiricist, you may hold that truth is discovered only by empirical inquiry. If you were a rationalist you would say that truth is found through valid inductive and deductive reasoning. On the other hand, you may believe that you know the truth directly through intuition or even revelation.

This ontological view is expected to play a great role in the quantity and quality of “hope” and any ‘act of hoping”. Therefore, we can differentiate types of “hope” and any “act of hoping” under categories such as reason²², revelation²³, empiricism and observation²⁴ mystic experiences²⁵, and also mythical authorities²⁶. We can also rely on books, persons, and organizations as some authorities representing each of the above worldviews.

C. Anthropological Variances. In the context of worldview the term anthropology does not mean usually the study of human culture and human artifacts but it refers to some beliefs about human beings. These ideas are formed in response to some anthropological questions of a worldview including: What is a human being? What is his/her place in the universe? Does he or she have free will? What ought he/she to or not to do? Is the human being basically good or evil?

These questions play some vital roles in relation with human meaning construction systems in general and hope conceptualization and also acts of hoping in particular. An anthropological view may presuppose human being merely as a cosmic accident or just one step in the directionless chain of evolution. From another anthropological stance of a different cognitive culture the human may also be considered as an evolutionary step, that step may nevertheless be a very important one on the path to some valued end. A religious and theist worldview may see the human being as the gem of God's creation or even a creature created in God's own image. At the extreme, even a worldview may consider the human as a part of God or even a god him/herself. Each of the above ideas grows different seeds of hope on the same ground. Though the land is unique for all the cases, the quality and quantity of seeds turns out to be different; therefore, hope products are expected to wear various dresses and colours. Some may be fruitful and delicious while the rest may never have enough potential to grow or if they grow, they may produce fatal and Poisonous fruits.

To know if the human has free will, anthropological stances of different cognitive cultures presuppose various responses based on which deferent seeds are produced for various hope manifestations. Some may presuppose no will for humans and consider them as mere mechanisms in nature, slaves to instincts and conditions or events beyond their control. Perhaps humans are puppets of God, acting out a script that they had no part in writing. However, other worldviews offer different anthropological views including such views where humans do have the ability to think and act with at least partial freedom though there may be constraints, imposed by the laws of physics and biology or the guidance of God. Through the anthropological presuppositions of few worldviews the free will of human being is denied and thus leaves big questions for cultural researches, such as how one can expect the production of “hope” and “acts of hoping” in a society whose members’ will is already killed by its anthropological prescriptions.

What humans ought to do is another pillar question of one’s anthropological stance. Moreover as different prescriptions of these kinds are observed at the worldview layer of various cultures, one expects various manifestations of hope in the related cultures. The anthropology of a cognitive culture may lead members of a society to believe that they have no obligation to anyone or anything beyond themselves or it may require them to have a responsibility for the well-being of the universe in general and Man in particular. A religious anthropology may oblige the followers to believe in love, obey, hope and even enter into communion with God.

At the same time the question of whether the human being is basically good or evil works as another component of one’s anthropology in a given cognitive culture. This question is fundamental to one’s view of humanity. Based on an anthropological presupposition, one may consider humans to be fallen and fundamentally sinful and also continually striving against their evil nature. Other views may presuppose the human being to be basically good and only in need of the environment and the opportunity to express that goodness. Maybe even more common is the anthropological belief that the human is basically neither good nor evil, but morally neutral from birth. According to this view, whether or not one follows a path of good or evil depends on external influences and strength of will. It goes without saying that choosing each of the above views produces a different seed of hope or even despair to be grown in a related culture.

D. Axiological Variances. It is impossible to overstate the importance of axiological aspects of any cognitive culture in determining one’s behaviour. Ken in 2005 says:

It is the foundation for *all* of your conscious judgments and decisions and therefore the basis for *all* purposive thought

and action. Although some acts are reflexive or instinctive and cannot therefore be ascribed to conscious reference to your beliefs about value, any action based on even the most cursory reflection has its foundation in your standards of what is good or bad, right or wrong.

To identify the relation between the axiological variable of a cognitive culture and any concept such as “hope” or any “act of hoping” is difficult. Funk in 2005 wrote, “Virtually all elements of your worldview, from your epistemology to your anthropology, are intimately related to your axiology and it is your beliefs about the value of things that are the proximate cause for most of your behaviour.” He also believes that the axiological beliefs of one’s worldview are presupposed as a response to some questions such as: What is value? What kinds of value are there? Is value objective or relative? Is value absolute or relative? What is the source of value? What is the highest good?

Leo Apostel in 1994 in his well-known treatise *Worldviews: From Fragmentation to Integration* obviously explains the evaluation component of worldviews in cultures and concepts such as “happiness”, and other ideas of these kinds. He states:

We do not live in a "neutral" world. We admire, love or value certain aspects of the world, while we detest and hate others or find them irrelevant. We enjoy, and we suffer. Some aspects of reality are holy, others profane. A worldview does not only make reality intelligible, but also provides a means of evaluating this reality, as it is expressed in different cultures.

Bart De Moor in 1994 and others under the worldview topic tried to know what happiness and suffering is for feeling and/or conscious beings and what increases or decreases happiness and suffering. Hellemans S. in 1994 and his well known colleagues also under the same subject believe these questions cannot be put aside. Whether the answers are negative/positive, or agnostic they are still answers, and they do suggest that the question of meaning makes sense.

Leo and others in 1994 believe:

An answer to such questions will be more universal, and consequently more objective, if individual systems of value can be integrated into a more global value system. For example, questions about marriage and sexuality or about parent-child relations vary greatly from one culture to

another. But there are no cultures where these questions are irrelevant. A worldview can neither put forward one set of values as the norm in all cases, nor consider the evaluative element of human existence as insignificant. Worldviews will differ insofar as they structure this evaluative element of human existence differently. For example, in more primitive societies, relations with one's own group will be highly valued, while this value is hardly present in the most industrialized groups of our society.

4. How is “Hope” Differently Instantiated Among Cultures & What Are Those Instantiations?

As we discussed before, a worldview or cognitive culture is the set of beliefs about fundamental aspects of Reality that ground and influence all our perceiving, thinking, knowing, and doing in general, and hope construction and conceptualization in particular. Any worldview consists of epistemology, ontology, cosmology, teleology, theology, anthropology, and axiology, praxiology and other building blocks some of which of course couldn't be discussed in this paper. Each of these subsets of worldview is highly interrelated with and affects virtually any concept or act such as “hope”. Hope is instantiated, as a result of macro dictates of any worldview presuppositions in world's cultures.

In a scientific worldview all components, prescriptions, and presuppositions derive directly from experience, observation and the related rationality and experimental reason. Any hope for any action or thought is already passed through experimental and observational filters. So in such a scientific community and culture “hope” is expected to be instantiated scientifically. That is to say the study of hope and any act of hoping must meet scientific methodology and its fundamental principles and evaluation as well as its meaning construction system. I asked Pia Trip, a German Physician, some questions as a way to detect her dominant worldview and also to identify her instantiations of hope dominated by her worldview. As I had already predicted through my knowledge of beliefs within the scientific worldview, she defined hope based on her observation, experience and a scientific methodology. Her actions and intentions regarding “hope” were in a circle dominated by the abilities and also potential limitations of science. Her agnostic attitude toward the ultimate nature of universe, in general and society and humans in particular confined her understanding of hope.

The philosophical worldview on the other hand instantiates “hope” based on reason that is mostly manifested through inductive and deductive judgments. Some beliefs on fate and determinism and also the denial of human will are observed in some philosophical schools of thought and related communities in which a concept such as “hope” or any “act of

hoping” is already displaced to despair, hopelessness, and also nihilism. Generally speaking “reason” is the only building block of any thoughtful decision and action in a philosophical worldview. Hope and any act of hoping has no place beyond rationality though the history of philosophy offers a spectrum for the rationality of hope that at one point is absolute accessible hope and at the other point is absolute nihilism.

In mythical worldviews, however, superstitions form the presuppositions of dominant worldviews and consequently the circle of “hope” and also its instantiations are based on the mythical authorities’ prescriptions. There can be found a direct relation between such a culture’s power to produce hope for bearing the difficulties, hardships, and also sufferings of life, and its cognitive cultural macro prescriptions. Antiquity holds many stories as instances for such a worldview.

The mystic worldview, at the same time, introduces a different window for the members of its community to approach, define and explain reality. The circle of ‘hope” and any “act of hoping” enable the members of the related community to bear easily with the sufferings of life. At the time humans were exhausted with hardships and difficulties of the industrial age and also shortages of scientific methodology regarding both body and spirit of the human and his/her world, an increasing tendency toward this sort of hope all around the world emerged.

However, the religious worldview variances of “hope” is studied in more detail as a way to see how hope is instantiated and what those instantiations are in such a culture. The Islamic worldview in Iran and its meta paradigm of Shia is scrutinized in this respect. Though we discussed only some conceptual cognitive culture or worldview variances in theory and postponed other related worldview variables to other papers and times, we scrutinize Islamic Shia variables regarding some variables of both cognitive and concrete Islamic culture.

Besides Islamic scholar’s philosophical and rational achievements, there are many beliefs based on other Islamic reliable authorities such as the Quran and Ahlulbeit that dictate and inject hope not only in the minds of the pious but require the followers to increase their hope toward their material efforts. In fact the efforts of believers in this world is an indicator for being saved in the latter world.

The following verses and narrations show that the Islamic worldview expect believers to coincide hope with good deeds. In Nahjolbalaghe²⁷ Imam Ali in response to a Moslem that liked to be admonished said: “Never be like those who have hope for being saved on the day of resurrection without any effort at this world”. Prophet Mohammad^(pbh) in this respect admonishes the Moslems to see “hope” only through the seeds they grow every day via their intentions and actions: “This world works as a farm in which some seeds are grown for the life after death”.²⁸ This Hadith²⁹

not only shows the theological and ontological variables of Islamic worldview, but it prescribes some rules for social activities of the believers. Furthermore, in *Sahifeyeh Sajadieh*³⁰ Imam Sajad while praying says: "O, my lord having hope to any body except you is harmful and leads us to a fatal destiny". Based on such a view the immortal source of "hope" and "any act of hoping" is God as the omnipotent. Again, in *Nahjolbalaghe*³¹ Imam Ali relates, "hope" to social life of the Moslems: "What is the meaningless claim of those whose hope is not manifested in their behaviour?" In the same source³² Imam Ali admonishes Moslems to avoid any greediness in vain, and yet not to get hopeless. He says: "Man's nature is in such an amenable position that if seeds of hope grow on its ground, greediness and vain wishes challenge him and if he gets hopeless, grief, regret and misery annihilate him". Finally, In *Ghorarolhekam*³³ Imam Ali says: "The best behaviour is taking a moderate position between fear and hope".

Our brief investigation on the Islamic worldview and its impact on the hope production mechanism indicated that all reliable authorities embrace hope as long as it leads and coincides with good deeds and intentions. Some of the Quranic verses that advocate such an idea are collected as follow:

Whoever hopes to meet his lord, he should do good deeds, and not join any one in the service of his lord³⁴.

But as to him who repents and believers and does good, maybe he will be among the successful³⁵.

...As for the land, my righteous servants shall inherit it³⁶.

Whoever does good whether male or female and ...make him live a happy life, and ...give them their reward for the best of what they did³⁷.

Surely those who believe and those who are Jews and the sbears and the Christians whoever believe in Allah and the last day and does good-they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve³⁸.

Allah has promised to those of you who believe and do good that He will most certainly make them rulers in the earth as He made rulers those before them, and that He will most certainly establish for them their religion which he has chosen for them, and that He will most certainly, after their fear, give them security in exchange; they shall serve

Me, not associating aught with Me; and whoever is ungrateful after this, these it is who are the transgressors³⁹.

Only Allah is your Vali and His Apostle and those who believe, those who keep up prayers and pay poor-rate while they bow⁴⁰.

The above evidences prove that the Islamic worldview expects the followers to consider hope and good deeds coincidentally. Mahdaviat is another religious instantiation of hope in the Islamic-Shia communities and culture. Followers of this believe that a spiritual saviour will appear at earth and put an end to all hardships of the oppressed and also destroy the arrogant rulers. We also collected some data reliable for Moslems on which they reason why any hope must coincide with some good deed. In a way they are considered as some inputs for the praxiology of Islamic worldview.

...Whoever hopes to meet his lord, he should do good deeds, and not join any one in the service of his lord⁴¹.

But as to him who repents and believers and does good, maybe he will be among the successful⁴².

However, for a Moslem like any other human, three questions are posed in respect to hope: 1) Why shall we hope at all? 2) To whom shall we hope? and 3) How can we hope? The Islamic worldview offers many beliefs as reliable authorities for such questions.

5. Conclusion

People in all cultures share the same predisposition and potentiality to hope and any act of hoping. Yet the machine of worldviews and the ideological manipulations of the same innate predisposing of 'hope' offer various productions both in quality and quantity. This paper was an endeavour to study hope from a deep stance such as worldview and its main variables such as anthropology, ontology, teleology, and axiology. It was emphasized that worldview is the headquarter and heart of any culture and it is the presuppositions and prescriptions of a cognitive culture or worldview that grow the seeds of hope or any act of hoping. Moreover we advocated that all humans from the very start point of their history define reality through five distinct windows: Myth, Religion, philosophy, science, and mysticism. It is evident that studying "hope" via each of these Meta-paradigms will lead us to different systems of meaning construction that introduce different conceptual frameworks for their audiences. That is to say, any culture through dictates of its unique prescriptions and beliefs introduces

different uses of the same potentiality of hope. We also collected some data from authorities of Islamic worldview that grow the seeds of hope for its followers. Yet we never stand in a position to justify them.

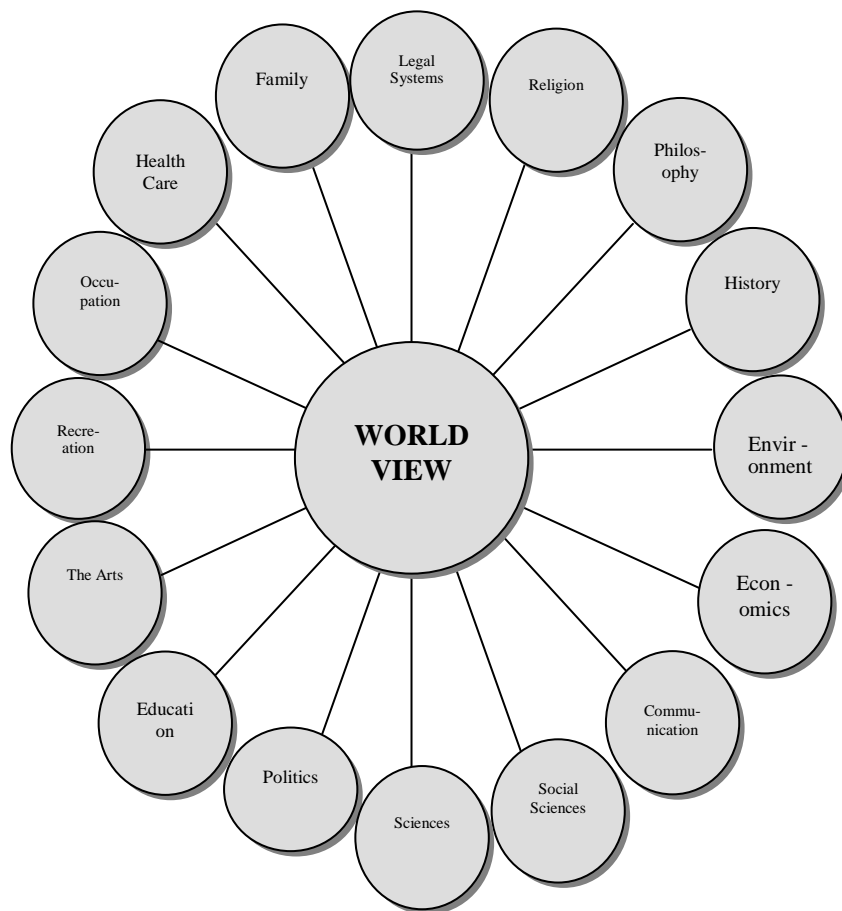


Figure 1. Relation between Worldview and Macro systems in a society

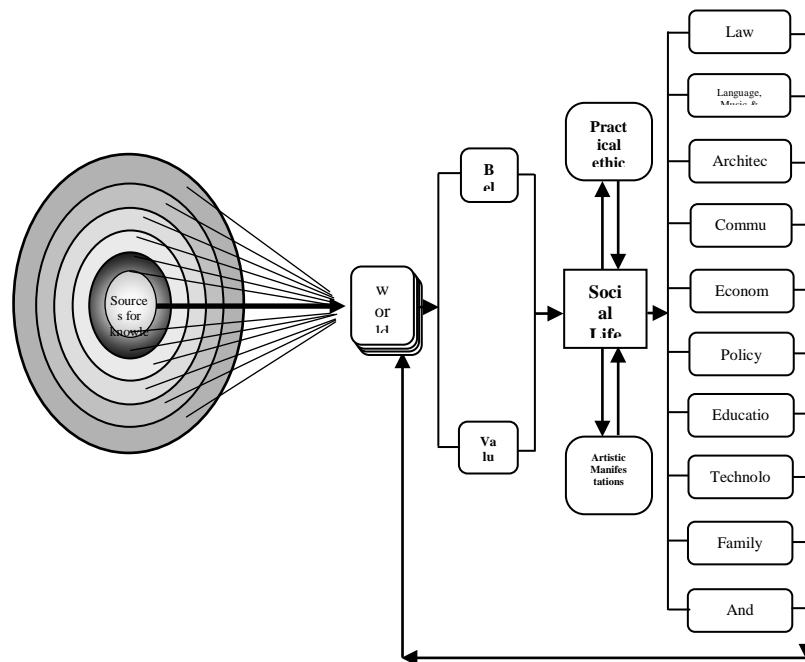


Figure 2. Relation between a Worldview and a Culture

Notes

1. Robert Theobald,1902.
2. The Holy Quran, Sureh 11, Verse 87.
3. Abolghasemi & Naderi 2004.
4. Damen, L. in 1987 , p. 367.
5. Abolghasemi and Naderi 2004.
6. Orville Boyd Jenkins, Last Updated 02 March 2006, 1993, 2001.
7. i.e., underlying ideas or concepts.
8. Philosophical.
9. in Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002.
10. literally, a perception of the world.
11. a series of shared starting points and currencies or values.
12. Aristotle, 384-322 BCE.
13. Lucretius , 99 - 55 BC.

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14. 428/427 BC[a] – 348/347 BC.
 15. Plato, *Phaedo* 99bc.
 16. Aristotle, *Generation of Animals* V.8, 789a8-b15.
 17. "De Dignitate et Augmentis Scientiarum," III, iv.
 18. "Principia Philosophiæ", I, 28; III, 2, 3; "Meditationes", III, IV.
 19. *Ethica*, I, prop. 36 app.
 20. Lochhead, Judy, 2000.
 21. For Further reading study: Morteza, Motahari, *Islamic Worldview*, Sadra Publishing, Tehran, Iran, 1973.
 22. philosophical worldview.
 23. religious worldview.
 24. scientific worldview.
 25. mystic worldview.
 26. mythical worldview.
 27. sermon 150.
 28. Hadith Mashhor (Famous Narration).
 29. Hadith is a Narration that is already said by Prophet or his family (Ahlolbeit).
 30. *Sahifeyeh Sajadieh* is a Prayer Collection of The Shia's 4th Imam.
 31. sermon 160 (*Nahjolbalaghe* is a Sermon Collection of Imam Ali^(pbh) as the first Imam of Shia's).
 32. sermon, 108.
 33. no. 5055 (*Ghorarolhekam* is a Collection of Short admonishes of Imam Ali^(pbh)).
 34. The cave, verse, 110.
 35. The narrative, verse 67.
 36. The prophets, verse, 105.
 37. The bee, verse 97.
 38. The food, verse 69.
 39. The light, verse 55.
 40. The food, verse 55.
 41. The cave, verse 110.
 42. The narrative, verse 67.

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Nahjolbalagheh (Nahjolbalaghe is a Sermon Collection of Imam Ali ^(pbh) as the first Imam of Shia's)

Sahifeye Sajadieh (Sahifeyeh Sajadieh is a Prayer Collection of The Shia's 4th Imam)

Ghorarolkekam (Ghorarolhekam is a Collection of Short admonishes of Imam Ali ^(pbh))

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Part II
Psychological Perspectives

From Cure to Quality of Life: The Shifting Meaning of Hope at the End of Life

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Nicholas E. Pisca, Ana P. Cabrera, and Melody Donboli*

Abstract: A theme of life's final chapter is hope versus hopelessness. Unfortunately, many physicians and laypeople equate hope at life's end with hope for cure, leading to unfortunate consequences. A key reason that physicians may not discuss hospice is that they fear destroying patients' hope. Thus, many seriously ill individuals who may prefer hospice receive this referral only shortly before death, others not at all. Limited research addresses a wider meaning of hope at life's end. At diagnosis, patients usually invest hope in cure. This can lead to a "fighting spirit" and greater likelihood of cure. Unfortunately, many illnesses are not curable. Although some patients fall into hopelessness, others disengage from the goal of cure and seek other goals. Such new goals often concern quality of life - e.g., resuming hobbies, making amends with family, or improving one's relationship with the divine. Although healthcare professionals can be important in aiding patients in "re-goaling", the medical system is not well equipped for this. We use Snyder's Hope Theory, which views hope as a goal-directed process, to widen the discussion of hope at life's end. Through research, theory, and case material, we discuss how the meaning of hope shifts as patients approach death.

Key words: End of life, terminal illness, death and dying, hospice, quality of life, hope theory, goals, re-goaling

1. Introduction

Terminal illness confronts people with a variety of pressing concerns. The dying face a broad array of medical and practical issues, including the treatment of their disease, pain control, choosing a care setting or place to live, drafting a will, and combating symptoms of depression and anxiety. Despite the wide-ranging nature of these issues, there is one phenomenon that is woven throughout - the tension between maintaining hope and falling into hopelessness. Unfortunately, the nature of hope at the end of life is controversial and not well understood. Not all health care providers and behavioural scientists agree on what it is, how it functions, whether or not it is healthy, and how (or if) it should be fostered. In this paper, we will discuss the importance of hope in the last chapter of life, review the limited available research on hope during this time, and offer some directions for future investigation.

2. The Importance of Hope at the End of Life

To understand the importance of hope during the last chapter of life, we must first discuss the complicated socio-medical context in which terminally ill patients find themselves. It is widely known that people are living longer. As a result of advanced medical technology, people are living with progressive and often debilitating illness for greater periods of time than ever before. For instance, one epidemiological study that followed 7,045 healthy smokers and ex-smokers for approximately four years found that participants who eventually developed cancer were told about their disease on average a year or more in advance of passing away, depending on the particular type of cancer.¹

A side-effect of this extended lifespan is that people have the possibility of choosing where and how they will die. On the one hand, patients can choose to pursue “traditional” disease-focused treatments that offer the possibility of more time. This is an excellent option as long as the treatments are likely to work, which they frequently do. Nonetheless, these so-called “life-prolonging” treatments too often do not extend life nor improve the quality of life. At times, they lead to side effects that can seem worse than the disease itself. It is well known, for instance, that chemotherapy can cause nausea, hair loss, and physical weakness. In severe cases, chemotherapy requires hospitalization, which may separate patients from their homes, friends, and families. Disturbingly, in the United States, about half of all patients with chronic illness die in the hospital, even though research has found that 70% of the general public wishes to die at home.^{2,3} Moreover, when Benzein, Norberg, & Saveman interviewed patients with terminal illness, they found that the vast majority wished to live as normally as possible before they died, something that is rarely possible in the hospital.⁴

Thus, many patients choose to consider a different type of care: hospice. Focused on maximizing comfort, hospice care typically entails forgoing disease-focused treatments such as chemotherapy. Patients often are able to return home, where they are visited by nurses, doctors, social workers, chaplains, and other professionals, all of whom work together to maximize quality of life in whatever time is left.

As an illustration, consider the case of Sylvia, an 85 year-old widowed woman with metastatic breast cancer. Among other treatments, Sylvia pursued surgery and chemotherapy, neither of which worked. After a few months (much of which was spent in the hospital) her hair had fallen out, she was vomiting several times a day, was barely eating at all, and was so weak that she began using a wheelchair. She felt so miserable that her physician expected her to die within a couple of weeks; she reported wanting to die even sooner. Eventually she and her doctor determined that it was highly unlikely that continuing disease-focused treatment would extend her life and that hospice was the right choice for her. Because of the severity of

her symptoms, she was admitted to an inpatient hospice unit. On hospice, her chemotherapy was discontinued, she was given an individual room with a window, was invited to wear street clothes instead of a hospital gown, was offered a wig to cover her baldness, and received aggressive treatment for pain and nausea. Within a week, she was out of her wheelchair, participating in activities and demanding the keys to her car. Although this experience is not the norm, it also is not uncommon. In fact, it is the point of hospice. A recent study even found that patients with heart failure and certain types of advanced cancers live longer on average under hospice care than under disease-focused treatment.⁵

Unfortunately, many patients who may prefer a hospice approach receive this referral only days or hours before death, while others are not made aware of the option at all.⁶ Pestillo and Bass found that a large number of patients were admitted to hospice during the late terminal stage when they could not benefit fully from hospice services.⁷ Although the situation is improving every year, according to the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, the mean length time patients spend on hospice care in the United States was 59 days in 2005.⁸ The median length time on hospice, which is a more accurate depiction of the typical patient's experience, was only 26 days.

If the benefits of hospice are so substantial and people often prefer the outcomes it affords, then we must ask why hospice referrals are as infrequent and late as they are. There is no shortage of opinion on the matter, especially from hospice providers. A survey of hospice staff, physicians, and volunteers attributed the principle perceived barrier to receiving hospice services to health care providers' misconceptions about hospice.⁹ Additionally, Mor, Hendershot, and Cryan, concluded that the lack of referrals from healthcare professionals was a major obstacle to early access to hospice services.¹⁰

What does any of this have to do with hope? One study attempted to identify the factors that led health care providers not to refer patients to hospice. Curtis and his colleagues asked the primary care physicians of patients with advanced AIDS to indicate why they sometimes do not discuss end-of-life care with patients, even when appropriate.¹¹ Many physicians cited fearing that such a discussion would destroy patients' hope. In fact, this was the second most cited reason behind only too limited a time during patient consultations to broach such a sensitive topic.

This is in stark contrast to the perception that hospice care providers have of the services that they provide. In fact, hope is a buzzword in the hospice community. A quick internet search reveals that the American states of Florida, California, Ohio, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Texas, Indiana, New Jersey, Michigan, and Maine all have at least one hospice containing the word "hope" in its title, not to mention a few scattered throughout England,

Romania, Russia, Mexico, and India. Obviously, primary care physicians and hospice providers have very different notions of what hope means.

3. (Re-)Defining Hope at the End of Life

Within the medical realm, hope is often equated with hope for a cure or for continued survival.^{12,13,14} Thus, in the aforementioned study by Curtis and colleagues, physicians citing fears that discussing hospice would destroy patients' hope most likely were referring to hope for cure.¹⁵ Using this definition, it is reasonable to fear that discussing hospice might take away hope. At the end of life, however, the challenge for patients is not to protect or maintain this type of hope, but to allow hope to evolve in new directions.^{16,17} Living with an incurable disease does not mean living without hope, it just means redefining it.

That hope can be redefined may seem obvious, but in our experience, this is not apparent to a great many health care providers. Consequently, using the hope-for-cure definition, some scholars have opined that hope should be discouraged in the terminally ill because of the unrealistic and false outcomes it connotes. Others, using a wider conceptualization of hope, believe that hope should be encouraged.^{18,19} We agree with Sullivan, who so eloquently writes,

Hopelessness is not the absence of hope, but an attachment to a form of hope that is lost. If we are tied to a hope for survival that is 'sinking into the deep blue sea,' we will be unable to see the other forms of hope floating before us.²⁰

Unfortunately, research on exactly what sorts of hope "float before" patients at the end of life is relatively sparse. The most common type of investigation involves in-depth qualitative interviews with terminally ill individuals and their families, the purpose of which is to identify what hope means as death approaches. Some of the components of hope at the end of life identified through these means include interpersonal connectedness through relationships with others; developing and working towards attainable aims and grieving the loss of goals that no longer are possible; emphasizing personal attributes and attitudes like determination, optimism, bravery, and composure; recalling uplifting memories; easing the fear of things like pain, dependency, and uncertainty; and viewing one's situation with a sense of light heartedness and humour.^{21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29} Religion and faith in a higher being also can provide forms of hope linked to enlightenment or salvation, though research on the actual effectiveness of faith as a source of hope is mixed.^{30,31,32}

4. Toward a Unified Definition of Hope at the End of Life

As informative as they are, a difficulty with the definitions of hope just discussed is that they are so wide-ranging. If one takes them at face value, it would seem necessary to conclude that hope at the end of life is equivalent to living a satisfying existence. At this point, hope loses much of its unique meaning. The challenge is to develop a definition that identifies what is essential about hope, disentangling it from other related yet distinct phenomena. Moreover, it is important that such a definition lend itself to quantitative measurement, because without such measurement we are unable to directly address physicians' fears that discussing the end of life with patients will lower their hope. We believe that C. R. Snyder's Hope Theory provides a definition fitting these criteria.³³

According to this theory, hope includes three inter-related cognitive components: goals, pathways thinking, and agency thinking. In order to have hope, one first needs something to hope for - a goal. Goals are anything that an individual desires to get, do, be, experience, or create. According to Hope Theory, virtually everything that human beings do in any area of life is directed toward achieving some goal.³⁴ Moreover, goals are conceptualised as the major source of emotion. People experience positive emotions when they perceive movement toward achieving goals and negative emotions when they perceive movement away from achieving them.

The second component of hope is pathways thinking. A pathway is a cognitive route to a goal.³⁵ People engage in pathways thinking when they plan ways to reach their goals.³⁶ It is important to note, however, that the beneficial effects of hope do not come from being able to generate actual pathways, but from the *perception* that such pathways could be created if desired.³⁷ Like many beautiful things in life, hope is in the eye of the beholder.

The third component of hope, agency thinking, is defined as "the thoughts that people have regarding their ability to begin and continue movement on selected pathways toward those goals".³⁸ As in Watty Piper's well-known children's book, *The Little Engine That Could*, agency thoughts such as "I think I can," empower individuals to pursue desired ends.^{39,40}

During the last 15 years, empirical research has demonstrated the benefits of this variety of hopeful thinking. High-hope individuals accomplish their life goals more frequently than their low-hope counterparts, report lower levels of depression and anxiety, experience more life meaning, and may even enjoy lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels.^{41,42,43} Very little work, however, addresses the intersection of this theory of hope and terminal illness.

Nonetheless, this theory provides a useful framework for understanding the shifting nature of hope at life's end. In other words, it can help us to understand the journey from everyday hope, through hope for cure,

to a redefinition of hope at life's end. Normally, healthy individuals pursue a variety of goals in various areas of life.^{44,45} Under ideal circumstances, they are able to generate the pathways and agency necessary to pursue these goals.

Upon receiving a diagnosis of serious illness, however, people are forced to accept a new goal: cure. We believe that the goal of cure is so compelling, in fact, that it is almost always prioritized above all others. Thus, there is a narrowing of hope as it is invested almost exclusively in this single goal. Our modern medical establishment rightfully encourages this type of hope by offering patients numerous treatment pathways. Patients' agency is bolstered by the promise of these treatments along with the encouragement and support of their medical providers, friends, family, and religious communities.

In addition to the aforementioned beneficial effects of hope, it may be that hope also has medically salutary effects. In one study, college-aged women were asked to write down what they would do should they be diagnosed with cancer.⁴⁶ High-hope women were able to generate more possible ways to combat their cancer than low-hope women. When quizzed about their cancer knowledge, hopeful people also were better informed. Should cancer actually arise, all this presumably would lead to a "fighting spirit," better utilization of care, and a greater likelihood of cure.

Of course, even with the most exemplary fighting spirit, cancer and other serious illnesses sometimes are not curable. Gum and Snyder suggest what happens in this case.⁴⁷ In their experience, most people realize that their diseases are not curable as they watch every treatment pathway fail. Because, according to hope theory, the various components of hope reciprocally influence one other, their agency also falters and diminishes. Finally, feeling utterly hopeless about obtaining a cure, they may give up this goal altogether. At this point, some choose a care approach such as hospice, which focuses on comfort rather than cure.

It is a mistake to conclude that hope will not return, however. Although some patients remain hopeless, others perform the difficult task of "re-goaling." Because this theory defines hope not by its content (i.e., what is hoped for) but by the thinking process that under-girds this content, it enables us to understand how patients may redefine the specific content of their hopes (i.e., their goals) without adopting a completely new conceptualization of how hope functions. Although the goal of survival may remain fundamental for some terminally ill persons, it can be supplemented with goals for comfort, dignity, legacy, intimacy, options, and decision-making.^{48,49}

Of course, hospice providers and other health care professionals can be important in helping patients to make this shift. Because of their specialized training, mental health professionals are ideally suited to help in this way. Nonetheless, such interventions primarily require time and patience. Although the present medical system often focuses on *treatment* goals, we

suggest that providers involve themselves equally with patients' *life* goals. To increase hope, patients can be encouraged and helped to find pathways and agency for accomplishing these life goals.

5. Present and Future Research

Obviously, there is much research to be done. Most of what has been presented in this paper is based on theory and clinical observation. Empirical research, especially of a quantitative nature, has trailed far behind speculation about hope at the end of life. To remedy this situation, our research team is presently performing a study related to the conceptualization of hope just discussed. We are approximately halfway through data collection. In the remainder of this paper, we will briefly describe this research.

Our study is presently underway at three sites: (1) an inpatient hospice care centre, (2) an outpatient (i.e., home) hospice program, and (3) an outpatient oncology clinic. In all of these settings, patients are verbally administered the study's questionnaires, which include quantitative measures of Snyder's conceptualisation of hope, current life goals, quality of life, physical symptoms, and anxiety/depression. Of note, the measure of hope assesses *overall* hope, thus disentangling it from hope for any particular goal. This avoids equating the phenomenon of hope with any specific goal content.

In short, we believe that individuals in hospice care will not have lower hope than individuals pursuing disease-focused treatment for cancer (i.e., participants drawn from the oncology clinic). Indeed, they may have higher hope. We put forth this hypothesis for one simple reason: Individuals undergoing disease-focused treatment will likely make "to be cured" their most important life goal. As mentioned previously, we believe that patients thus relinquish or downgrade the importance of other goals in their lives. In other words, they put all of their "eggs in one basket" where hope is concerned. Of course, if patients are seeing progress toward the goal of cure, hope should remain relatively high. However, given that patients in all three settings are selected because they have advanced cancers, those continuing to pursue disease-focused treatment generally should perceive that they are not progressing toward this important goal to their satisfaction. This should lower overall hope. For patients in hospice care, however, the goal of cure should be relinquished or at least downgraded in importance. Instead, they should begin to embrace a relatively large array of other goals. These more "do-able" goals should serve as a source of redefined hope.

Unfortunately, there is not enough data to report firm results at this time; we have only surveyed about 15 patients in each setting. A preliminary look at our limited data indeed reveals a correlation between a higher number of goals and higher hope. Excluding goals for cure or extended lifespan, patients in hospice (especially home hospice) reported somewhat more goals

on average than patients in the oncology clinic. Some examples include to “resume my hobby of digital photography”, “spend as much time as possible with friends and family”, and “help other people with my disease”. Moreover, half of patients in the oncology clinic reported having the goal of cure or longer life, whereas less than a quarter of patients in the hospice settings reported this goal. Almost all patients who indicated having the goal of being cured or living longer rated this goal as their most important one. It is crucial to note, however, that due to our presently small sample size, this study is statistically underpowered. Thus, none of these results have yet been tested for statistical significance. They should be treated with great caution at this time.

6. Conclusion

In sum, we have argued that individuals nearing the end of life have much about which to be hopeful, when hope is construed as meaning more than simply cure. However, health care providers and patients themselves often wrestle with this concept, delaying appropriate referrals to hospice, and thus, limiting opportunities to complete or modify life goals, attend to unfinished business, or address practical matters that could improve overall quality of life. Using Snyder’s Hope Theory, we propose that hospice provides terminally ill individuals with the opportunity to re-goal or redefine the content of their hopes beyond cure, ultimately allowing for a more positive dying process. Should our preliminary data continue to be consistent with this conclusion, our next step is to explore factors that are associated with people who have difficulty re-goaling (i.e., low hope people) and to develop effective means of facilitating this process. To bring us back to the wisdom of Sullivan, “If we are tied to a hope for survival that is ‘sinking into the deep blue sea’, we will be unable to see the other forms of hope floating before us”.⁵⁰

Notes

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Theatre and Counselling: Factories of Hope and Resilience

Edgar Rodríguez Sánchez

Abstract: Some people live in a land of opportunities, whereas some other people just dream of a land of possibilities. Richness, poverty, health, illness, discrimination, pain, lack of education, injustice, trauma... These are some issues people have to deal with in their lives. What determines the strength with which someone faces unpleasant things in his/her life? In this essay, I examine how resilience can be an engine of change, a clearer window in which we can see a different reality. But resilience is understood not only as an inner strength, but also as a skill that can be developed. I explain how theatrical techniques used in the process of counselling can be beneficial for post-traumatic stress disorder, treatment of depression, multicultural counselling, development of social skills or labour or group counselling in order to generate a more resilient personality. I examine the works of Stanislavski's, Brecht's, Boal's, and Ionesco's in which theatre is understood as a way of learning to act (in both senses: acting and taking action) in hope and create new realities; beautiful and wonderful realities, all with the power of theatre, counselling, love and hope.

Key Words: Resilience, Counselling, Theatre, Hope, Hopeless, Social Issues, Multiculturalism.

1. Theatre and Counselling? What is this about?

Psychologists and Counselors, as professional helpers, are conscious of the mental health needs of people of the 21st century in the sense that we deal generally with people's pain, we deal with trouble, with depression, with trauma and try to prevent and repair the effects of larger social issues such as poverty, war, pandemics, lack of education, discrimination, migration, multiculturalism, and other situations that make people suffer. We help people get on with their lives. For that objective, we encourage them to use their potential strengths in their favor.

Psychology and Counseling have evolved in parallel to the technologic, social, political, scientific, and cultural changes of our postmodern society. Because we are not in control of most larger conflicts in the world, development of a resilient personality becomes one of the most important tools in life. From childhood through late adulthood, there are certain times when we may need help addressing problems and issues that cause us emotional distress or make us feel overwhelmed. When you are experiencing these types of difficulties, you may benefit from the assistance of an experienced, trained professional. Professional counselors offer the

caring, expert assistance that we often need during these stressful times and have demonstrated that a resilient personality is one way to face the difficult situations we all find in life.

Resilience is a term used in many disciplines, such as engineering, economics, politics, ecology, business and psychology, and has been defined as the ability to recover quickly from misfortune; the ability to return to an original form after being bent, compressed, or stretched out of shape. In psychology it has been used to describe the capacity of people to cope with stress and catastrophe. The term as it is used here follows Al Siebert.¹ He describes it as a human ability to recover quickly from disruptive change, or misfortune without being overwhelmed or acting in dysfunctional or harmful ways. It is also used to indicate a characteristic of resistance to future negative events. This psychological meaning of resilience is often contrasted with "risk factors". Resilience provides the person with a vision of hope based on a strong structure of healthy optimism as a consequence of the confidence in one's resources.

2. Are Hope and Resilience, Theatre and Counselling Related?

At this moment, you might be questioning what the relationship between resilience and hope, theatre and counselling is. Well, I strongly believe that theatre used in a therapeutic way is a factory of hope and resilience.

Great play writers since early periods in time have used theatre plays to express their ideologies in situations of crisis. Theatre meant, for many of these people, a way of escape, a way of building a new and more positive reality.

Augusto Boal², a Brazilian theatrical director, writer, and politician, founded the Theatre of the Oppressed, a theatrical form in which he broached difficult and important themes such as the Brazilian government of the time: the same government that arrested, tortured and exiled him. The Theatre of the Oppressed allowed him to fuel an ideological revolution. Boal allowed blood to spill over the paper, over the stage. His methodology allowed for catharsis, enabling oppressed people to feel identification with this kind of theatre, and making them believe in a more hopeful future.

Eugene Ionesco³, one of the foremost playwrights of the Theatre of the Absurd, used plays to express the way in which he perceived life as well. He showed through his masterpieces the modern feelings of alienation, and the difficulty (in some cases impossibility) of communication. He saw the society of his time as accelerated but conformist.

Similar to Ionesco, Bertolt Brecht⁴ lived through the horror of World War II and he had to leave his country, Germany, as consequence of his socialist and antifascist politic orientation. In his plays, Brecht found a way

to reflect the feelings he thought were representative of the feelings of the population.

Constantin Stanislavski, director, actor and theatre theorist - and a compulsory reference for modern western theatre of the 20th century - developed a method which is probably his most important contribution to theatre: the psychological realism method. This method tries to reflect to the audience in a more real way the emotive world of the characters. He encouraged actors to explore their own feelings in order to create a more truthful experience with the audience in hopes of forging a stronger identification between the character and the public. He perceived the theatre as a path of teaching and educating the people.

Stanislavski⁵, whose main focus in theatre was the fight against the cliché acting style - the repetitive stereotype and emptiness of emotions of his epoch - reacted against the narcissistic way of acting focused on mere audience approval. He rescued the actor as an artist. He proposed a model in which the actor/actress acts with honesty according to his/her own nature, an actor/actress that works from the truth. That conception of acting gave more importance to the professionalism of the actor. It enabled them to find authentic emotional states and left much up to the fortuitous occurrence of them.

In this sense, Theatre is strongly linked to Psychology and Counselling because both disciplines find the deepest understanding of the emotional states of human kind, even though with different purposes. Jacob Levy Moreno, a Psychiatrist born in Bucharest in 1889 showed in a more explicit way the link between theatre and psychology.

Jacob Levy Moreno was the pioneer of using dramatic techniques to heal people. He found that dramatic techniques used in psychotherapy are useful for:

- A. Being aware of one's own thoughts, feelings, motivations, behavior and relationships;
- B. Becoming better in the comprehension of situations, of other points of view, of our self image and our actions to others;
- C. Discovering one's own capacity to act in new and more functional ways; and
- D. Rehearsing, learning or preparing to use behaviours or responses that are found to be more functional.

These and many others theatrical artists have converted the stage, the forum, the playwrights, unveiling the art in social action and thereby turning theatre into social action. They did this by saying what they thought was wrong with their society. Doing that, not only aroused a state of

awareness in the public, but also a state of strength, hope and resilience in the artist. The effect of theatre carried two objectives out; it reached both the social and the psychological spheres.

3. The Role of the Counsellor

Theatre artists work as storytellers, their task consists in representing human behaviour. The counsellor, on the other hand, works on different levels: the personality level, the thinking level, the attitude level, and the behavioural level. People who ask for counselling help, generally want to make a change in the level of behaviour, but often times, the change they want to make in their behaviour is also related to one of the deeper levels. So, one task that covers more than one level is the developing of a more resilient personality, the discovering of strengths and the use of these strengths in ones' own favour. These strengths provide a person with a wide range of possibilities, and the counsellor interested in using artistic techniques will see - as we have seen in the biographical information about the artists who have used them - that benefits obtained through theatrical art matches with the profile of a resilient personality.

Frederich Flach in his book *Resilience*⁶ identifies some characteristics that conform the resilient personality; these characteristics are divided between inner strengths and interpersonal strengths. Among those *inner strengths* we observe:

A strong, supple sense of self-esteem.
A high level of personal discipline and a sense of responsibility.
Recognition and development of one's special gifts and talents.
Creativity: open-mindedness, receptivity to new ideas, willingness to dream.

A wide range of interests.
A keen sense of humor.
High tolerance for distress.
Focus and a commitment to life.
Faith, a philosophical and spiritual framework within which personal experiences can be interpreted and understood with meaning and hope, even at life's seemingly most hopeless moments.

Among the *interpersonal strengths* we observe:

Independence of thought and action, without being unduly reluctant to rely on others.
The ability to give and take in human interactions.

A well-established network of family and friends, including one or more who serve as confidants.

The willingness to let go and skill at letting go of resentments and forgiving others as well as oneself.

Proficiency on setting limits.

Healthy self-interest.

Freedom from one's own selfishness and protection against the selfishness of others.

Generosity.

Ability to give and receive love.

When revising the characteristics mentioned before, I truly believe that the vast majority of them can be developed through theatrical art counseling. Psicodramatic Therapy arises with Jacob Levy Moreno⁷ who, inspired by religion and philosophy, took advantage of sociology, theatre and psychology. In that regard, Psicodramatic Therapy is a paradigm that integrates the faith and optimism of the humankind theory, the search for sense in the trans-personal perspective, the comprehensive biographical depth of psychoanalysis, and the contextual and social view of a systemic perspective. It thereby makes it easier to develop all the inner and the interpersonal strengths mentioned before.

4. Theatrical and counselling techniques used as generators of hope and resilience

A. The Text Analysis, Operative Words. Listening to the conversation with clients, counselors can identify *operative words*, or those words that people live with and that make sense to the discourse, but sometimes can be obstacles to the fluency of actions in the life of the client. The personal argot constitutes the mode of reacting to the environment; the language is the structure of the thoughts. For that reason, analysis of texts in the case of actors, directors and writers, or analysis of dialogues and conversations in the case of counselors, are a great resource not only for obtaining information about the personality of the clients/characters, but also for understanding them in the deepest sense.

For doing that analysis, the steps of Stanislavski's method are quite similar to the steps of counseling through active listening: underlying the operative words, making agreement about the content, the shown affection, the hidden affection, the causes of the action, the intention of the action, the consequences in action and in feelings. This analysis allows the deepest understanding of a text or a dialogue and results in beneficial work for both artists and counselors.

It's easier to see areas in which behaviour could improve through

watching or reading others, and once we have seen them in the open, we can work internally.

In order to be clearer about the importance of the text analysis, pay attention to the following phrases: "*It's easier to see areas that could become better in the behavior of others*".

And now, listen the next one: "*The best option to be aware of mistakes is to see them in the behavior of others*".

The impact of the second one is harder than the first one. A careful analysis of the texts of the characters in plays is an excellent way of developing a more hopeful perspective on life.

B. Acting and Systematic Desensitization. *Systematic Desensitization* is a technique from Cognitive Therapy that has shown high effectiveness in the treatment of phobias in general, but specifically social phobia. Counselling through theatre techniques could be a supportive tool for those who cannot deal with daily social requirements. Role-playing could be an "interlude" in the life of people with social phobia. It could constitute one of those paradoxical interventions used in therapy in which people experiment with those activities they are afraid of, but in a safe setting. Clients with social phobia can represent the character of someone quite extroverted as permission for being extroverted just for a short period of time. It would be desirable to join Art Therapy with Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy or Cognitive Therapy.

C. Theatre and Development of Social Skills. Another way in which Theatrical Counseling can be helpful is in *assertion training*, one form of social skills training. People who lack social skills probably experience interpersonal difficulties at home, at work, at school and during leisure time. So, Corey⁸ gives some examples of work in assertion training. This can be useful for people who cannot express their anger or irritation, people who have difficulty saying no, those who are over polite and allow others to take advantage of them, or those who find it difficult to express affection and other positive responses.

Playing (playing in all meanings of the word) a character in the context of a group of theatre counseling is beneficial for showing us different perspectives on life. In the group we can take a situation that has been difficult to someone in the group, the rest of the members of the group have to represent the situation of that someone in a free style, it means solving the situation from their own point of view. We all have lived similar situations, but we have different ways of facing those situations, and showing a wide range of possibilities in a safe setting is the objective of this activity.

D. Theatrical Art Therapy and Post-Traumatic Stress. Survivors of a

traumatic event tend to enclose their feelings, to think there are no exits to their troubles, to get in a closed circuit of negative memories-negative feelings-anxiety or depression-negative behaviour-and the circle begins again with negative memories of the traumatic event. The tendency to enclose feelings is negative for people, but in cases of trauma, remembering the situation is like living it again and to do it without a professional intervention can maximize the trauma. That is a paradoxical situation because expressing feelings is exactly what survivors of traumatic events need.

Art Therapy can be the safest way to deal with clients who have been victims of trauma; with this approach they can express their feelings through painting, writing, singing, and acting. They don't avoid their feelings nor do they enclose them, nor re-live them; rather, they're expressing them in a different way.

Clients with post-traumatic stress can feel identification with a character in a similar situation, a well directed theatre play with therapeutic objectives can help people to express their deepest feelings and thoughts, those that people generally repress or have difficulty getting out. In counselling with a theatrical approach we can play with those difficult situations, we can dare to experiment with them but without being obliged to do it; in counseling we are not compelled to do anything we don't wish to do. That is great for trauma survivors because the approach we take to the situation is not a menace: we are in control, we can go up to our own limits.

Maralynn Hagood,⁹ for instance, has utilized successfully art therapy with survivors of sexual abuse. Her approach supports the theory about the art of projection as a way of expression and a non-intrusive way of exploring strong annoying feelings, and later on transforming them into learning and self knowing. This method recognizes the vast capacity of human beings to discover strengths in weaknesses, and as the phoenix, to be born again from the ashes.

E. Theatrical Art Therapy and Empathy Development. In the same way, watching theatre plays can be an excellent way to analyze perspectives from different points of view. Analyzing the behavior of people in a play, and questioning the reasons for acting in a certain way with the understanding that people act in ways because it was often their very best try, lets the clients observe life from a distinct angle and directs them to a deeper understanding of the person and consequently to a more empathic mood.

Just by questioning the reasons, motivations, and intentions of a character, and trying to explain and justify their actions we can develop empathy and avoid prejudices. In counseling we can take on board difficult themes with clients who are reticent to talk about some important topics or some specific kinds of people just through talking about different expressions of art as in movies, paintings, poems, and books. We are getting in the action

through an indirect technique.

F. Theatre and Multiculturalism. *Angels in America*, by Tony Kushner¹⁰ is a representative example of how art can do worthwhile work in understanding Multiculturalism. Analyzing this play from the perspective of the counselor, or simply from the perspective on a theatre enthusiast, we can observe how religion, racism, sexual diversity, spirituality, politics, substances abuse, AIDS, life, death and comprehension of humankind is shown with mastery and accuracy.

Jack Kroll, in *Newsweek*, writes about *Angels in America*, It is

the most ambitious American play of our time: an epic that ranges from earth to heaven; focuses on politics, sex and religion; transports us to Washington, the Kremlin, the South Bronx, Salt Lake City and Antarctica; deals with Jews, Mormons, WASPs, blacks; switches between realism and fantasy, from tragedy of AIDS to the camp comedy of drag queens to the death or at least the absconding of God.¹⁰

Watching this kind of play with a critical analytical eye is an opportunity for multiculturalism in counselling itself. Through reading it with an analysis of operative words, or by rehearsing it with therapeutic purposes, for example, interpreting a specific character especially if it is one who we disagree with in thoughts and feelings, deepens this type of counselling.

One of the great strengths of contemporary theatre is its rich capacity to renew itself through dynamic international and intercultural encounters. It enables different kinds of people to get an overview of the “whole scenery” of the world. Such a widening spectrum of globalization has lead to a remarkable hybridization of the possibilities for theatre itself and also of the possibilities for counseling. This characteristic result is so relevant for the current situation in almost every country of the world: people with multi-nationalities, cosmopolitan cities, inhabitants with different backgrounds such as natives, migrants, and floating population (people who are in the country for business or studies).

This reality is valid almost worldwide and is so useful in multiculturalism counseling. In Japan,¹¹ the NOHO Theatre Group of Kyoto staged the plays of Samuel Becket in a fusion of *kyogen* and experimental elements, mixing occidental theatre with the oriental form of doing theatre. Another example of multicultural theatre took place in 1996 at the Habima Theatre in Tel Aviv when a company founded in 1917 by actors trained at the Moscow Art Theatre in the naturalistic style by Stanislavski himself, and presented for the first time a new work written and performed as a modern

Hebrew interpretation of *Nöh* and *Kabuki*. Or again in Paris, where Arine Mnouchkine directed the Théâtre du Soleil in a compelling production of *Les Atrides*, a four play, ten-hour cycle of Greek tragedies in which the actors wore opulent ceremonial costumes of Asian provenance, the stagehands were *kabuki*-like, while the choreography of the chorus emulated the Kathakali dance dramas of Southern India. Why do I mention these plays? Because these are a perfect display of multiculturalism. These masterpieces of theatre have made the crossover and have allowed people from very different parts of the world to come closer together through the theatre.

5. Final notes

Resilience should be understood in terms of dynamic abilities, or as characteristics that can be developed with good guidance. Counseling and Theatre contribute to people recovering their hope and a better attitude to life. For developing a resilient personality people have many resources, counseling with theatre is just one of them. It doesn't work for everyone and there are wide ranges of alternatives.

For sharing a more resilient personality we don't need to change our whole life. Developing resilience does not imply that we have to start from nothing. It's more about rearranging, combining, and synthesizing existing ideas and frames of reference.

When we are in trouble, we try to solve the problems by our own well-known rules for doing everything. When the old techniques don't work, the counseling and theatre can offer us tools for solving problems through a relearning process.

Disciplines today are not detached, the period of time in which professionals worked individually has passed. Collaborative work is the result of necessities of the world of 21st century. Following this, different perspectives of Psychology, Counseling and Arts perform work without precedence because we are not located in established disciplinary ways of doing things. Artists and Counselors work can be seen along the same lines: as creating new visions of the reality in which we live, working together to contribute to the development of a more resilient personality, and to create hope for those whose situations in life have made them hopeless.

Notes

¹ Siebert, A., *The survivor personality*. Berkley Publishing Group, New York. 1996. p.p. 12-15.

² Boal, A., *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. Routledge, London. 2002. p.p. 1-23.

- ³ Ionesco, E., *Diario en migajas: Presente pasado, pasado presente*. Páginas de Espuma, Madrid. 2007. p.p. 15-30.
- ⁴ Brecht, B., *Teatro completo*. Cátedra, Madrid. 2006. p.p. 1-13.
- ⁵ Stanislavski, C. *El trabajo del actor sobre sí mismo*, Quetzal, Buenos Aires. 1980. p.p. 1-40.
- ⁶ Flach, F., *Resilience: Discovering a new strength at times of stress*. Hatherleigh Press, New York. 2004. p.p. 103-112
- ⁷ Marineau, R., *J. L. Moreno: Su biografía*. Hormé, Buenos Aires. 1995. p.p. 1-25.
- ⁸ Corey, G., *Manual for theory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy*. Brooks/Cole, Monterey, CA. 1998. p.p. 254-282.
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- ¹⁰ Kushner, T., *Angels in America, a gay fantasia on national themes*. Theatre Communications Group, New York. 1995. p.p. 1-15.
- ¹¹ Hartnoll, P., *The theatre, a Concise History*. Thames and Hudson, New York. 1998. P.p. 271-286.

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Consistency of the Optimism-Pessimism Variable: The Role of Emotions

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Abstract: Three different theoretical frameworks of optimism- : Abstract pessimism (hereunder OP) constitute the basis for this study; the Dispositional Optimism, the Hope Theory, and the OP Explanatory Style. Analysis of the similarities and the differences between these theories reveals subtle differences that might lead to one unified theory. Within this theory two objectives were investigated: (a) the measure OP's stability in the different content domains, and (b) the measure of consistency between the cognitive OP expectancies (hereunder, plausibility) and the positive-negative emotions. 244 participants of various ages (M= 35.97; SD = 18.35) completed two questionnaires: (1) An upgrade of existing questionnaires (2) A questionnaire to assess 5 events; 3 of high personal involvement for the individual (expected surgery), and 2 of low personal involvement (National economic situation).

The results of the study show that:

- A. The OP variable is composed of two separate factors: one of high personal involvement, and the second of low personal involvement. In each of them the stability in the various content domains (cross-domain) is maintained;
- B. Lower plausibility-emotions correlation is found in high personal involvement than in low personal involvement.
- C. In events of high personal involvement a high positive correlation is found between the emotions and the OP grade. However, in events with low personal involvement, the correlation between emotions and OP grade is positive, but significantly lower.

The results emphasize the role of the emotions as one of the sources of information processing for the OP evaluation. High Emotional impact provides different information processing than low emotional impact.

Key words: Optimism-Pessimism, Heuristic-Systematic information processing, emotions.

1. Theoretical background

A. Optimism-Pessimism Theoretical frameworks. Three different theoretical frameworks of optimism-pessimism (hereby OP) constitute the basis for this study; the Dispositional Optimism, the Hope Theory, and the OP Explanatory Style.

The Dispositional Optimism is based on a particular version of the expectancy-value model approach to motivation which leads to a description of the self-regulatory model.¹

The Hope Theory conceptualizes hope as a cognitive set that is directed at goal attainment. Hope contains two interrelated components: The first component is agency, which is a perception of successful use of energy in the pursuit of goals in one's past, present, and future. The second component is pathways thinking, which is defined as a perceived ability to imagine ways of generating successful routes by which to reach a given goal.²

According to the OP Explanatory Style, the terms Optimism and Pessimism apply to the ways in which people routinely explain events in their lives. People are optimistic when they attribute problems to temporary, specific, and external (opposed to permanent, pervasive, and internal) causes.³

B. Common dominators in most aspects of OP theories. Deep study of the terms "Optimism" & "Pessimism" requires analysis of the similarity and the difference amongst the theories. We found common denominators in most aspects of OP theories.

C. Expectation= plausibility; estimation of outcome probability. There is a general agreement on the OP definition: Optimism or Pessimism is the expectancy of future positive or negative outcomes, respectively.⁴⁵ Subtle differences in the definition of expectancy led to the use of the word "plausibility" which is defined as the estimation of outcome probability including adjusted calculation of other factors such as personal history, personal characteristics, heuristics etc. In other words, plausibility refers to the cognitive process of information that helps to predict future outcome.

D. Similar process: positive (negative) plausibility enhances (reduces) motivation and emotions, and consequential behaviour. Positive plausibility enhances motivation towards goal attainment, while negative plausibility reduces motivation. Positive plausibility leads to positive emotions and vice versa: OP consequences predict behaviour.

E. Analysis of the OP theories may lead to one unified theory. Analysis of these three OP theories reveals subtle differences that might lead to one unified theory. The unified theory concludes plausibility and emotions: Positive plausibility and emotions enhance motivation towards goal attainment that predicts behaviour, while negative plausibility and emotions reduce motivation towards goal attainment.

F. Contradicting findings whether the OP variable is domain-general or domain-specific. The OP theoretical frameworks present relative life-time stability of the OP variable.⁶⁷ However, contradictions were found regarding the stability of OP in the different content domain: Garber claimed that findings have been mixed in empirical examinations of the relation between general OP Explanatory Style and explanations within specific domains.⁸ Lopez clarified that although the Hope Theory emphasizes the dispositional hope over the last decade, it has become clear that 'here and now' hope is important.⁹ One of our objectives is to discover the conditions in which the OP is cross-domain.

G. Emotions have more influence on the OP variable in events of high personal involvement. Lazarus defines emotions as complicated responses that involve physical and mental states, and include subjective psychological conditions, impulsion to act and physical changes. Emotions rise in accordance with personal meaning or explanation of surrounding events, when one attributes an event to an achievement, or to prevention of a personal goal.¹⁰ In other words, emotions will rise when events are explained as successful and they strengthen our self-esteem, or when they are explained as failures which threaten our self-esteem. One of the objectives of this study is to reveal the influence of high vs. low personal involvement on the emotions in the OP variable.

2. The Research Hypotheses

Three hypotheses are derived from the theoretical background. First, the OP variable will keep its stability in accordance with the level of personal involvement: Events of high (vs. low) personal involvement will produce different OP variables. Second, in events of low personal involvement higher plausibility-emotions will be found than in events of high personal involvement. This hypothesis is explained by the theory in which - in low personal involvement - the emotions' importance decreases and results from the plausibility. However, in high personal involvement - when the impact of the emotions increases - lower plausibility-emotions correlation is expected. The Third involves two sub-hypotheses: events of low personal involvement will rely more on plausibility than on emotions, and events of high personal

involvement will rely more on the emotional component than on the plausibility.

Since low personal involvement reduces the influence of the emotions on the OP variable, events of low personal involvement will mainly rely on plausibility in evaluating OP. However, events of high personal involvement enhance the influence of emotions in OP and would cause a major influence.

3. Methods

A. Participants. 244 participants (193 females and 51 males, $M = 35.97$; $SD = 18.35$) took part in this study. The participants were chosen randomly from different courses of Social Science (40%), 3 high-school classroom teachers (30%) and a group of elderly participants in special courses (30%).

B. Materials. Participants completed two OP questionnaires in this study. The first questionnaire is self-report measure which is an upgrade of existing questionnaires: the Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) that measures OP according to the Dispositional Optimism Theory¹¹ and the Hope Scale (HS) that derived from the Hope Theory.¹²

The LOT-R consists of eight items (plus four filler items), four of which are positively and four negatively worded. Respondents indicate their agreement with statements on a 5-point Likert type scale where 0 = *strongly disagree* and 4 = *strongly agree*. High scores indicate high levels of optimism.

The HS comprises 8 items with an additional 4 items to disguise the nature of the test. Respondents rate the extent to which statements apply to them on a 4-point Likert-type scale in which 1=*definitely false* and 4=*definitely true*.

In the upgraded questionnaire we used a 5-point Likert-type scale in which 1=totally disagree and 5=totally agree, high scores indicate high levels of optimism. We added emotional statements to the questionnaire that contains a total of 46 statements, 12 of which are filler items. Internal reliability using Cronbach's coefficient alpha = .916.

We also initiated a new OP questionnaire, based on the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ)¹³ structure in order to measure OP in different content domains. Participants were required to assess their plausibility and their emotions in 5 different events; three events of high personal involvement for the individual and including expected surgery, a dismissal possibility and theoretical problem in a couple's life, and two events of low personal involvement that deal with the national economic situation, and the existing separate groups in the nation.

For example, participants were requested to report on their thoughts (plausibility) in a hypothetical event of possible diagnosis after CT imaging.

They were able to choose more than one option, and to estimate each ones' weight in percentages. They were also requested to report on their feelings (emotions) towards the future in this case. They could choose more than one feeling, and estimate the weight of each feeling.

The results were grouped in two groups: high and low personal involvement high scores indicating high levels of optimism. Internal reliability using Cronbach's coefficient alpha = .49, .45 respectively. These low consistencies reflect separate variable components (plausibility and emotion) and are similar to the internal reliability of the ASQ (range from .44 to .69).

C. Procedure. Participants took part in groups of 20-30. After completing a consent form, they were handed a questionnaire booklet containing the tests. Participants were assigned to all five events of the new OP questionnaire. All participants first completed the OP self report questionnaire and then answered the new OP questionnaire. After completing the booklet, they were thanked and debriefed.

4. Results

The first hypothesis postulates that events of high vs. low personal involvement will produce different OP, in each of which the stability is maintained (cross-domain). Confirmatory factor analysis of the OP questionnaire; events analysis using varimax rotation method is presented in table 1.

Item	F1	F2
Event 1- pessimistic statement	.825	
Event 1- optimistic statement	-.800	
Event 2- pessimistic statement	.702	
Event 2- optimistic statement	-.694	
Event 3- pessimistic statement	.546	
Event 3- optimistic statement	-.424	
Event 5- pessimistic statement		-.708
Event 5- optimistic statement		.757
Event 4- pessimistic statement		-.744
Event 4- optimistic statement		.757

Table 1. CFA (2 factors) rotated matrix of the OP variable questionnaire; events analysis

The results confirm the hypothesis. The findings indicate that the OP variable is composed of two separate factors, one of high personal involvement (presented as events 1-3) and the second of low personal involvement (presented as events 4-5). In each of them, the stability in the various content domains (cross-domain) is maintained. The two factors are independent ($r = -.018, p > .05$).

The second research hypothesis assumed that in events of low personal involvement higher correlation will be found between plausibility and emotions than in events of high personal involvement. The third research hypothesis was that OP in events of low personal involvement will rely more on the cognitive plausibility than on emotions and vice versa, OP in events of high personal involvement will rely more on the emotional component than on the cognitive plausibility. In order to test these two hypotheses we used the OP self report questionnaire, that represents a general OP, as evaluator of the higher plausibility/emotions influence on the OP in analyzing specific events. The operational hypotheses were, therefore, that in low personal involvement, higher correlation will be found between plausibility and emotions than in high personal involvement. In addition, in low personal involvement, when the plausibility will be held constant, no correlation will be found between emotions and the OP self report questionnaire. However, in high personal involvement, when the emotions will be held constant, no correlation will be found between plausibility and the OP self report questionnaire.

We used partial correlation to test the third hypothesis. Tables 2-3 present the correlation between the OP self report questionnaire plausibility and emotions in low and high personal involvement. After each table, partial correlation is presented:

	OP self report Q	Plausibility	Emotions
OP self report Q	-		
Plausibility	.353(**)	-	
Emotions	.244(**)	.569(**)	-

** $p < 0.01$.

Table 2. Pearson correlation among OP self report questionnaire, plausibility and emotions in low personal involvement

Partial correlation between OP self report questionnaire and emotions when the plausibility is held constant is found $r = .055, p > .05$.

	OP self report Q	Plausibility	Emotions
OP self report Q	-		
Plausibility	.338(**)	-	
Emotions	.496(**)	.466(**)	-

** $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. Pearson correlation among OP self report questionnaire, plausibility and emotions in high personal involvement

Partial correlation between OP self report questionnaire and plausibility when the emotions are held constant is found $r = .139$, $r < .05$.

The result generally confirmed the two hypotheses: in low personal involvement higher correlation is found between plausibility and emotions than plausibility-emotions correlation in high personal involvement. In addition, higher correlation is found between the OP self-report questionnaire and plausibility, than the correlation between this questionnaire and emotions. However, in high personal involvement the correlation between the OP self-report questionnaire and plausibility is moderate, but the correlation between this questionnaire and emotions is higher. The difference between the correlation the OP self-report questionnaire and emotions in events of high and low personal involvement is significant ($p = 0.0013$).

Partial correlation was performed on low and high personal involvement. In low personal involvement, when the emotional component was held constant, no significant correlation was found between the OP self-report questionnaire and emotions. In high personal involvement, when emotions components were held constant, a positive low correlation was found between the OP self-report questionnaire and plausibility.

5. Discussion

A. Summary of the research findings. The results of the study show the following. The OP variable is composed of two separate factors, one of high personal involvement and the second of low personal involvement. In each of them, the stability in the various content domains (cross-domain) is maintained;

Lower plausibility-emotions correlation is found in high personal involvement than in low personal involvement.

In OP of low personal involvement, when the plausibility is held constant, no correlation is found between emotions and the OP self-report questionnaire. In OP of high personal involvement, when the emotions are

held constant, low correlation is found between plausibility and the OP self-report questionnaire.

Understanding the research results demands a short introduction to the Heuristic-Systematic Model, that describes two possibilities of information processing toward attitudinal judgment.¹⁴ This theory will further help in explaining the results of this research.

B. The Heuristic-System Model: high motivation and cognitive capacity will cause systematic information processing. Heuristic-system model (HSM;) distinguishes two prototypical modes of information processing that form the poles of a continuum of processing effort: a) an effortless heuristic mode and b) a systematic mode requiring more effort. According to the HSM theory, the processing effort varies with a perceiver's motivation and cognitive capacity.

Heuristic processing involves the use of simple generalizations that individuals believe are predictive of a variable. These cognitive shortcuts are developed from prior experiences and become procedural knowledge used to evaluate messages. *Systematic processing*, by contrast, involves detailed analysis of the quality and structure of the argument, and requires greater cognitive effort and attention.

Motivation to process systematically is often determined by the evaluator's desire for accuracy in his or her judgments, derived from the need to possess confidence in his/her evaluation. To the extent that an evaluator has a strong desire to reach an accurate conclusion, that individual is more likely to engage in systematic processing. Moreover, as individuals increase their level of systematic processing, the effects of heuristic cues are typically attenuated, although not necessarily removed. Derived from the HSM theory, a necessary component to produce heuristic and/or systematic processing is the level of confidence that one possesses an accurate variable (hereby ST-AC gap).

The model's sufficiency principle states that people try to attain sufficient confidence in their judgment. What is sufficient is defined by two constructs: a) the sufficiency threshold (ST), defined as the level of confidence a person would like to have, and b) the person's actual confidence (AC). The HSM assumes that whenever the actual confidence is below the sufficiency threshold, the individual will be motivated to process (additional) information, and the larger ST-AC gaps are more likely to require systematic processing, whereas smaller gaps may be bridged by heuristic alone.

Both sufficiency threshold of confidence and actual confidence vary across persons and situations. For example, if the evaluation is attributed to low personal relevance, both ST and AC should be similarly low and little processing effort would be expected. When the ST is high, AC in holding an accurate evaluation is questioned. When the AC is also high, no necessity to

hold an accurate evaluation will appear, and respectively, there will be no motivation to information processing requiring more effort. However, low AC increases one's motivation to hold an accurate evaluation and would cause an increase in information processing (systematic processing) requiring effort.

C. Adaptation of the HSM to The OP variable. As examined in the research finding, there are two independent factors of the OP variable; one of high personal involvement and another one of low personal involvement. Each one of them includes two components: a) plausibility, b) emotion. In the research we used also a general OP measurement to measure the OP self-report questionnaire (c).

C1. *OP in events of low personal involvement provide heuristic information processing.* Our findings support the adaptation of the HSM theory to the OP theory: in events of low personal involvement heuristic information processing appears. Three findings represent this kind of information processing:

Higher plausibility-emotions correlation in low personal involvement than in high personal involvement, points to the tendency to maintain consistency between the two components and therefore to use heuristic processing.

In partial correlation, when the plausibility component is held constant, no correlation is found between the OP self-report questionnaire and emotions. This finding proves that the main influence on the evaluation of events of low personal involvement is by the plausibility component that effects emotions.

C2. *Events of high personal involvement provide heuristic and/or systematic information processing.* The results point to the emotional heuristic processing as the type of heuristic processing that is used in OP of high personal involvement. That is, holding emotions as constant in partial correlation examines low positive significant correlation between the OP self-report questionnaire and plausibility. In other words, encountering events of high personal involvement mainly raises the emotional level, which generally affects (through emotional heuristic processing, and in specific conditions that will be discussed, through systematic processing) the evaluative plausibility.

However in specific conditions, systematic processing may emerge. The first condition is high personal involvement, which requires high ST. The second condition is low AC that appears in moderate levels of OP. This condition is implied by the low correlation plausibility-emotions in high personal involvement. However, this subject needs further research.

D. Summary. The main conclusions of this research are as follows. In OP of low personal involvement the heuristic information processing controls. In OP of high personal involvement emotional heuristic processing usually controls. In further research the appearance of systematic processing will be measured in OP of high personal involvement, when the plausibility is moderate.

Notes

¹ C Carver & F Scheier `Optimism, pessimism, and self-regulation` In C Chang (Ed), *Optimism and pessimism: Implications of theory, research, and practice*, APA, Washington, DC, 2001, p. 31.

² R Snyder et al, `Optimism and hope constructs: Variants on a positive expectancy theme` *ibid.*, p. 101.

³ J Gillham et al, `Optimism, pessimism, and explanatory style`, *ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴ S Carver & F Scheier `The hopeful optimism` *Psychological Inquiry*, vol.13, 2002, pp. 288-290.

⁵ C Peterson `The future of optimism` *American Psychologist*, vol. 55, 2000, pp. 1- 44.

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Part III
Literature, Art and Hope

Finding Life in the Liminal: The True Voice in the Cinematic Narration of a Psychopath

Phil Fitzsimmons

Abstract: This paper is grounded in Blessing and Tudico's notion that movies are a reflection of and a reaction to the ongoing search for purpose and meaning in our daily lives.¹ The existential answers to the purpose of life, once found in institutions such as the church, now supposedly resides in popular culture in general and the cinema in particular. As Lyden further suggests the sense of encroaching chaos and meaningless that proliferates in current Western society is tempered by the neat framing of time and focussed overcoming of the 'uncanny', evil, death, injustice, pain and suffering that movies provide.²

An answer to this problem is not immediately apparent in the movie '*The Departed*'. It is not until the concept of the 'scapegoat', a premise touched on visually and linguistically several times in the movie, is applied as a thematic and dialogic foil that the apparent nihilism of this film is seen to be a carefully constructed ruse. Using 'language in action' as a platform of demonstration, this movie will be deconstructed via the notion of the 'scapegoat' to reveal how key elements of the dialogue raise the subtext into pivotal 'definable perspectives' of hope in a world of apparent mayhem, murder, betrayal and hopelessness.

Key words: Hope, The Departed, scapegoat.

1. Foundations of Analysis

The framework of analysis that gave rise to this chapter is grounded in three key precepts. Firstly, social construction is primarily developed through a narrative blend of social reality and symbolic interaction vehicle through which social reality is constructed.³ However, it is generally accepted that at present this narrative *mélange* in the western world is in a state of flux. In an era of post-millennial instability, where we in the First World appear to be existentially aimless the transtextual narrative of terror and terrorism has overshadowed our thoughts and dominated the stories that we told in our daily lives through the print and visual media. Our world survived the supposed techno time bomb of the change into the third millennium, and in age of cynicism and rapid increase of IT wizardry that constantly bombards our waking senses with supposed non fiction hypertext we have lost the concept of the 'connective narratives'; the ones that tell us who we are.

Secondly, up until relatively recently it was through our primary social institutions that our sense of connected narrative arose, and in

particular our religious institutions. However, in many instances these appear to be failing, not in the sense of telling the wrong story or a story, but in the way they tell their stories. They are still shuffling down the same old mode continuum as the exegesis of these narratives has slipped into a 'taken for granted' explanation instead of what I would call 'heuristic liminality'. In other words our narratives have become forms of "norm bound incumbency, liminality is belittled, skipped over and denied".⁴ Our stories no longer take us to the edge of possibility and provide opportunities of exploring new meanings through the extremes found at the edge of our imagination. Their message is indeed the medium but it no longer resonates in the same way.

Hence, instead it would appear that that the old prayer of 'give us our daily bread' is now located in the screens found in our homes and in the movie theatres. However, with television rapidly becoming a small visual snippet that simply keeps the commercials apart, the cinema is now the new house of worship. It is there that millions find existential sustenance in the 'dream state'⁵ of others as a reflection of themselves.

This paper focuses on one of the most recent 'new mirrors', *The Departed*, and how it defines the concept of hope firstly through how it is defined in the current context of culture, and secondly how it should be defined through the ever present but at times almost undetectable lens of the 'scapegoat' motif. However, this movie refocuses the typical interwoven thread of voice and cinematic eye, and instead utilizes an initial documentary style to introduce its simple first level of discourse, which then switches into a third person jigsaw of character interplay. However, throughout the movie there are elements of dialogue that act as linguistic disconnectors, and introduce a primal narrative in which "the question of voice becomes, finally the question of mind, and both are inseparable from the question of meaning".⁶

2. The Voice and Subvoice: The Key is at the Door

From the moment the initial voice over begins in this film, the narrative not only details and complements what the viewer sees, but begins a subtle counterpoint. While the first person assertions of Frank Costello, an Irish gangster, and visual elements assign the narrative to its plot trajectory of "you have to take what you want"; Costello's personal view, viewpoint and ideology give unstated voice to other levels of discourse. While the initial focus creates a continual commentary on hopeless, death and abandonment, there is a continual parenthetical commentary that re-brackets the scenes of bloodshed and third person dialogue into a sense that there is hope in a world defined since the turn of the twentieth century as 'chaos'.

While seemingly overwhelmed within greed and hopelessness, the linguistic re-bracketing commences with an embedded link to the symbol of the 'scapegoat' and the irrelevance and corruption of the church.

Commenting on the most ancient of motifs, Deardroff defines the scapegoat's character and characteristics as "the fall from the promised life. Here is the one driven to interiority, marked by the wound and wounded for bearing the mark".⁷ Commencing with Costello, all of the characters in this movie experience this fall from grace and bear a mark of some kind.

The initial frames of violence and racism are a lead into Costello's comment. "I don't want to be a product of my environment. I want my environment to be a product of me". While asserting the dominant theme of being in control of his own life and the immediate environment around him, this single sentence is a crystallization of the ancient religious symbol of the first murder when Cain killed his brother Able and received the 'mark of Cain'. In what Girard calls, a 'sacrificial crisis',⁸ this murder was over the use of food from the immediate environment as means of supplanting the killing of a lamb as the sacrificial symbol of eternal hope and resurrection. In the Christian cannon this murder was the enactment of the Edenic familial sacrificial system in which an innocent lamb was killed as means of revealing that a saviour would come as a means of rescue by taking on the vicarious death of all humanity. In the Jewish exodus this daily sacrificial rite became an even more focussed ritual through the annual Day of Atonement rites. During the course of this ceremony the sins of the slain lamb were figuratively cast onto a scapegoat, which was sent in to the desert to die. Acting as a double binary, this ceremony metaphorically not only prefigured the final redemptive act of a messianic figure by taking on the evil of all mankind through his death, but the ending of all sin in which evil is cast out. This casting out process is typically viewed as Satan being the final bearer of the sins he created, as he is finally destroyed in the heat and loneliness of a figurative desert. The Christian church has taken over this typological narrative and has typically seen its role as proclaiming this dual message of the messiah as sin bearer and finisher of evil. The theological corollary of this being the principle that the death of the Christian believer is temporary and that his or her sins will finally be atoned for by the messiah who will place all sin onto the head of the final scapegoat, on the final day of judgement.

Thus in a few short words Costello reveals the impetus and narrative framework of the movie as well as his life path of murder. On the surface it would appear that this movie is a metaphor for the death of what constitutes genuine hope at both a personal, ideological and cultural level. In almost the same breath Costello conjoins this ideological synthesis with a comment that, "years ago we had the church, that was only a way of saying we had each other. The Knights of Columbus were head-breakers. They took over their piece of the city". As an Irishman, it obvious his religious context in the movie is bound up with the catholic faith in a contest for 'turf'. Thus, there exists a triune conflict between the popular view of the church as being

irrelevant, the loss of the genuine message from those who minister in the church, and Costello's chosen pathway.

Another reoccurring motif of this movie is the revelation that the priests in Costello's world are just as corrupt as he is. Rather than being the pathway of hope, the church is continually cast as being a new mafia, one that deals in even more sordid activities than any of the ethnic criminal forms.

Linked to this chain of cohesion, is Costello's comment that "the church wants you in your place". Coming within the initial section of the movie, where Costello is castigating the church, he fails to realize that in his search for apparent freedom to do as he pleases he has actually set in place a criminal form that insists on the same mindless allegiance and acquiescence. Indeed from this point on in the film, the plot parallels and intertwines Costello's criminal activity with church activity and references to the notion of salvation.

The second hint of the presence of the scapegoat trope surfaces in the initial voice over commentary by Costello when he states:

Twenty years after an Irishman couldn't get a job, we had the presidency. That's what the niggers don't realize. If I got one thing against the black chaps it's this: No one gives it to you. You have to take it.

While Costello's statements thus far reasserts the narrative principle that the activity of authoring always takes place in the context of a relationship, in the ongoing dialogue between self and others, in his context it reveals the ongoing threads of the scapegoat motif and murder. A subtle hint of conspiracy theory is revived here. A common set of popular myths in regard to the Kennedy presidency are that John Fitzgerald Kennedy was elected on the back of his father's dirty money and criminal activity, and his assassination was a scapegoat elimination because of his political directions.

In a linked scene where Costello is taking what he wants, he begins the 'buying off' of the young Collin Sullivan with food and comics, the first of which are three loaves of bread. With these messianic motifs at the fore, the movie rapidly shifts into another religious context, the scene of a morning mass where young Collin is serving as an altar boy. With incense swirling around, again a symbol of messianic intercession, the priest intones:

To you, O Lord we commend the soul of Alphonsus, your Servant; in the sight of this world he is now dead; in your sight may he live forever. Forgive whatever sins he committed through human weakness and in your goodness grant him everlasting peace.

As indicated, everlasting peace can only be achieved through the rite and symbolism of the scapegoat carrying the reason for sin into oblivion. However, it quickly becomes apparent that Colin grows up in the fold of Frank Costello, even when he moves into the Boston police force. As a defector from his initial faith, and mole for Costello in another bastion of protection, Sullivan also moves into a state where he is doubly in need of a scapegoat. Like Costello, not only has he departed from the supposed way of truth as faith but he also departed from the path of the church's golden rule.

As a polar opposite to this thread of an outsider becoming a part of Costello's family, Costello's real nephew, Billy Costello, moves away from the family. In a confrontation with his Uncle Ed Costello, he makes it clear that after the death of his mother he will be ending all family connections. However, he also enters the same police force as Collin, and because of his insider knowledge is recruited to become an informer for the police. He thus takes on the mantle of the scapegoat. Although desperately wanting to escape his past, he is forced to re-enter that world as an undercover agent, the payment for which is the ultimate loss of his soul, sense of self and his life. In what Miller believes is "an integral part of the sacred aspect of the repeated narrative framework of the one who could not rest in his own lived life",⁹ Billy is from this scene onwards "is inscribed, for him and for us, with death".¹⁰ As his death is for a cause that was not of his making and the result of others crimes, indulgences and transgressions, it is the departing of the 'scapegoat'.

After a series of intertwined sequences where we gain even more glimpses into the worlds of these two characters the movie cuts to the funeral of Billy's mother. With no connection to the few mourners that are there, we finally see Billy alone at the graveside. He notices a tag on one of the wreathes under the Virgin Mary, it reads "Heaven holds the Faithful Departed" and it is signed: "F. Costello". As Bailey has pointed out the flowers, especially those cast on the circular wreath are associated with the finding of grace, Jerusalem as the place of grace or spiritual plenty.¹¹ The motifs of death, abandonment and human weakness once again meet on common ground, at a point of connection for the two family members under another symbol of salvation. As Deardorf has pointed out, once a society departs from the notions of family, love and the higher ideals of humanity there is often the need, or at least the understanding of the need for a sacrifice. Through a sacrificial wounding those wandering from the path can find hope in the trialogue narrative of "the stranger, village and road-personal, local and universal".¹² Again, the subtext of the need for scapegoat surfaces in this trinity where Billy has not been able to fit within the village, and does not look up to a symbol of the universal.

In a key scene where Costello is confronted by Queenan and Dignan, the officers 'running' Billy, a key parenthetical aside revisits the

heated confrontation between the protagonists. As he walks off, Costello joins this girlfriend, as they follow a group of young girls dressed as angels. This is a subtle return to the theme of the scapegoat moving on 'the universal road'. However, the theme of redemption is immediately highlighted when the movie cuts to a black and white television playing, and man is seen kneeling before a crucified Christ. He loudly exclaims, "Frankie. Frankie, your mother forgives me". Both elements in this post confrontation perspective are linked to the initial opening where Billy is serving as an altar boy, and the priest finishes off the funeral with the incantation,

May the angels lead you into paradise; May the martyrs
come to welcome you and take you to the holy city, the
new and eternal Jerusalem.

It is at this point that the movie rapidly leads to the death of all of the three main characters. Costello is killed by Collin for being an FBI informer, Collin is killed by Dignan in act of revenge, each shot and killed for following their path of *vindico vindcta*, the killing of one's own family or kinsman. Only Billy dies the death of the scapegoat, the "unexamined life".¹³

3. The Surfacing of Hope

In this cinematic dreamscape of mayhem, death and bloodshed, where does the viewer see the emergence of hope? The first person voice over that commences this film invites the reader-viewer to also understand this film through the first person singular and ask the questions raised by this movie through the same lens. From the opening scenes we seem to be forced to ask, how will it end? Will my life end in the same way as the characters I have seen?

At the first level of discourse the narrative of this movie focuses on hopelessness and links this concept to the issues of death and quality of life. It very bluntly says that we now live in a world where the concept of hope has all but been extinguished. "The primary disease of earth's prisoner is neither coronary heart disease or cancer. It is meaninglessness".¹⁴

However, as pointed out in the previous pages, one of the second levels of discourse in this film is the ideal of the scapegoat narrative. This age old understory has always been grounded in the concept of finding a sure resting place through personal sacrifice. Throughout history this reoccurring narrative element has always spoken of the hope that lies not in a life that focuses on the self, but one that focuses on relationships and love. Just as Costello dies as part of the environment he created, falling backwards into a false grave of a grader's bucket so too the being that relies on self and the use of "pleasure as an art of existence"¹⁵ as the sole art of existence never completely finds rest for their soul.

More importantly, the scapegoat motif in this movie echoes all of its predecessors in that its message is that the secret to life is found in the development of a spiritual core, and in the 'substitutional' death of another. While this has theological overtones, For Victor Frankel the praxis of this theological and psychological understanding was more fundamental, one has to give oneself to another.

The more one forgets himself-by giving himself to a cause to serve or another person to love-the more human he is and the more he actualizes himself.¹⁶

Notes

¹ K Blessing and P Tudico, H Bailey, *The Lost Language of Symbolism*, vol. 1, Carol Publishing, New York.

² J Lynden, film as Religion: Myths, morals and religion, New York University Press, New York, 2003, p. 16.

³ H Berger and T Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality*, Anchor, New York, 1967.

⁴ W Doty, *Mythography: The study of myths and rituals*, University of Alabama Press, Tuscalossa, 1989, 92.

⁵ B Kawin, *Telling It Again and Again: Repetition in Literature and Film*, Cornell University Press, Ithica, 1972, p. 3

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷ D Deardorff, *The Other Within: The genius of deformity in myth, culture, and psyche*, White Cloud Press, Ashland, 2004, p. 7.

⁸ Renee Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1977, p. 4.

⁹ D Miller, *The Epic Hero*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2002, p. 336.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 336.

¹¹ H Bailey, *The Lost Language of Symbolism*, vol. 1, Carol Publishing, New York, 1990, p. 137.

¹² Deardorf, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

¹³ S Larsen, *The Mythic Imagination: The quest for meaning through personal mythology*, Inner Traditions International, Rochester, 1996, p. 142.

¹⁴ D Ford, *A Kaleidoscope of Diamonds: Finding a pattern of beauty in life's chaos, pain and passion*, Desmond Ford Publication Newcastle, CA, 1986, p. 6.

¹⁵ M Foucault, *Practices of self Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and other writings 1977-1984*, Trans A Sheridan ed L Kritzman, Routledge Vintage Books, New York, 1985, p. 10.

¹⁶ V Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Washington Square Press, New York, 1984, p. 133.

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Hope in Despair, or the Expressive Void of Art

Tomasz Wiśniewski

Abstract: The article is opened with a brief analysis of George Steiner's disillusionment with the humane power of art. Faced with the atrocities of the twentieth century, European literature of the post-WW2 period lost its purely aesthetic character and testified to the overwhelming sense of despair. Such transformation of the artistic paradigm opened ground for philosophic nihilism epitomised by Jacques Derrida and post-modern whirling of signifiers (notably this shift flooded Polish thought as late as in the 1990s, after the fall of the Communist regime). Still, at the turn of the century, it became clear that what initially seemed an expression of utter despair, retrospectively revealed its more ambiguous nature. This shift is illustrated with the dynamics of the reception of Samuel Beckett's drama within the last few decades. The final part of the paper focuses on traces of hope which are to be found even in such desperate work as that of Tadeusz Kantor, Tadeusz Różewicz, and the Wierszalin Theatre.

Key words: 20th century literature, theatre, Derrida, Beckett, Kantor, Rozewicz, Wierszalin Theatre.

Yet again, in *Grammars of Creation*, a book published at the starting point of this century, George Steiner looks back at the watery craters of Verdun and the ghastly barracks of Auschwitz. Disillusioned with humanity, he insists on pursuing reasons that might have triggered the atrocities of the twentieth century. Steiner seems to believe, notwithstanding his awareness of "the divorce between humanity and language,"¹ that a human being still is a creature directed by the imperative of questioning, the craving for belabouring and by the desire for speculation. *Grammars of Creation*, as any other work written by George Steiner, gives testimony to the very nature of the "language animal" and thus proves that there is, after all, something left to say.

Among the questions that dominate Steiner's argumentation, the one concerning the ambiguity of hope and fear fascinates me with its vibrant resonance. Messianic hope - which encompasses for Steiner both Christian and Marxist postulates for future perfection - and the fear of death are the notions whose epistemological vitality has stimulated the cultural evolution of mankind. But the twentieth century changed a lot in this respect:

The twentieth century has put in doubt the theological, the philosophical, and the political-material insurance for hope. It queries the rationale and credibility of future tenses. It makes understandable the statement that 'there is abundance of hope, but none for us' (Franz Kafka).²

As elsewhere Steiner expresses his disillusionment with the human power of art and questions its ethically privileged position.³ The main thesis of "Humane Literacy" - an essay published in 1963 - concisely and most accurately expounds this view.

We come *after*, and that is the nerve of our condition. After the unprecedented ruin of humane values and hopes by the political bestiality of our age. That ruin is the starting point of any serious thought about literature and the place of literature in society. Literature deals essentially and continually with the image of man, with the shape and motive of human conduct. We cannot act now, be it as critics or merely as rational beings, as if nothing of vital relevance had happened to our sense of the human possibility, as if the extermination by hunger or violence of some seventy million men, women, and children in Europe and Russia between 1914 and 1945 had not altered, profoundly, the quality of our awareness. We cannot pretend that Belsen is irrelevant to the responsible life of the imagination. What man has inflicted on man, in very recent time, has affected the writer's primary material - the sum and potential of human behaviour - and it presses on the brain with a new darkness.⁴

This lengthy quotation establishes the conceptual framework for my paper. True: the European literature of the post-WW2 period lost its purely aesthetic disposition and testified to the overwhelming sense of despair that characterised most of the art of the time. Such transformation of the artistic paradigm opened grounds for philosophic nihilism epitomised by Jacques Derrida and the post-modern whirling of signifiers. Still, at the turn of the century, it became clear that what initially seemed an expression of utter despair, retrospectively reveals its more ambiguous nature - traces of hope, faint as they might be, have remained an intrinsic part of desperation. Paraphrasing Steiner's metaphor: the act of production of a profound and veracious work of art restores the credibility and rationale of future tenses. Wretchedness, desperation and futility, when incorporated in artistic structures, depart from the domain of the phenomenal world and enter the

semiosphere. The experience is thus endowed with meaning - be it the meaninglessness - which is directed to those who are yet to come.

When working on the above thesis, I have scrutinised a considerable number of the English- and Polish- language literary texts and theatrical performances. For the sake of this paper, I have selected some of the most striking examples. I will begin my argumentation with a description of the semantic shift in Samuel Beckett's studies, which has occurred within the last few decades. Next, I will refer to Tadeusz Kantor's theatrical manifesto "The Theatre of Death". It will be followed by a concise analysis of one poem - "Ocalenie" - written by another artist from Poland, by Tadeusz Różewicz. In the conclusive part, I am going to focus on "Bóg Niżyński", a recent production of a Polish off-fringe theatre, "The Wierszalin Theatre".

An analysis of what has happened to the reception of Samuel Beckett's drama since the world premiere of *En Attendant Godot* in 1953 opens the illustrative part of my paper. The global range of Beckett's centenary celebrations in 2006 proved that his work is nowadays deprived of the initial aura of incomprehension and sturdy rejection. Stereotypically regarded as an unprecedented theatrical scandal (even today anti-drama and anti-theatre remain the labels which, in popular view, best describe Beckett's work), the scandal which completely ignores our habits and our expectations, *Waiting for Godot* is no longer considered as an absurd play drained of any relation to the traditional culture, as a total annihilation of human values, as a nihilistic degradation of norms and conventions. Subjected to scrupulous analysis, Beckett turned into a modern classic whose artistic kinship with, among others, John Milton, William Shakespeare, Jean Racine, Percy Bysshe Shelley and William Butler Yeats, is taken for granted.

In the English speaking world the case is particularly explicit. Recent productions of *Waiting for Godot* tend to explore peculiarities of the Irish humour (Beckett was Irish). When in 1991, Walter Asmus directed the play for the Gate Theatre in Dublin, he frequently defused theatrical tension with sudden and unexpected shifts of suggested meanings. I will take just one example, that of an amusing, if awkward, scene in which the play on the word "nothing" is particularly visible. In the course of the performance, Estragon - one of the two main characters - utters a sentence, which yokes together the fictional world and the theatrical situation. When saying "In the meantime nothing happens", Estragon comments upon futility of his life, reveals his exasperation, alludes to the sense of void, desolation, hopelessness. But simultaneously he proves that appalling weariness is an intentional quality of the performance - it is an objective of the playwright to make the audience bored. In the Gate Theatre production, Walter Asmus explores consequences of this double perspective by devising, immediately before the Estragon's utterance, enormously long, hardly bearable in the theatrical circumstances, silent *tableau*. In the meantime nothing happens in a

very physical way. Yet, the effect that the Estragon's words brought to the audience was that of relief: at last something happened, at last someone broke the silence.

The comical capacity of the play was further pursued by Peter Hall when in 1997 he directed *Waiting for Godot* at the Old Vic Theatre in London. Frequent outbursts of sheer laughter would be something of a shock for those who attended Peter Hall's English language premiere of the play at the Arts Theatre in London forty-two years earlier and reacted to it with sceptical irritation. Abstract connotations of the minimalist stage design (the stage was just a blue box-set), being confronted with the flamboyant splendour of the Victorian theatre building, introduced an additional clash between contemporary aesthetic norms and those of the nineteenth century. What I am trying to say is that Peter Hall's second production of *Waiting for Godot* provoked a curious interplay of at least three concepts of theatre and, by implication, confronted three sets of human values. On the diachronic plane, Hall rejects the naive aesthetics of Victorian entertainment and re-evaluates the annihilating poetics of nonsense stereotypically ascribed to everything which is labelled as the theatre of the absurd. Finally, and most importantly, Hall directed his second *Godot* as a lyrical play in which the sense of despair is intermingled with that of lingering hope. Godot has not arrived within the two acts of the play. Still, he may - but does not have to - come. What is being communicated throughout the play is the fact that in the meantime nothing happens. As one other Beckett character puts it:

Ah well what a joy in any case to know you are there, as usual, and perhaps awake, and perhaps taking all this in, some of all this, what a happy day for me... it will have been.⁵

Beckett's stage is inhabited by awkward, shabby figures (e.g. *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Footfalls*), which are at times reduced to parts of the body (*Not I*, *That Time* and *Play*). And this exemplifies a more general shift, which transformed the visual aesthetics in the theatre of 1950s, 60s and 70s. The fragmented images, the peripheral phenomena and the tattered actors became pivotal elements for the major theatrical experiments of the time, be it a Beckett, a Kantor or a Grotowski.

In "The Theatre of Death" - to take the example of Tadeusz Kantor's theatrical manifesto - we come across a passage which deals with Kantor's "long-held conviction that only the reality of the lowest order, the poorest and least prestigious objects are capable of revealing their full objectivity in a work of art."⁶ Convinced of "the absolute downfall of today's [institutionalised] theatre,"⁷ Kantor proposes to re-new the relationship between an actor and a spectator by coupling the stage with the notion of

death:

The MANNEQUIN in my theatre must become a MODEL,
through which pass a strong sense of DEATH and the
condition of the DEAD. A model for the live ACTOR.⁸

The model of the theatre which is proposed here offers stark contrast to the one which is associated with the Irish theatrical tradition. Whereas for Kantor the stage should follow the pattern of the dead, in Irish tradition the audience epitomises the dead who are watching the living actors.⁹ The contrast is very telling since it reflects mental disturbance which was expressed through this distressing metaphor: the living took the passive role of the observers whilst the dead were acting. The museum in Auschwitz and the massive monument in Verdun make the living guilty of having survived.

I find it symptomatic that two major Polish poets of the second half of the twentieth century examined the semantics of the word “ocalenie” (‘rescue’, ‘salvation’) in their works published once the war had finished. If in 1945 Czesław Miłosz entitled his collection of poems as “Ocalenie” (“Rescue”), Tadeusz Różewicz named one of his most famous early poems as “Ocalony”. For the sake of conciseness, I will briefly comment on an English translation of only the latter work.

Adam Czerniawski opens Różewicz’s poem - translated as “The Survivor” - with a gloomily furnished tercet: “I am twenty-four // led to slaughter // I survived.”¹⁰ Utter confusion of the speaker is further strengthened in the following four stanzas in which he: degrades the oppositions of “man and beast // love and hate // friend and foe // darkness and light” to the rank of hollow and empty synonyms (stanza 2); dehumanises the dignity of a human body (stanza 3); equates “virtue” with “crime”, “truth” with “lies”, “beauty” with “ugliness”, “courage” with “cowardice” since these ideas are merely words (stanza 4). What is more, in the fifth stanza the speaker sounds absolutely astonished by the fact that “Virtue and crime weight the same // I’ve seen it: // in a man who was both // criminal and virtuous”. The frame composition - the final stanza echoes the first one - seems to complete the destructive force of this desperate and disillusioned expression.

Yet, the depths of despair, which certainly dominate Różewicz’s “Rescue”, are counterbalanced with slight signs of hope which spring up in the penultimate stanza. Let me read the Polish original here: “Szukam nauczyciela i mistrza // niech przywróci mi wzrok słuch i mowę // niech jeszcze raz nazwie rzeczy i pojęcia // niech oddzieli światło od ciemności.”¹¹ In Czerniawski’s translation it reads: “I seek a teacher and a master // may he restore my sight hearing and speech // may he again name objects and ideas // may he separate darkness from light.” This quatrain - this sentence - entails

everything that lies at the core of my argumentation. Disillusioned, depressed and disenchanting as he is, the speaker preserves in himself capacity for hope, the value which seems decisive for maintaining at least some humane traces within the mentalscape of the “language animal”.

I think that in this sense George Steiner - to refer again to his standpoint - catches, with remarkable accuracy, the very gist of the human conduct when he writes in *Grammars of Creation* the following sentences:

In the overwhelming majority of formative acts [...], [artists] have hoped to transmit to the future their identity. They have hungered after immortality, within the bounds which saddened common sense assigned to this promise.¹²

As directed to the future, any artistically successful expression of despair - caused by the devastation of personal or universal principles - assigns to the ruins of the mind more general meaning. After all, some promise of hope originates any communicative act since a transmission of the mentalscape *a priori* equals overcoming of the limitations of the self. Hamm, a vicious, if pitiable, protagonist of Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, conveys this axiom in a very intriguing way:

Hamm: We're not beginning to... to... mean something?

Clov: Mean something! You and I, mean something! (*Brief laugh.*) Ah that's a good one!

Hamm: I wonder. (*Pause.*) Imagine if a rational being came back to earth, wouldn't he be liable to get ideas into his head if he observed us long enough. (*Voice of a rational being.*) Ah, good, now I see what it is, yes, now I understand what they're at! ([...] *Normal voice.*) And without going so far as that, we ourselves... (*with emotion*)... we ourselves... at certain moments ... (*Vehemently.*) To think perhaps it won't all have been for nothing!¹³

When trying to provide the most conclusive proof for the practical relevance of my argumentation for contemporary art, I could not help thinking about a tiny independent theatre from Supraśl, a provincial town of some 4,500 inhabitants which is hidden somewhere in the forests of eastern Poland. I am speaking here about the Wierszalin Theatre. I do mention its decentralised location on purpose - how many of us have visited Supraśl? - the decision of establishing an aspiring theatrical group in the peripheries of

Poland, demonstrates complete disregard to the tediousness of the mainstream.¹⁴

In the final part of my paper, I am going to concentrate on a recent production of the Wierszalin Theatre, which is entitled “Bóg Niżyński” - “God Niżyński”. As the title suggests, the performance is based on the legend of Waclaw Niżyński, a Russian ballet master who revolutionised the ballet conventions during his spectacular, though brief, international career, which collapsed at the end of WWI when Niżyński, at the age of thirty, was overtaken by insanity. For the remaining thirty years of his life, the diagnosed schizophrenia completely isolated Niżyński from the external world (as the legend says he regained consciousness for a brief period in August 1939 so as to express, after reading newspapers, his ominous prophecy: “The second act is beginning.”)¹⁵

The story presented by the Wierszalin Theatre is set in a madhouse and creates a blasphemous liturgy in which Niżyński - the God, as he calls himself - dances on the grave of Siergiej Diaghilev, his most enthusiastic mentor, and a detrimental ex-lover. Metaphorical intermingling of the madhouse with the sacred¹⁶ ruthlessly exploits the void of the human psyche. Mental instability of the protagonist throws him into extreme emotions of sublime holiness, vicious conceit, self-destructive passion, untamed creativity and sheer madness. The ferocious expression of insanity, which permits us to probe - in this mysterious play of the twentieth first century - the depths of despair, is decisive for the humane quality of “God Niżyński”. The ruin of Niżyński’s hopes, aspirations and values, his blasphemous dance and his sacrilegious crucifixion might become - for some of us at least - a starting point for a serious re-consideration of the void lodged within ourselves. On the artistic plane, “God Niżyński” transforms seemingly petrified theatrical conventions - such as the gradual anticlockwise switching off lights, the powdering of the body with flour and the climactic crucifixion - into powerful metaphors. Yet once again, the creative act of the Wierszalin Theatre imposes meaning upon a meaningless story of a hopeless degradation of the ballet genius, of his mental exclusion, of his madness. Yet once again, the legend of the dead is performed for the living. And again, the hope arises that “perhaps it won’t all have been for nothing!”

Notes

¹ G Steiner, *Grammars of Creation*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2002, p. 283.

² *ibid.*, p. 9.

³ “We know that some of the men who devised and administered Auschwitz

had been taught to read Shakespeare and Goethe, and continued to do so”, G Steiner, ‘Humane Literacy’, in *Language and Silence*, G Steiner, Atheneum, New York, 1970, p. 5.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵ S Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works*, Faber and Faber, London, 1990, p. 152.

⁶ T Kantor, ‘The Theatre of Death’, in *Twentieth Century Polish Theatre*, Drozdowski (ed.), John Calder, London, 1979, p. 103.

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 102.

⁹ For a detailed comparative analysis of the Polish and the Irish theatrical traditions see: N Witoszek, *The Theatre of Recollection. A Cultural Study of the Modern Dramatic Tradition in Ireland and Poland*, University of Stockholm, Stockholm, 1988.

¹⁰ T Różewicz, *Poezje wybrane. Selected Poems*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków, 1995, p. 7.

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 6.

¹² Steiner, *Grammars of Creation*, p. 326.

¹³ Beckett, pp. 107-108.

¹⁴ In this way, The Wierszalin Theatre follows the tradition of Grotowski’s Laboratory Theatre, and The Gardzienice Theatre.

¹⁵ After: W Krasowska, *Niżyński*, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa, 1978, p. 208.

¹⁶ The sacred understood as a sphere which matches metaphysical ‘the above’ with ‘the below’.

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Phenomenology of Hope and Despair: A Qur'anic Perspective

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Abstract: Hope is an intrinsic value towards success, victory, enthusiasm, and a positive attitude in life. It is the main driving force that leads one to strive for excellence. Despair, on the other hand, turns off the rays of hope and optimism, and keeps one constantly lagging behind. It perishes the victims from the inner roots.

Al-Qur'an, the Holy Book for all Muslims, sheds lights on the issue and urges one to be optimistic and hopeful. It warns of severe punishments for persistent criminals and sinners; while, on the other hand, sheds rays of hope for Divine mercy and forgiveness to the repentant. The Qur'an condemns the phenomenon of despair outright. It is only attributed to the deviant and non-believers. The Qur'an relates hope with belief in Allah and religion, and despair with disbelief and atheism. (Qur'an 12: 87, 15: 56) It is the non-believers alone that quickly turn to despair and hopelessness. He collapses during distresses and adversaries. It is the irony of humans that when affluent, turn out to be proud, and during adversaries get collapsed and lose all hopes, leading sometimes to suicide. (Qur'an 11: 9). The present research would therefore aim to provide a clear picture of hope and despair from Qur'anic perspective. How does the Qur'an instil hope in the minds of common people? What are the qualities of the people who are optimistic and have a positive attitude in life? What about those pessimistic and hopeless? The research focuses on the Qur'anic *ayat* as the primary reference, and also on the traditions of the Prophets as the secondary source. The research is expected to instil some rays of hope in the minds of readers, and through their implementation would help them turn out as optimistic and positive human being.

Key words: Hope, believers, despair, atheists, Qur'an, Sunnah.

1. Defining Hope and Despair

Hope is a positive spiritual attitude in life, that leads a person towards activism, dynamism and constant striving towards excellence. Hope is a belief in a positive outcome related to events and circumstances in one's life. Hope implies a certain amount of patience and perseverance even though a person is faced with the contrary situations. It is closely tied with faith and belief of a person.

In his *Al-Iman wa al-Hayat* [Faith and life], Yousuf Al-Qaradawi explains, "Hope is the Elixir or panacea of life, and a stimulator of activism.

It reduces the worries and increases happiness and brightness in people. Life with no hope has no meaning at all.”¹

Allah has used it in both positive and negative sense. For example, in *Surah al-Kahf*, Allah mentions:

Wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world:
But the things that endure, good deeds, are best in the sight
of thy Lord, as rewards, and best as (the foundation for)
hopes. (Al-Kahf 18:46)

Allah has referred to good deeds as something to be hoped for. On the other hand, Allah says in *Surah Al-Hijr*:

Leave them alone, to enjoy (the good things of this life)
and to please themselves: let (false) hope amuse them: soon
will they know (the reality). (Al-Hijr 15: 3)

The word ‘Amal’ or ‘Hope’ is referred to as false hope in the above ayah. It was reported that Adam’s children will have envy and long lasting ‘hope’.

2. Defining Despair

Despair is against hope. While hope makes a person hopeful and leads him to dynamism and activism, despair leads him to total hopelessness in life. It may lead him to suicide in many incidents. In most religions it is regarded as a matter of sin. Yousuf Qaradawi explains “*Qunut*”, “*Ya’s*” or ‘despair’ as follows:

Despair is against hope. It turns off the flame of hope in the chest, and severs the thread of expectation from the heart.. It is the invincible obstacle and strong block that destroys all motivations of work and weakens the body from all strengths.²

Ibn Masud says: “People get perished because of two things: *Hopelessness* and *self pride*. For hopelessness will lead to despair, and self-pride will lead to egoism.”³ Imam Ghazali relates between the two by saying that happiness can only be obtained through hard work and constant efforts. A hopeless person does not put out any effort because everything is impossible to him. An egoist person, on the other hand, feels he attained his goal, so there is no need to put effort at all.⁴

3. Importance of Hope in Life

Hope is an essential element in life. Without this, one cannot continue in the struggles of his or her life. He or she cannot succeed in his or her mission. Hope leads one to dynamism in spirit and physical strength. It transforms the lazy into active, and helps the active to perform even better in order to obtain excellence.

In Islam, hope is a required condition to gain success in both the world and the Hereafter. You cannot get desired success unless you strive for it with an ardent hope. Likewise, you cannot get salvation in the Hereafter without a firm faith and hope in Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness. The Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) is reported to have said:

Live a truthful, moderate, and hopeful life. No one would enter Jannah because of his righteous acts (alone). "Not even yourself O Prophet of Allah!"? Yes, even not myself, unless Allah (SWT) covers me with His Mercy and Forgiveness.⁵

'Hope' is a very essential element for the advancement of sciences.

If the scholars of science, invention and technology [says Qaradawi] stop at the established precepts of their time; and the 'Hope' did not aid them to discover unseen realities and information, the science would not develop forward and could not reach men to Moon. The ray of light which enlightens the great hearts, makes the road clear, and removes darkness, it is 'hope', or let us say it is *Iman* in Allah's help.⁶

Ghazali mentions that one needs to be hopeful toward Allah and remain at His Mercy. It is very much hoped that Allah would then forgive him.⁷ Ghazali quotes the hadith of the Prophet that a rich man who used to give loans to people and remained lenient to the rich and forgave the poor. He met Allah without any other good act. Allah forgave him. For, the man, though was empty-handed in terms of other good acts, remained hopeful for the mercy of Allah for this noble dealing with the people.⁸

4. Iman necessary condition for hope

A believer always remains hopeful. Iman and hope are interrelated. A true believer is the person with supreme happiness, joy and contentment of heart. He stays at great distance from pessimism, impatience and despair. The

materialists stay with the observed laws of cause and effect. They do not hope for anything beyond. The believers supersede observed phenomena and reach for the secrets of existence: to Allah, the creator of cause and effect. In Islam, Allah is the owner and controller of causes and its effects. The believers, therefore, turn to Him during dangers and calamities. They get peace of mind in turning to Him during calamities and gain His company when no one is around. The patient turns to Him when all the doctors of the world become hopeless, and he still feels hopeful of recovery. The secret behind such a positive approach is one's firm faith with Allah, the creator of the universe, the controller and the sustainer. Allah has confirmed this in the different places of the Qur'an, such as:

Who created me, and it is He Who guides me; "Who gives me food and drink," "And when I am ill, it is He Who cures me. (Shu`ara 26: 78-80)

5. Impact of hope on happiness

A believer in Allah's favours gets security, satisfaction and happiness in life. It is the ray of hope that enlightens ways for him and guides him through to the right direction. A person full of hope is usually a happy person. A peasant works hard and sweats for the hope of its produce. A businessman risks travelling and dangers for his hope of profit. A student strives constantly for his hope of success. A soldier risks his life and offers brave acts for his hope of victory. A subjugated nation constantly struggles for freedom. A patient tolerates bitter medicine for the hope of cure. Likewise, a Believer in Allah strives against his unlawful desires and follows Allah's commands for the hope of obtaining Allah's Pleasure and entering into Jannah. The hope, then, is the panacea of life and stimulator of activism. It reduces the worries and increases happiness in people. How narrower the life in which no hope exists at all.⁹

6. Types of happiness

In Islam, a believer could attain two types of happiness, in the world and the Hereafter. Ibn Al-Qaiyyim classifies this happiness into three types:¹⁰

A. External happiness. It can be achieved through richness and having a long life. According to Ibn al-Qaiyyim the parable of this type of happiness is like the bald-headed person who gets happy by the beautiful and stylish hair of his cousin.

B. Happiness in Physical appearance. It is obtained through good health, sound intelligence, handsome looks and a

well-built body. Though it is linked with a person's own self, it is still beyond a person's real personality. For his identity is not through his body or wealth; but through his spirit and heart.

C. Spiritual Happiness. The real happiness lies in his spiritual happiness, which is to be obtained through learning beneficial knowledge that guides one throughout his or her life.

7. **Hopefulness as a trait in Believers**

One of the common characteristics of humans is the desire to be happy. Every individual tries hard to achieve this goal, thinks more of the future than the present and is often preoccupied with thoughts alike. *Mu'min* places his hope in Allah according to his faith, sincerity and closeness to Allah. Knowing that everything happens according to His will, believers do not fall into despair or become hopeless and pessimistic. Believers who are aware of this do not lose hope, even when facing the most distressing events, in Allah's mercy or help.¹¹

The Qur'an, for instance, portrays believers as being in a constant spiritual state of hopefulness toward Allah. As Allah promises to the Believers: "As for those who believe and do right actions, We will erase their bad actions and recompense them for the best of what they did." (Al-'Ankabut 29: 7) The believers' prayers and wishes are full of hope. "They call upon their Lord in fear and ardent hope." (As-Sajdah 32: 16)

8. **Prophets as Models of Hopeful**

A. Prophet Ibrahim. He was rejected by his own people, and they wanted to burn him alive. Ibrahim was of composed mind, not fearful of their plots. For he had rested hope in the power and mercy of Allah. "The only answer of his people was to say: "Kill him or burn him!" But Allah rescued him from the fire. There are certainly Signs in that for people who believe." (Ankabut 29: 24) Further, "We said: "Fire, be coolness and peace for Ibrahim!" (Al-Anbiya' 21: 69)

B. Prophet Ya`qub. He lost his beloved son, Yousuf, to the conspiracy of his other children. Many years passed by. Still he did not lose hope in getting back his son and advised his children to search for Yousuf and Ben Yamin. He said:

O my sons! go ye and enquire about Joseph and his brother,
and never give up hope of Allah's Soothing Mercy: truly
no one despairs of Allah's Soothing Mercy, except those

who have no faith. (Yousuf 12: 87)

C. Prophet Ayyub. He was the best example of patience and gratitude in the face of severe afflictions that he went through. He suffered from severe disease; but did not lose hope with Allah for getting cured, and with no complaints. Allah answered his prayers:

So We listened to him: We removed the distress that was on him, and We restored his people to him, and doubled their number- as a Grace from Ourselves, and a thing for commemoration, for all who serve Us. (Al-Anbiya' 21: 83-84)

D. Prophet Yunus. He left his community without Allah's permission, and, ultimately, was swallowed by a large fish, which means he faced total destruction. But Yunus did not lose hope in Allah and celebrated Allah's praise and glorification. Allah listened to him and released him from the afflictions. Allah says:

He cried through the depths of darkness, "There is no god but thou: glory to thee: I was indeed wrong! So We listened to him: and delivered him from distress: and thus do We deliver those who have faith. (Al-Anbiya' 21: 87-88)

E. Prophet Musa. The prominent Prophet of Allah Moses delivered Bani Isra'il from Egypt; but Pharaoh and his folk chased them. Bani Isra'il got panicked and became hopeless. They showed their dissatisfaction and anger to Moses; and it was a moment full of anxieties and worries. But he had firm conviction in Allah's help that Allah will show him the way to get released. Allah kept the honour of Moses' word, and asked him to hit the sea and it gave way to Moses and Bani Isra'il, and destruction only to Pharaoh and his folks.

(Moses) said: "By no means! my Lord is with me! Soon will He guide me!" Then We told Moses by inspiration: "Strike the sea with thy rod." So it divided, and each separate part became like the huge, firm mass of a mountain.... Verily in this is a Sign: but most of them do not believe. (Shu'ara 26: 62-67)

F. Prophet Muhammad. The life of Prophet Muhammad also serves as the best example of hope, patience and submission to Allah's help and mercy. He was dejected and rejected by his own people in Makkah. His great protectors

like his uncle and wife Khadijah passed away. He left for Ta'if in search for another land of Islam. But the people of Ta'if treated him severely. Their hooligans hurled rocks at him and he was chased out bleeding. But to their dismay, the Prophet of hope and mercy, when given an option of destroying this nation, he opted for forgiveness. He said: "No, I hope that God will bring out from their offspring people who worship Him alone and associate no partners with Him."¹²

Allah made it a reality. It was within 80 years that a young man of this Thaqafi tribe, Muhammad bin Qasim was able to conquer Sind, while coming to rescue a few Muslim woman hostages by a pirate chief. The Prophet was full of hope and optimism which brought astonishing results.¹³ He migrates to Madinah, and hides inside Thawr cave. The investigator came to the mouth of the cave with the other people of Quraysh. If they looked down, they would see the Prophet and Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr was anxious about the safety of the Prophet, but the Prophet was firm, free from fear and hopeful for the help of Allah. He said: "What do you think O Abu Bakr about the two men? Allah is third."¹⁴ Allah liked the word of the Prophet and recorded this in the eternal Book. These are few examples from the pages of history which are true events, though the materialists will reject some or all of them, as they stand against 'Aql and what people usually see.

9. Basis of Hopefulness

Imam Ghazali mentions that if one deeply reflects on Allah's bounties, he would always remain hopeful. For if he realizes that Allah has created him in the best shape and provided for him all the necessities of life abundantly. He created the world and filled it with all types of bounties, favours and temptations. Allah made it so beautiful that most of the people do not want to die and they want to live and enjoy as much as they could.¹⁵ Allah asked people to reflect on the creation of Allah and His limitless favours. This would make them hopeful to live with a mission in life to please Allah the creator. For, Allah did not create him without a purpose. "O people of understanding! deeply reflect on His creations." (Hashr 59: 2)

In many Qur'anic *ayat* Allah promised the Believers that he would support them in their daily life. Allah also welcomes the repentance from the sinners and promised to accept it provided that it was done with a sincere heart. He also promised that He will replace their wrong actions into good. Imam Ibnul Qayyim clarifies that 'if the spiritual life gets pure and holy, material life also becomes pure and holy, as the heart controls the organs of a person.'¹⁶

Allah (swt) not only promised a good life in this world, but most importantly He promised to the righteous persons a wonderful reward in the Hereafter: life in the Gardens of Eden and in Paradise with endless bounties of Allah. Numerous Qur'anic *ayat* are cited on above and similar topics, such

as the following:

For those who believe and do right actions, there are Gardens of Delight, to remain in them timelessly, forever. Allah's Promise is true. He is the Almighty, the All-Wise. (Luqman 31: 8-9)

It is a unique feature of Islam that Allah has kept the door of Tawbah wide open for them. The people are not angels, nor should they be like Satan. If they commit any sin or mistake, and immediately repent to Allah directly, without the intermediary of any, He will accept their repentance provided that it was done sincerely. Allah has invited people to be hopeful, and not to turn hopeless. Say: "My servants, who have transgressed against yourselves, do not despair of Allah's mercy. Truly Allah forgives all wrong actions. He is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful." (Zumar 39: 53) Believers who sin but then repent and seek Allah's forgiveness should not be seized by grief and hopelessness, for hopelessness displeases Allah.

10. Despair and Its Impact on Human life

Despair, as has been cited above, is against hope. While hope makes a person hopeful and leads that person to dynamism and activism; despair, on the other, leads a person to total hopelessness in life. Imam Ghazali mentions that Allah has made the very foundation of despair unlawful for mankind by saying: "Despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins." (Zumar 39: 53) That is why the Prophet was reported to have said: "No one shall die but by keeping good hope with Allah."¹⁷ Ali (R.A.) was reported to have said to a person who turned hopeless due to his limitless sins: "Your despair from the Mercy of Allah is greater sin than all your sins."¹⁸

A hopeless person simply abandons trying to do something. He or she believes there is no hope in it. A proud person feels that he already obtained what is needed by him. Hopelessness acts like a slow, gradual poison that kills the soul of a person. He or she is totally deterred from society and environment. Hope can only bring one back to the right track.

11. Despair and Kufr are interrelated

Kufr and despair are interrelated and go hand in hand. The people who reject Allah are usually affected with such despair. These are the people who live with themselves and obey their desires. They severed any ties with the Universe and its Creator. There is close relation between despair and *kufr*. One leads to the other. Despair begets *kufr*, and vice versa. "Truly no one despairs of Allah's Soothing Mercy, except those who have no faith." (Yousuf 12: 87)

Men usually succumb to hopelessness during distressing events. The

Qur'an points to this as it says, "If We give man a taste of Mercy from Ourselves, and then withdraw it from him, behold! he is in despair and (falls into) blasphemy." (Hud 11: 9) Also the Qur'an speaks of the characteristics of the people in general and says that during good days they get proud, and during calamities, they suffer from despair. Allah says, "Man does not tire of asking for good (things), but if ill touches him, he gives up all hope (and) is lost in despair." (Fussilat 41: 49)

12. Meaningless hope of the Ignorant

"Hopefulness is a state of a peaceful heart, awaiting the desired goal." At least this is how al-Ghazali puts it, and a 'cause' (*sabab*) is preconditioned toward this desired goal. Otherwise, it should rather be known as a wishful thought (*tamanna*) only.¹⁹ He cites examples from the Prophetic Hadith, "One who follows his own desire and lusts, and (at the same time) wishes for Allah's (swt) (favour and) Jannah, is the real fatuous."²⁰

A person's degree of hope for Allah's mercy is in direct proportion to one's attachment and closeness to Him and to one's observance of the Qur'an's rulings. Those who do not remember Allah, who live as they please, and who turn away from Allah's commands and then expect a good recompense are only fooling themselves. The Qur'an speaks of the nations who in spite of disobeying Allah wished for His bounties, "But after them there followed a posterity who missed prayers and followed after lusts; soon, then, will they face Destruction." (Maryam 19: 59) In another instance, the Qur'an narrates, "*After them succeeded an (evil) generation: They inherited the Book, but they chose (for themselves) the vanities of this world, saying (for excuse): 'Everything will be forgiven us'.*" (A`raf 7: 169) Muhammad Asad comments on this verse and says, "Their wish that they would be forgiven for breaking God's commandments in their pursuit of worldly gain is completely an allusion to their persistent belief that they are 'God's chosen people' and that, no matter what they do, His forgiveness and grace are assured to them by virtue of their being Abraham's descendants."²¹

13. Conclusions: Overcoming Despair

Despair has become part of civil life today. Everyone will have his share of worries that sometimes may lead to despair. We need to deal with this in a systematic and rational way to overcome despair in our life.

Firstly, we have to be realistic in making demands upon ourselves and the society in which we live. Secondly, we should find contentment with the situation in which we find ourselves. This does not mean that we should not have ambitions and dreams. Rather we should have ambitions and be optimistic to achieve success in it. Umar b. `Abd al-`Aziz said: "I am an ambitious man. First, I desired governorship. When I attained it, I desired to

be Caliph. When I became caliph, I renounced its pleasures, for then my ambitions had turned to attaining Paradise.”²² Thirdly, we should enjoy our successes and achievements. All of us have some achievements to our credit. We need to take satisfaction and pride in them, as this helps to prevent us from making light of Allah’s blessings. Fourthly, we should be grateful to Allah for all His favours. “If you are grateful, I will give you more” (Quran 14:7). Fifthly, we must observe daily prayers in congregations and leave the world behind five times a day. It will help us to become more Hereafter-oriented and less worried about this temporal world. Sixthly, one should make the Qur’an, the divine Book of Allah, his or her partner to alleviate the worries and distresses. Reading and listening to the Qur’an will help refresh our hearts and our minds. Connecting to the Qur’an means connecting to God. Let it be a means to heal our hearts of stress and worries.²³ Finally, we must refrain from envying others. If Allah has gifted some of His servants with special gifts, we should not get upset because of this. We should find out the good circumstances that we are in, and be thankful to Allah for this.

The Prophet said: Whenever you see someone better than you in wealth, face or figure, you should look at someone who is inferior to you in these respects (so that you may thank Allah for His blessings).²⁴ If we are to compare ourselves with others, we should only do it in two respects: our Iman or Faith and our Islamic knowledge. We should be pleased by seeing that today is better than many days in the past, and the coming days can even be much better than it is now. We should not get upset by looking into the lost opportunities of the past; we should instead look forward to the promise of a better future.

Notes

¹ Yousuf Qaradawi, *Al-Iman wa al-Hayat*, Maktabat Wahbah, Cairo, 1998, p. 156.

² *ibid.*, p. 157.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Abu Hamed Ghazali, *Ihya’ ‘Ulum al-Din*, Dar al-Ma’rifah, Beirut, vol. 3, p.369.

⁵ Bukhari, *Al-Jami’ al-Sahih al-Mukhtasar*, Kitab al-Riqaq, Bab al-Qasd wa al-Mudawamah, (6102), Dar Ibn Kathir, Beirut, 5/2373; Muslim bin Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim*, Kitab Sifat al-Munafiqin, Bab Lan Yadkhula Ahad al-Jannah., (2816) Dar Ihya’ al-Turath al-‘Arabiyy, Beirut, n.d., 4/2169.

⁶ Qaradawi: 164.

- ⁷ Imam Ghazzali, *Al-Khawf wal-Raja' (Fear and Hopefulness)*, Zahir Shafiq al-Kabbi (ed.). (Ihya' 'Ulum al-Deen Series: 7). Dar al-Fikr al-'Araby, Beirut, 1992, p. 16.
- ⁸ Bukhari, *Kitab al-Anbiya'*, (3293), 3/1283; *Muslim*, *Kitab al-Musaqat*, (1562), 3/1196.
- ⁹ Qaradawi, p. 156.
- ¹⁰ Ibn al-Qaiyyim al-Jawziyyah, *Miftah Dar as-Sa`adah*, Dar Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut, n.d. 1/107-108.
- ¹¹ Harun Yahya, *Hopefulness in the Qur'an*, Saba Islamic Media, Kuala Lumpur, 1991, pp. 12-13.
- ¹² Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, Maktabat al-Ma`arif, Beirut, n.d., 3/137.
- ¹³ Ibid. 7/297.
- ¹⁴ Bukhari, *Kitab at-Tafsir*, (4386), 4/1712, *Muslim*, *Kitab Fada'il al-Sahabah*, (2381), 4/1854.
- ¹⁵ Ghazali, *Al-Khawf wa al-Raja'*: 20-21.
- ¹⁶ Ibn al-Qaiyyim al-Jawziyyah, *Madarij as-Salikin*, Dar Kitab al-'Arabiyy, Beirut, 1393/1973, vol. 3, p.259.
- ¹⁷ *Muslim*, *Kitab al-Jannah*, (2877), 4/2205.
- ¹⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Al-Khawf wa al-Raja'*, p. 16.
- ¹⁹ See: Imam Ghazali. *Al-Khawf wa al-Raja'*, p.11.
- ²⁰ *Tirmidhi*, (2459), 4/638.
- ²¹ Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'an*, Dar al-Andalus, Gibraltar, 1980, p. 229.
- ²² http://islamtoday.net/english/showme2.cfm?cat_id=30&cat_id=614 (07/21/07 19:33:35).
- ²³ See for details, Abdul Malik Mujahid, "25 Ways To Deal With Stress And Anxiety." <http://soundvision.com/info/peace/stresstips.asp> (08/06/07 21:55:25).
- ²⁴ Bukhari, *Kitab al-Riqaq*, (6125), 5/2380, *Muslim*, *Kitab al-Zuhd wa al-Raqa'iq*, (2963), 4/2275.

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Part IV
Engaged Projects of Hope

Freedom, Democracy, Affirmative Action, Employment Equity: The Current Landscape of Post-Apartheid South Africa: Are We Opening or Closing Futures?

Fredelene Elie and Tshepiso Matentjie

Abstract: Post-apartheid South Africa created the expectations of infinite possibilities for many of its citizens, especially the black segment of the population who now have access to quality education and employment opportunities which were denied to them under the apartheid government. At the same time the white segment of the population are for the first time confronted with affirmative action and employment equity policies in order to redress the injustices created by apartheid policies. This paper set out to investigate and compare the effects of the current South African landscape on the hopes and perceptions of a group of white 12th grade students with those of a group of black 12th grade students who are on the verge of completing their high school years, and entering the world of work or higher education. The hypotheses was that the new post-apartheid landscape will instil a greater sense of hope for previously disadvantaged young people, and hopelessness for white young people who are now confronted with policies that put black people ahead of them. The results of this investigation indicates that there is no simple linear relationship between the new found freedoms and policies of post-apartheid South Africa and the promise of a “better life for all”, as propagated by the ruling African National Congress. Variables that dispute this linear relationship are highlighted and some complexities of transforming South African society are also indicated.

Key words: youth, affirmative action, employment equity, Apartheid.

1. Introduction

The transition in South Africa is described as being from mandated segregation by race to desegregation and equality by post-apartheid policies such as affirmative action and employment equity. Although described by the rest of the world as a miracle transition, South Africa remains a divided society marked by deep inequities.

Although South Africa has made progress from apartheid to democracy, from racial privilege to equity in the sense of equal treatment of persons of all races, it has been far less successful in promoting equitable educational opportunities and adequacy.

Affirmative Action and Employment Equity as policies to level the playing fields in South Africa have been embraced by the masses of historically disadvantaged people as an opportunity for upliftment, and

although frowned upon by the historically advantaged group, considered a necessary evil.

Fourteen years after the first democratic elections the debate about Affirmative Action still continues to rage in the public domain. There are those (both black and white) who are calling for its demise – as it is considered degrading, especially to those who were disadvantaged but made it against all odds.

On the flipside of the coin are those who are adamant that affirmative action must stay until such time that it can be demonstrated that the majority of the disadvantaged masses have derived some form of benefit in post-apartheid South Africa. Either point has been difficult to prove, as witnessed by the glaring levels of poverty and lack of resources in communities who suffered the most under apartheid. It is this debate about Affirmative Action and Employment Equity and our daily work of doing Career Guidance with both black and white students in their final year of high school, that led us to ponder how this generation views the current landscape of Post-Apartheid South Africa. They were only 5 years old when we had our first democratic elections, and thus baring what they have been told about apartheid and its ramifications, have very little firsthand experience of the actual situation. Our aim here was to determine to what extent these policies instil hope and /or open or close doors for adolescents in South Africa.

2. Methodology

A micro qualitative study was conducted with a convenience sample of 20 participants: 5 black females, 5 black males, 5 white females, and 5 white males.

The young people in this sample belong to the generation of South African youth growing up in ‘the New South Africa’ that officially offers them opportunities for a life of equality, one such opportunity being the ‘free and equal access to education’ (South African Schools Act 1996). They belong to a generation that was and is expected to build a life different and better from their parental generation. However, all of the black participant’s live in poverty, go to under resourced schools and are confronted with levels of community violence that renders them often insecure about their own chances in life. They are trying to construct their lives and identities in the still problem-abundant streets of what is commonly known as townships or informal settlements or shanty towns in South Africa.

The white participants in this sample are from a more affluent white community, attending a well resourced private school far removed from the realities of their black counterparts.

3. Data collection

A questionnaire with 5 open ended questions were administered to the participants and it attempted to tap into the following characteristics:

Participants awareness and understanding of these policies; The impact of these policies on South African youth; Whether they believe they can benefit by these policies; How do they feel about their future in S.A in light of these policies; and What needs to happen for them to have a sense of hope for their future in South Africa

4. Data Analysis

Based on the responses to the participants answers to the questions, we looked at themes and trends in their responses to get a sense of what the data means.

5. Results

A. Question 1: Participants awareness and understanding of these policies.

In response to the question that tapped into why they think these policies are part of the current landscape, most of the participants cited similar reasons such as the provision of: EQUALITY (between different groups), OPPORTUNITY (careers, jobs), OPEN DOORS (to a better future), GOAL ATTAINMENT (they do have goals but there is a perception that they need assistance – the third force), DO AWAY WITH DISCRIMINATION

B. Question 2: The impact of these policies on South African youth

Asked about their believe about the impact of these policies on South African youth. The responses were again positive but ranged in perceptions.

•More Opportunities •Less crime •the possibility of pursuing your dreams and to live your best life.

Black males cited:

• a sense of hope, • fighting chance, •equal chance for job, career and business opportunities • Motivated

National impact: •youths see each other as equals, •don't dwell on the past •one nation

White males cited:

•ambivalence, mixed emotions •causes conflict amongst youths
 •inspires more racial issues •we should go back to the olden days – no interracial mixing •creates further separation •a bad impact
 •we are really battling •it is now unfair

C. Question 3: Whether they believe they can benefit by these policies

This question tried to determine if they believe that they can derive any benefit from these anti-discriminatory policies. The Results were as follows:

Black females
•more opportunities for me assistance •encourage me •financial
•more jobs

White Females
•equal footing between social groups universities and jobs •unbiased selection for
•people won't judge based on skin colour or gender •can pursue dreams with great possibilities and success •we
can be free as we meant to be.

Some white females at this stage focused on the fact that these policies are merely false promises and that it is not applicable to white males.

The black males had a general positive response to this question.:
•freedom to be a better person environment •to have a universally positive
•making us all .equal •gives direction, to know what
to do and what not to do •information and easy access.

White Males felt completely marginalized. They cited:
•uncertainties about their future in this country •benefiting
youth from other races •difficult for white males to benefit from
affirmative action •does not benefit us at all

D. Question 4: How do they feel about their future in S.A in light of these policies.

In terms of their feelings about their future in South Africa in light of these policies: the black participants generally felt positive. The white females had ambivalent feelings: some felt that their future could be prosperous if these policies are implemented properly; whilst some felt that they actually do not have a future in this country. One participant felt strongly that she would have to leave South Africa as she does not foresee any future for her in S.A.

The white males responded with total hopelessness to this question. They all mentioned that they do not see any future for themselves in S.A. Some were even explicit about the fact that they will have to immigrate to other countries where they can be treated as equals, as they do not see this happening in the country of their birth. They felt that the policies will even afford unqualified black people career opportunities before them.

E. Question 5: What needs to happen for them to have a sense of hope for their future in South Africa.

To this question, the black participants indicated what they perceive as problems around the implementation of these policies. Even though they are positive about the policies as a mechanism through which they can be fast tracked to a better life, they see the policies as useless if it does not address the lack of resources in their schools, insufficient access to financial aid to enter higher education, as well as the high drop-out rate in higher education of black students and the high unemployment rate of black graduates.

The White female and white male responses to this question were almost for an overwhelming appeal to start over, from a clean slate, where everyone is considered equal, where there is no discrimination or reverse racism, and for a situation where everyone can compete on equal footing. Some of the white males even called for white empowerment and a return to the old order of the apartheid years.

6. Hope Theory

The view of hope as a psychological construct is based on Snyder's et al. (2000) view that hope consists of three cognitive components, namely: goal, pathway and agency thoughts. This model of hope was used as an organizing frame in this study. In this model hopeful thought reflects the belief that one can find pathways to desired goals and become motivated to use those pathways or goal attainment.

A. Goals

The data from these participant's responses indicates that there is no shortage of desired goals amongst young people in South Africa.

B. Pathways Thinking

Pathways thinking involves the ability to generate at least one, and often more, useable routes to a desired goal even in the face of impediments. The current data generation method did not tap into this aspect as pertaining to their internal messages such as "I'll find a way to reach my goals". For the black participants as well as for most of the white female participants, however, it is clear that they do view Affirmative action as a mechanism to goal attainment. The white males see themselves totally excluded from this AA as a pathway to their goal attainment

C. Agency Thinking

The motivational component in hope theory is agency – the perceived capacity to use one's pathways so as to reach desired goals. Whilst they might have the internal motivation to use their pathways, and employ agentic phrases such as "I can do this", young people often hit the ceiling when a

mechanism that should facilitate their goal attainment fails them. In this case participants mentioned difficulties with the disconnect between Affirmative Action as a policy on paper and the proper visible implementation thereof, to the point where they will consider the policy useless as an aid to their goal attainment.

As a work in progress this very preliminary investigation has left us with more questions than answers such as:

1. If these policies are viewed by previously disadvantaged youth as a pathway to their goal attainment - to achieve the better life for all as promised by the new government - is it fair to call for its demise in the face of glaring inequalities?
2. Are there other routes to racial equality besides of affirmative action?
3. Is it fair that a new generation of white young males, and soon young white women, should suffer the sins of their fathers who masterminded apartheid and are now exempt from much of the blame?
4. How do the youth respond to the continuous call to nation building and the pride in South African campaign if there are policies such as affirmative action that work to level the playing fields but that are also viewed by certain segments of the youth as causing racial tensions and reverse discrimination and racism

7. Conclusion

The current reality in South Africa indicates that there is no linear relationship between policies such as Affirmative Action and Employment Equity and higher hopefulness in historically disadvantaged youth or higher levels of hopelessness in white youths. However, white males on average still find employment quicker than their black counterparts and the majority of capital owners in South Africa are still white and therefore to a large extent controllers of the economy. Until such time that everybody in South Africa sees the rebuilding of South Africa as a collective responsibility, engaging with and implementing mechanisms for redress in the transition period as speedily as possible, we will be debating issues such as Affirmative Action and Employment Equity and the merits thereof. I remain hopeful however that through ongoing research and engagement with these issues that we will find answers and solutions to these questions which will allow the young people of South Africa to take up the call for *masakhane*: working together for a better future.

It should be emphasized that this investigation is very preliminary and more an evolving work in progress. Therefore it is in no way intended to be generalized to the broader population of young people in South Africa. At

this stage it serves as a useful start to organise our thoughts for a more broad and in-depth study that will be more representative and therefore more generalizable to the broader population.

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Changing Perceptions of Opportunities: Hope for Young People in High HIV- Risk Environments

David Harrison, Linda Richter and Chris Desmond

Abstract: South Africa is a socio-economically polarized country with a high prevalence of HIV. Almost half the lifetime risk of HIV infection among women occurs between the ages of 17 and 21. This spike of new infection is associated with declining condom use, which is not adequately explained by the desire to have a baby, changes in condom self-efficacy, duration of relationships, nor marriage.

Greater tolerance of risk is likely due to lower perceptions of opportunity among young people who leave school and enter 'the meantime' with little prospect of employment or further education. Thus, HIV prevention strategies must address the factors shaping perception of opportunity and seek to reduce socio-economic gradients at the same time.

loveLife is a national HIV prevention campaign which seeks to reinforce the aspirations of adolescents of school going age. Its challenge is to sustain apparent reductions in HIV infection into early adulthood. Through its community-based programmes, it has identified and developed thousands of young leaders in HIV prevention. loveLife plans to capitalize on this leadership to change perceptions of opportunity in their marginalized communities and nurture a commitment to a more equitable society. We argue that this strategy can help effect structural changes that lessen HIV infection.

Key words: HIV, income distribution, leadership, opportunity, loveLife, risk reduction

The sense of being trapped at the bottom of the pile - unable to navigate an acceptable future - predisposes to risky sexual behaviour.¹ This paper asks how strategies that engender hope can help to prevent HIV infection among young people in a heavily infected and socio-economically polarized country like South Africa.

Meta-analysis of behaviour change strategies for HIV prevention among young people shows that fear-based approaches are least effective, while those that are motivational - fostering hope and opportunity and building self-efficacy - have more impact.² But it is not known whether this holds in contexts in which, for the majority, day-to-day choice and opportunity are severely constrained, and prospects of real improvement are poor. Much, though not all, of the literature linking optimism to safer sexual

behaviour describes interventions in relatively low HIV prevalence environments or on islands of poverty in a sea of wealth.³

How far can hope take young people when a quarter of 24-year-old women are HIV positive,⁴ three-fifths of the population earn less than a fifth of total income,⁵ and only a third of 18-35-year-olds have ever had a job?⁶

This paper reviews the experience of loveLife - a national HIV prevention campaign for teenagers in South Africa. It describes the way in which loveLife has sought to build on the aspirations of young people, and evidence for the positive effect of its interventions. At the same time, it highlights limitations of the current approach and the urgent need to link messages of hope with enhanced access to opportunities. We conclude by describing how loveLife seeks to further develop its youth leadership initiatives to help change perceptions of opportunity for young people.

1. New HIV Infection in Young People Fuels the Epidemic

The brunt of infection is borne by young women who account for 77% of total prevalence among 15-24 year olds. In terms of spatial distribution, the highest rates on infection are found in urban informal settlements. The HIV prevalence among women in their early twenties (23.9%) is roughly three times that among 15-19-year-old women (9.4%).⁷ However, the increase is not uniform, as there is a sharp increase in infection among 18-21-year-old women (see Figure 1).⁸ If there weren't a spike in infection rates among 18-21-year-old women, the HIV epidemic in South Africa would be much smaller.

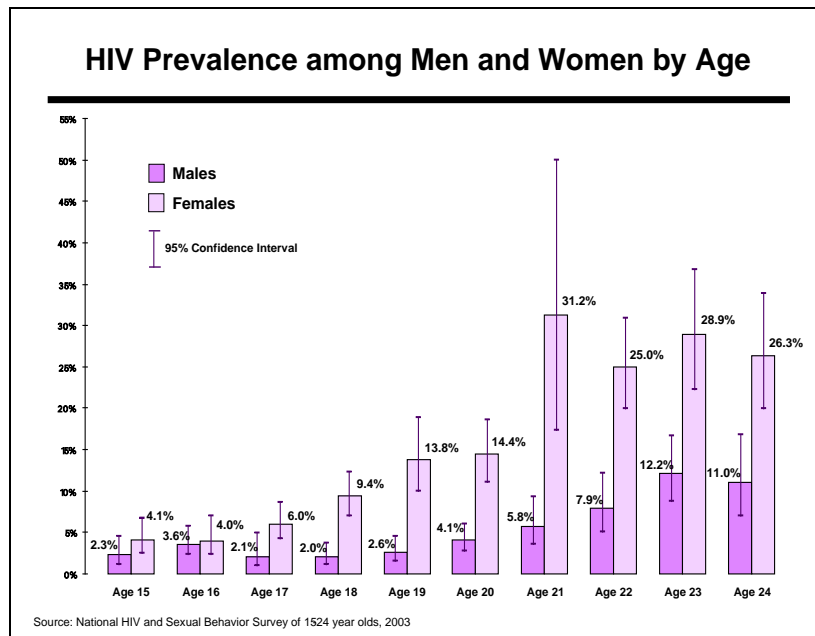


Figure 1: Sharp increase in HIV prevalence among 18-21-year-old women⁹

Over the last 7-8 years, there has been a slow decline in prevalence among young women.¹⁰ If this decline can be accelerated, rapid change in overall prevalence could be achieved over the next decade, for the following reasons. Firstly, new infections among young people continue to fuel the epidemic, accounting for about half of all new adult infections. This is down from an estimated 60% in 2000,¹¹ but still represents the greatest concentration of new infection. Secondly, South Africa has a young population: forty two percent of the population is under twenty years of age, and a just over a third (34.6%) under fifteen.¹² This “youth bubble” creates the opportunity for relatively large changes in population dynamics within a short time. Thirdly, self-reports indicate that South African teenagers are skewed towards high risk, particularly with respect to consistent condom use. This means that even a relatively modest shift in teenage sexual behaviour could trigger sharp declines in overall infection.¹³

2. Poor Prospects for Young People

The present socio-economic outlook for young people is poor. At the current rate of infection, the probability of the current cohort of 15-year-old South Africans dying before the age of 60 years (45q15) is approximately

51% for women and 62% for men.¹⁴ Although the reasons for the epidemic's severity in Southern Africa are not clear, Zanakis and others have shown associations between HIV infection and highly polarized income distribution.¹⁵

South Africa is a very unequal society, as evidenced by the Gini Coefficient; this rose from 0.69 in 1996 to 0.77 in 2001.¹⁶ Figure 2 shows cumulative household income distribution in 2000. The degree of income polarization is illustrated by fact that the poorest 60% of the population earn less than 20% of income, while the richest 20% of the population earns over 60% of the income.

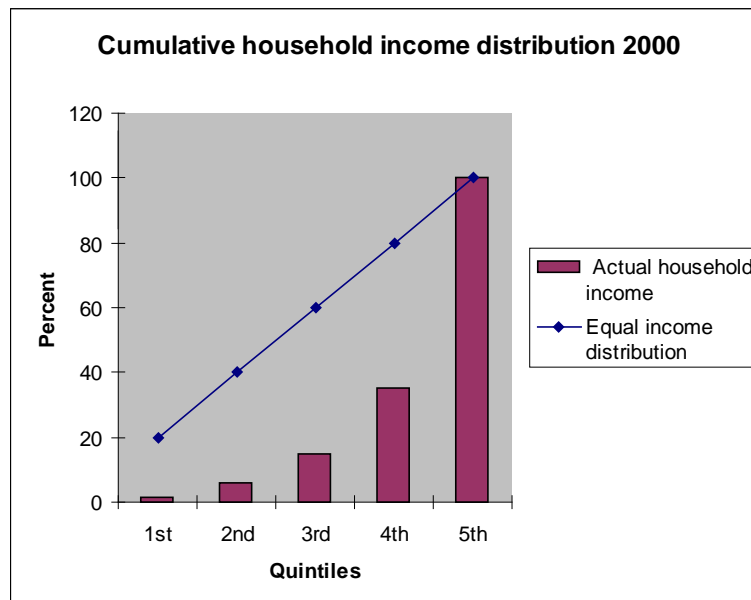


Figure 2: Income distribution in South Africa is highly unequal¹⁷

Young people bear a large burden of the effects of poverty, inequality and polarization. For example, they are poorer than older cohorts: young people aged 18-24 years of age are one of the poorest age groups in South Africa, including pensioners, being second only to children.¹⁸ Two-fifths (41%) of 18-24-year-olds were living in poverty in 2003. Because of high rates of drop-out, nearly three quarters of the million plus young people who enter the labour market each year for the first time have not completed their schooling.¹⁹ These young people seek work under conditions of severe structural unemployment.²⁰ More than two thirds of young South Africans under 35 are not employed, and the same number have never had a job. Both

race and education affect labour market participation. Only 29% of young Africans entering the labour force will get a job within a year.

It is in this context that HIV prevention initiatives need to be developed for young people.

3. The Response of loveLife

loveLife seeks to reduce the rate of new HIV infection among young people by bringing about sustained changes in their sexual behaviour. In so doing, it aims to contribute to reductions in the overall prevalence of HIV in South Africa. Established in late 1999, loveLife positions itself as a new lifestyle brand for young South Africans - part of the popular youth culture of music, fashion, pop icons and commercial brands, communicated largely through commercial media. The brand is the platform for an extensive range of face-to-face interaction in communities across South Africa, including youth centres and national athletic events.

Local mobilization in over 700 communities and 4,000 schools is led by a national corps of 1,200 18-25-year-olds known as groundBREAKERS (recruited annually for one year) and 5,000 volunteer peer motivators ('mpintshis'). Each month, this programme reaches roughly half a million young people. In this regard, loveLife has found young people themselves to be the most effective agents of change, as indicated by the quote below:

Seeing billboards of a dying person didn't tell me about me. But when some one says 'You have such amazing potential that HIV shouldn't be part of it' - then it wasn't about HIV. It was about me. No one is wagging a finger at me. These groundBREAKERS were people the same age as me. It wasn't a celebrity living in a million-dollar house telling me what to do. It was another young person from the same township as me.²¹

From the outset, loveLife's communication campaign was premised on the view that sexual behaviour change is inspired by a strong sense of purpose, belonging and identity with an HIV-free way of life, as illustrated in Figure 3.

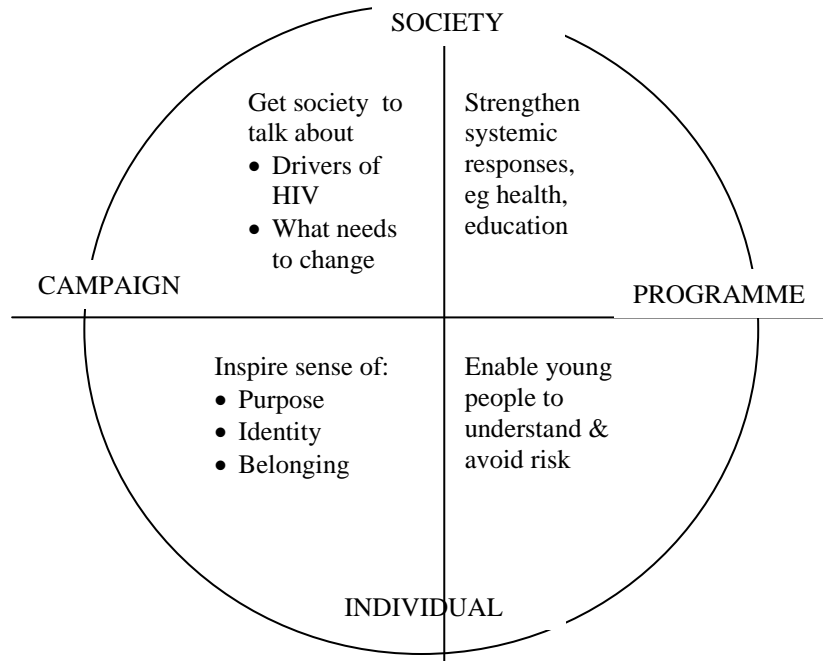


Figure 3: The loveLife approach

The approach aims to create a dialectic between the longer-term aspirations of young people and day-to-day pressures and expectations. For example, one of the most successful tactical campaigns sought to harness the national enthusiasm around the Fifa World Cup Soccer Bid for 2010 (which was later awarded to South Africa). Its “2010. Love to be there...” campaign won a national marketing excellence award and continues to be a rallying call at loveLife sports events. At the same time, loveLife recognizes the down-to-earth aspirations of young people - to be safe, healthy, educated, employed and be part of a stable family.²²

4. The Impact of loveLife

By 2003, 85% of young people had been exposed to loveLife, and 37% had participated in its face-to-face programmes, enabling its effects to be examined.²³

Results of a cross-sectional national probability household survey (of youth aged 15-24 years of age (n = 11,904) suggest that participation in

loveLife programmes is protective against HIV infection. To account for possible selection biases in programme participation, a multivariate logistic regression with 14 covariates was performed (including high school completion, race, age, urban/rural residence, awareness of other prevention campaigns and so on). Adjusted odds ratios for sexually experienced men and women were 0.60 (95% CI 0.40 - 0.89) and 0.61 (95% CI 0.43 - 0.85) respectively.²⁴ Similar significant associations are not demonstrated among young people who have not had direct experience with loveLife's programs.

While it is not possible with available data to establish causal links with declining new infection rates, young people exposed to loveLife report higher levels of condom use (AOR for men 1.75 CI 95% 1.36-2.25 and women 1.63 CI 95% 1.20-2.22), more discussion about HIV and AIDS with friends and family (AOR for men 3.2 CI 95% 2.5-4.0 and women 2.4 CI 95% 1.9-2.9), and a higher likelihood to be tested for HIV (AOR for men 1.7 CI 95% 1.0 - 2.9 and women 1.9 CI 95% 1.5 - 2.4).

To further assess the possible impact of self-selection bias, propensity score analysis was done to gauge the Adjusted Average Treatment-to-Treated Effect (ATT). This effect can be inferred as the "treatment effect" of loveLife programming relative to the baseline. Overall, the analysis shows strong treatment effects of loveLife programming for 4 out of 6 outcomes (condom use consistency, talking with parents, changed behaviour as a result of HIV/Aids and talking to a partner about condoms). For women, the effect of loveLife programming on HIV serostatus is also significant (3.2% and 4.5% for participation in one and two programs respectively).²⁵

Although these findings are quite robust and results still need to be interpreted with caution, the findings point to the importance of sustained face-to-face peer interaction to inspire change.

While loveLife cannot attribute these changes specifically to its aspirational approach, young men and women who participate in loveLife programmes are more likely to say that they have a clear idea of where they are headed in the future (AOR 1.8 CI 95% 1.4-2.4 and 1.5 CI 95% 1.3-1.9 respectively). As shown in Table 1, exposure to loveLife through the media is also associated with greater self-reported aspiration.

Table 1: Media exposure to loveLife is with greater aspiration²⁶

Outcome variable	Crude OR	Adjusted OR*
I have long range goals for myself	4.15 (2.05-8.40)	2.97 (1.71-5.17)
I think I will have many opportunities in life	2.28 (1.75-2.97)	1.58 (1.24-2.02)
I know what I want out of life	2.37 (1.79-	2.16 (1.68-

	3.15)	2.80)
I have a good idea of where I am headed in the future	2.68 (2.11-3.40)	2.16 (1.84-2.54)
* Adjusted for gender, age, in school or not, electricity and geotype		

5. Hope, Opportunity and HIV

The associations between self-efficacy and safer sexual behaviour are already well described in the literature. Among South African youth 15-24 years of age, condom use self-efficacy is significantly associated with condom use at last sexual intercourse in both men and women (AOR 1.64 CI 95% 1.46-1.84 and 1.60 CI 95% 1.43-1.79).²⁷ However, the ability to attribute changes in sexual behaviour to self-efficacy is constrained by the bluntness and biases of self-report survey instruments.

Gauging hope and optimism through such surveys - less immediate and more abstract concepts - is even more difficult. For example, the combined 'explanatory value' (adjusted R^2) of the above four 'optimism' variables in predicting HIV is 0.015, compared to 0.045 for four variables related to condom self-efficacy - and the association is not statistically significant. The problem is compounded by expressed hopefulness of most young people. For example, 87% of 15-24-year-olds say that, looking ahead, they are most hopeful about their future. Only 12% are mostly not hopeful.²⁸

This vague, yet prevailing sense of hopefulness for the future - consistent with hyperbolic models of utility²⁹ - makes it difficult to gauge changes in hopefulness over time and is consequently not very helpful as a predictor of sexual behaviour.³⁰ The degree to which health and social benefits are discounted in the very short term - days or weeks - might be more strongly correlated with individual choice and behaviour and provide a more sensitive barometer of change, provided suitable indicators of 'hopefulness in the short-term' can be found.

Conversely, the association between socio-demographic factors and HIV - gender, age, living in informal urban areas, and failure to complete high school - consistently emerge as strong predictors of HIV infection.³¹ The relative ease with which the association between HIV and demographic and structural factors can be demonstrated, compared to the weak associations with indicators of hope and optimism, could obscure pathways to risk reduction which rely on a 'capacity to aspire'.³² Greater appeal to psychological and attitudinal interventions may reflect growing frustration with the sparse returns of individual risk-reduction 'messaging'.

The dilemma for HIV prevention is the clear recognition of the structural determinants of HIV infection, yet reluctance to take on efforts to reduce poverty and inequity. This means that structural change either sits

vaguely and uncomfortably in behaviour change constructs³³ or is noted as a global imperative that will ultimately make or break HIV prevention efforts.³⁴

Prevention needs to find new ways to bridge individual, social and structural dimensions of HIV infection. These include, but need to also go beyond, already promising directions, such as keeping young people in school and improving the quality and efficiency of education; scaling up micro-finance interventions to increase hope and opportunity and to change gender power relationships;^{35 36} and expanding social security for the most marginalized groups.

6. An Example from loveLife's Experience

To the extent that attribution is possible, loveLife's cross-sectional survey data suggests that marked changes in sexual outcomes for young women are associated with leaving school.

Figure 4 shows that potential outcomes of sexual activity, pregnancy and HIV prevalence, vary by age. The ratio of young women who report having had sex to those who report being pregnant declines sharply from 15 to 17 years of age.³⁷ At age 15, there is one pregnancy for every 13 girls who report having had sex. At age 16, the ratio is one pregnancy for every 7 sexually active girls, while from age 17, the ratio drops below 3:1. In other words, the chance of becoming pregnant from sex increases with age - with sexually active 15- and 16-year-olds relatively protected. Beyond that age, the upward trend is as would be expected from a cumulative biological probability incremental of pregnancy.

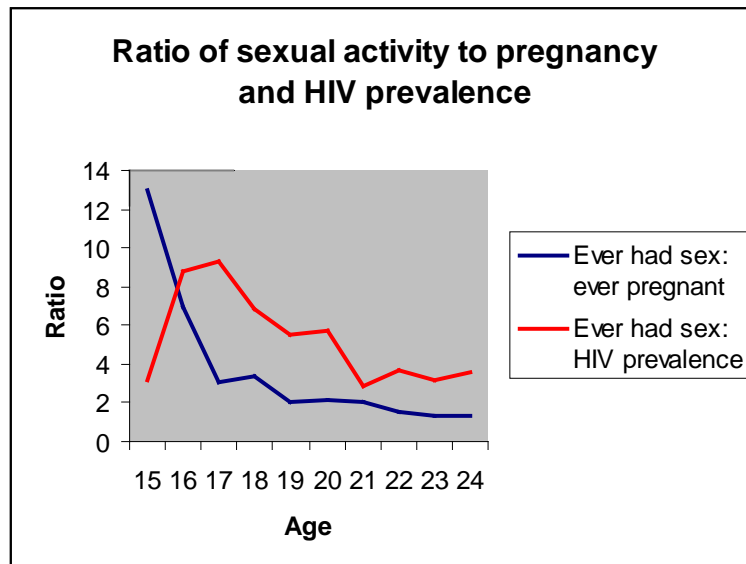


Figure 4: Outcomes of sexual activity vary by age among young women³⁸

Ratios of sexual activity to HIV infection also vary by age, with 16- and 17-year-olds appearing to be relatively protected. The strong correlation between reported sexual activity and HIV prevalence among 15-year-old girls is indicative of the fact that sexual activity in this age group is strongly associated with coercion, transactional sex and low condom use. This vulnerable sub-population may use injectable contraceptives, enabling them to prevent pregnancy, but not HIV infection.³⁹ In contrast, most sexually active 16- and 17-year-olds are more likely to have sex with partners who also want to avoid pregnancy and thus may be more amenable to condom use.

The findings are not explained by substantive differences between younger and older women in the frequency of sexual activity. The proportion of 15-19-year-olds reporting sex 1-5 times a month is not substantially different from 20-24 year olds (46% vs 52%). The implication is that sexually active young women may initially protect themselves from pregnancy, but they subsequently experience life changes that put them at risk.

The life event that precipitates such marked changes in sexual outcomes is school-leaving - either through dropout or completion of schooling. And the direct reason for the spike in pregnancy and HIV infection is lower contraceptive use among school leavers - in particular lower rates of condom use. Sexually active school-going women are 1.7 (95% CI 1.05-2.65) times more likely to use a contraceptive than their same-

aged peers.⁴⁰ Further, there is a sharp decline in self-reported condom use among women of school-leaving age (18-21 years). Until 21 years of age, trends in condom use by single year age-bands track the odds of having HIV among women who have had sex (see Figure 5). The divergence of trends after 21 years of age probably reflects relative saturation of the high risk pool.

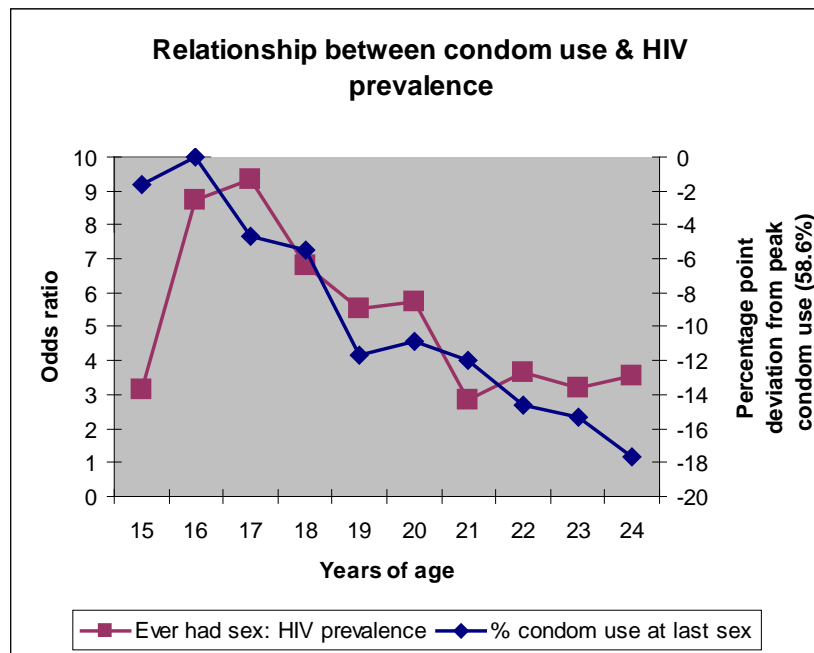


Figure 5: The HIV risk tracks condom use at last intercourse among sexually active young women⁴¹

One reason for variation in condom use by age could be the desire to have a baby. But for most young women, it cannot be explained by an explicit desire to conceive. A national survey conducted in 2006 found that less than a third (28%) of 15-24-year-old women who have been pregnant cite a desire to have a baby as their reason for pregnancy. A fifth cite personal affirmation. For example, “it would show that I am a woman” (8%); “would make people respect me” (7%); or “it would make my boyfriend marry me” (5%). Neither can the difference be explained by direct physical coercion, as only 3% said they were forced to have sex against their will. But two-thirds (66%) did not articulate a reason for being pregnant other than

they were not using a contraceptive.⁴² The same percentage of women reports having been pregnant when they did not want to be.⁴³

As demonstrated earlier, there is a spike in HIV infection among 18-21-year-old women around the time they leave school.⁴⁴ Most of these young women would not have participated in loveLife programmes because, despite its relative size, loveLife's face-to-face coverage is still only 40% at best. They would also be experiencing a radical shift in identity, from learner to incipient mother and job-seeker. This change in identity is combined with intensified pressures, such as the need for protection at home and in the community, and family expectations of contribution to household work and income. We believe this shift in identity plays out in changes in the outcome of sexual behaviour.

The strongest predictor of condom use is whether condoms were used during the first sexual intercourse.⁴⁵ However, this predictor is retrospective and cannot explain future changes. For women, the predictors which do explain future variation include changes in self-efficacy (AOR 1.6 CI 95% 1.43-1.79), the length of relationship with partners (AOR for > 6mo 0.44 CI 95% 0.32-0.62), and marriage (AOR 0.46 CI 95% 0.23-0.72). For men, optimism also emerges as a significant, though small, predictor of condom use at last sex (AOR 1.13 CI 95% 1.04-1.24).

Analysis of self-efficacy for condom use on a sample of 7,409 sexually active 15-24-year-olds (using a 20-item score based on a previously validated scale) showed no significant difference between 15-19-year-olds and 20-24-year-olds (AOR 1.08 CI 95% 0.85-1.37). Self-efficacy for condom use is thus not a likely explanation for varying condom use by age.⁴⁶

At first glance, the inverse relationship between condom use and the duration of relationships could be interpreted as misplaced trust in the protection afforded by long-term relationships and marriage. Marriage and/or long-term relationships alone could not account for most of the temporal variation. Marriage rates are low (9% among 20-24-year-old African women)^{47 48} and the likelihood of being in a stable monogamous relationship is much the same among 15-19-year-olds (36% report having one partner in the last year) as among 20-24-year-olds (39%).⁴⁹

However, what about reluctance based on the view that condom use implies infidelity. We suggest that this is more expressive of the social expectations of women eligible for marriage than genuine naïve belief. Those women who agreed with the statement that using a condom implies distrust of your partner reported much lower condom use self-efficacy (AOR 0.57 CI 95% 0.51-0.86). Collinearity between the belief that condom use implies distrust and lower self-efficacy suggests that expression of this belief is a function of self-efficacy - and not an independent explanation for condom use.

All of the above begs the question as to why the proportion of sexually active women who have unprotected sex differs so markedly according to age. As we have shown, most young women who have been pregnant did not explicitly want to be, self-efficacy for condom use does not vary significantly, and the proportion of women in long-term relationships does not change substantially over this age period.

The likely answer is that some 18-21-year-old women succumb to a set of social pressures and expectations that prevail when they leave school. To the 19-year-old woman in an informal settlement - unemployed and insecure - acquiescence to immediate economic pressures and social expectations seems rational and for her own good. This compliance is very likely to take the form of sexual partnership with a man who can provide physical and material protection; but the 'protection' is often in exchange for *unprotected* sex. Despite the general expression of optimism about their long-term future, in the short-term, the social and individual sexual behaviour of young people is shaped by the constraints of day-to-day reality - popularized by a well-known rap artist as living "*in the meantime*".

Sidlubusha bethu (we're enjoying our youth)
Siphelabantwana in the meantime (we're fucking the girls
in the meantime)
Khona 'zolahla (someone's going to get laid tonight)
Khona 'zolahla in the meantime...

Lyrics by Sista Bettina

Trying to break out of the constraints has penalties with no guarantee of reward. Most young people - even those who are hopeful that the future may be brighter - feel they just have to settle for what they've got in the meantime. The 'meantime' mentality increases risk tolerance and this is the key challenge HIV prevention in South Africa.

7. Change Perceptions of Opportunity in the *Meantime*

We have argued that the statistically significant predictors of variability of condom use *at any age* seem to do a pretty poor job of explaining condom use *by age*. One reason for that is that we could be missing variables in self-efficacy measures based on social cognitive models. Gains may be got from expanding indicators of self-efficacy indicators that relate to the 'outcome expectations' described in social cognitive models. The two outcome expectations incorporated into the self-efficacy scale referred to earlier are "perceived risk of HIV" and "use of condoms is a sign of distrust". These indicators, consistent with theories of rational decision-making, underscore the importance of knowledge and beliefs in determining individual behaviour.

There are, though, many other outcome expectations that may be taken into account during sexual intercourse - if not consciously, at least subliminally. These include: the desire for partner approval which, if not forthcoming, could affect the duration of the relationship; the need for immediate physical or material protection versus longer term considerations; the fear of shrinking into being *a nobody* in the uncertain world of 'the meantime' versus the security of belonging to a group or having a partner; and the personal affirmation of motherhood, perhaps outweighing the stigma of muted community reproach.

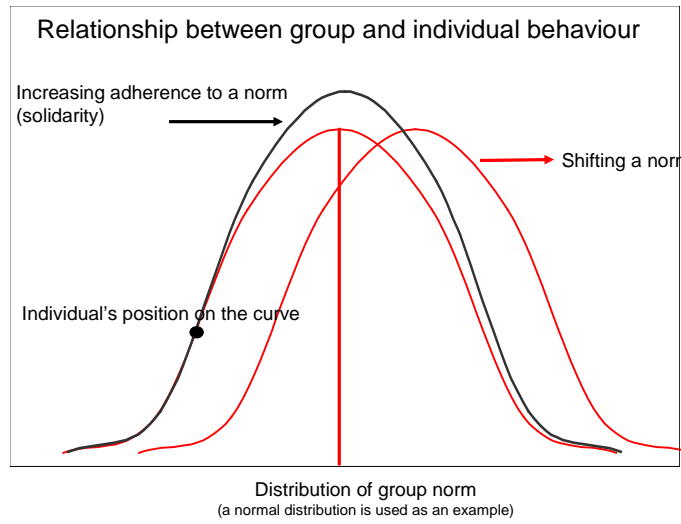
In sexual relationships, the opportunities and costs of these outcomes are sub-consciously weighed, moderated by perceptions of who you think you are (identity), where you fit in society (belonging) and where you think you're going (purpose). These attributes - a personal sense of identity, belonging and purpose - reflect an individual's response to both group and structural influences. For example, a young woman leaving school may feel excluded from her family - who now expects her to contribute work and income to the household or move on - yet unequipped to generate money except through piece work which may include transactional sex.

The implication for HIV prevention is that we need to change the 'meantime defaults' that lead to high risk behaviour, by fostering positive identity, building solidarity and nurturing a sense of purpose. At the same time, we need to find ways to dispel the notion of a 'meantime' by changing perceptions of opportunity. This is very close to the definition of hope advanced by Snyder and colleagues - 'as the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways'.⁵⁰

8. Leadership for Change

So far, this paper has addressed only the first of the challenges to establishing a clear agenda linking behaviour change programmes and structural change, namely to better understand why response-to-risk varies significantly by age for individuals faced by relatively uniform socio-economic circumstances. In this concluding section, we describe a theoretical framework within which the arguments for new approaches to prevention are formulated.⁵¹

We make the assumption that individual's norms are distributed around group norms in a probabilistic manner (see Figure 6). That is, individual norms are not independent of the group norm, although they may be different. While the position of an individual on the curve may change to the right or left, if the group norm shifts, the individual norm will shift with it. An individual deviates to a certain degree from the norm and so is dependent on where that norm is. A similar assumption is made for group norms relative to societal norms.



changing the position on the curve of individuals by decreasing their personal levels of risk tolerance.

We have argued that school-leaving shifts the group norm to a higher level of risk tolerance. To use our earlier example, average condom use drops. The sudden loss of social cohesion that school provided leads to changes in the distribution of the norm, with a skewing towards higher risk; i.e. median condom use drops even more. These normative changes place the individual at greater risk, despite particular individuals changing position on the curve through their accumulation and use of HIV-prevention knowledge and self-efficacy skills during adolescence.

The main challenges for HIV prevention are: i) to shift the norm towards safer sexual behaviour among 18-24 year olds; and ii) to narrow their skewed distribution of risk. However, strategies of 'safe sex messaging' or 'safe sex negotiation', which characterize risk-reduction focused on the individual, are not suitable as primary mechanisms to shift the curve. The key objective must be to change the prevailing perceptions of social, educational and economic opportunity, enabling young people to break through ceilings which trap them in the meantime (see Figure 7).

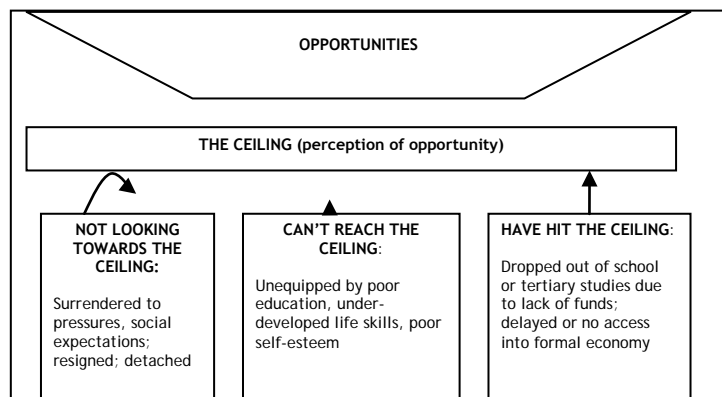


Figure 7: Key factors shaping perceptions of opportunity among young people

Strategies to change individual behaviour - to shift their position on the curve - must be continued. However, it is clear that this will produce greater benefit for some as compared to others. For further traction, it is critical that interventions are developed to address three main types of challenges or ceilings: young people who are resigned to their situation and see no opportunities, those whose options are limited by their poor preparation, and those whose further progress is constrained.

For those without options, we need to tackle the factors that trap them, including social expectations of women and, in some communities, the notion that fertility proves womanhood which feeds the need for *meantime* personal affirmation. But we also need to address the consequences of economic demoralization, which renders young people passive in waiting for opportunity instead of looking for it. This mindset shift requires us to develop the ability to recognize and fully exploit opportunity, to take initiative and risks, think creatively and critically, work as a team, have a sense of wonder, determination and adventure.⁵²

Without preparation - psychological, cognitive, behavioural - young people are unlikely to be able to capitalize on any opportunities that do present themselves. For this group, loveLife's experience is that community service can help bridge the gap between school leaving and employment by developing personal and leadership skills and increasing social networks. To date, over 5,000 loveLife groundBREAKERS have graduated from the year-long programme as community leaders in HIV prevention and a further 6,000 are expected to pass through the groundBREAKER programme over the next five years. Most of them (>70%) get employment or further education opportunities after completion. In addition to service, strategies must address the usual objectives of job readiness, including personal financial management, public speaking, team- and project management.

For those who have hit the ceiling, innovative ways must be found to link them to new opportunity, including service-linked student loans to allow completion of secondary and tertiary education, rapid expansion of volunteer placement, learnership and youth development initiatives.

Together, these efforts must be directed at changing perceptions of opportunity, including by providing some opportunities that lift the ceiling and reinforce an identity characterized by ambition and innovation. As Douglas and Wildavsky first suggested, perceptions of greater choice may reduce a society's tolerance of risk.⁵³

The second main challenge for HIV prevention is to rein in the skewed distribution of risk, brought about by the polarizing effect of school-leaving in which a minority 'make it' while the majority enter 'the meantime'. The social and economic gradients in South Africa are so great that any expansion of opportunity without corresponding increases in solidarity will mainly result in those at the top of the pile capturing new benefits as private gains. That society - where anyone, but not very many, can be a winner - will probably do little to change the underlying dynamics of crime, HIV infection and domestic abuse.

In order to reduce societal tolerance of risk, we need to reshape national identity and build solidarity for a society committed to expanding social, educational and economic opportunity, as envisioned by the notion of a developmental state, and by the perception of HIV/AIDS as *the new*

struggle. The task is not insurmountable if we can identify interventions with strong multiplier effects. One intervention that can shift social norms and build solidarity through strengthened social networks is to foster leadership among young people committed to these ideals.

Much social theory is built on the premise of ‘agents for change’,⁵⁴ and store placed on their attributes of leadership and communication. This suggests that investment in young people with leadership potential could strengthen societal cohesion and solidarity. In order to avoid investments in leadership being captured as private gains with little spin-off for broader society, investments should be made in young people with a proven track record in community service. However, leadership development on its own won’t necessarily build solidarity and, for this, social network strategies also need to be fostered.

Social networks as a major driver of the HIV epidemic is starkly illustrated in Southern Africa. These networks are most intense in marginalized and disrupted communities. It is very unlikely that the factors driving HIV in South Africa will be profoundly influenced by national interventions without parallel changes in sexual dynamics within local communities.⁵⁵ Local leadership, communication and identification are critical in generating a sea-change in sexual behaviour.⁵⁶ Further, seeking out leaders from marginalized communities and strengthening their connections to mainstream economy and society will contribute to reduction of the extreme polarization of South African society.

In summary, building solidarity for a society committed to expanding opportunity will effect risk reduction in two ways: Firstly, an emergent leadership aware of the risks of HIV and committed to safer sexual behaviour can have positive impacts on sexual networks in South Africa and, secondly, an emergent leadership committed to reducing social and economic gradients in South Africa can help create a more risk-averse society.

9. New Avenues for Risk Reduction

Together with their *mpintshis* (buddies), most groundBREAKERS continue to play an important leadership role in their communities. These young people are uniquely placed to be the bedrock of disseminated national leadership in South Africa - drawn from the most marginalized communities - who could effectively begin to respond to requirements of the prevention model outlined above.

Under consideration is a proposal to recruit 5,000 young people to participate in an accelerated leadership programme. They will be drawn from ex-groundBREAKERS who have been unable to find work, yet are still active and committed to loveLife. The programme will have three distinct components aimed at changing perceptions of opportunity, namely service, developing social entrepreneurialism and creating opportunity.

These young people will participate in a dynamic programme aiming to:

- Shift the mindset from low-grade defeatism, endemic in marginalized communities, to dynamic young people at the forefront of a new generation;
- Develop hard skills in systematic programme management, and
- Create opportunity for career choices that would typically be outside of the prospects for young people from marginalized communities.

Leadership development as a strategy for social cohesion is well-known, but the key challenge is to create a big enough ripple effect so that other young people from similarly marginalized communities benefit too. This will require that the economic and educational opportunities that open for the leadership group establish precedents for others, and that candidate leaders disseminate and promote values that counter economic polarization and HIV, crime and domestic violence reduction, and environmental preservation.

For example, hopeless young people from marginalized communities often miss out on learnership and even volunteer placements that create paths into the mainstream economy. Yet loveLife's experience is that prospective employers are often impressed by the self-confidence and work-preparedness of groundBREAKERS and are willing to take on young people like them. Critical knock-on effects will be achieved if other young people follow the examples of groundBREAKERS and *mpintshis* who have resumed tuition to complete secondary or tertiary studies, or are inspired by groundBREAKERS who have started local businesses or non-profit organizations. These connections are critical in building solidarity to reshape society and effect structural change.

10. Conclusion

In the introduction, we questioned whether strategies that foster hope are as effective in highly polarized societies as in contexts where personal achievement is perceived to be more attainable. We queried whether or not there is hope only for those at the top of the bottom of the pile, in which case increased efforts need to be made to change individual behaviour. We also questioned whether it was possible or not to generate hope amongst those at the bottom of the bottom of the pile, in which case you could change a society.

We demonstrated the association between HIV infection and social and economic marginalization in South Africa, and described the response of loveLife, an HIV prevention campaign that aims to reinforce the aspirations

of adolescents of school-going age. We highlighted apparent gains from participation in loveLife programmes and the fact that the incidence of HIV among young people seems to have started to decline.

Despite these glimmers of hope, the epidemic continues to be fuelled by new infection, particularly among 18-21-year-old women. We demonstrated that the jump in HIV infection rates is closely associated with school-leaving and that the proximate determinant of higher incidence rates is lower condom use. We concluded that the higher frequency of unprotected sex cannot be substantively explained by an explicit desire to have a baby, personal belief or partner trust, nor by declines in the ability of women to negotiate condom use.

We suggest that the shift to higher risk behaviour reflects a change in individual and group identity, which leads 18-21-year-old women to succumb to a particular set of social and economic constraints present at the time of school-leaving. We argue that risk tolerance among 18-25-year-olds will only diminish if we can change their perceptions of opportunity in the *meantime*. In this regard, we outline our thinking about building leadership that helps shape individual and societal norms and builds solidarity which, in turn, could contribute to reducing the aggregate tolerance of risk and lead to structural change. By implication, we argue that it is not only structural change that affects opportunity, but that changed perceptions of opportunity can lead to structural change.

Our view is that interventions that simultaneously address individual, social and structural dimensions of HIV infection represent a major new frontier for prevention. In this regard, we believe that hope-based interventions which nurture the 'capacity to aspire' hold new promise for intractable social problems of developing countries, such as HIV/AIDS. In highly polarized societies like South Africa, the process of building that capacity must simultaneously reduce social and economic gradients.

In doing so, we will help to develop not only the capacity to aspire, but make day-to-day life worth aspiring to.

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NGOs in Brazil: Hope is Not a Verb...It is an Adverb; It is Not an Action, It is a Modality.

Mariangela Marcello

Abstract: Children have dreams but sometimes, their hands are left empty by occurrences that in a split second change their lives forever. A child that is told he has cancer, a child who finds himself alone in the street, with no place or person to go to, has lost the balloon that was making him look at the sky, a far-away target. They need somebody who patiently and carefully weaves that thin invisible thread, so necessary in life, which is called 'hope'. The experiences reported in this paper refer to two NGOs in Brazil, in Vitória (ES). The first one, ACACCI (Associação CAPixaba Contra o Câncer Infantil) deals with children from shanty towns who have to undergo cancer treatment. They give meaning to the word 'human', offering a 'Family Home', a place which can host up to 30 children with their mothers to avoid therapy interruptions due to long distances, financial or social issues. The children receive, once they leave the hospital for their daily treatment, health, hygiene, nutrition and life style advice and are involved in recreational activities, while their mothers learn handicraft or improve their knowledge of their mother tongue. The second NGO is called 'Casa Lar', a House 'Home'. It is a family experience with a married couple who, on a voluntary basis and under supervision, welcomes as 'parents' a certain number of 'meninos de rua', homeless children living in the streets, and leads them to discover dignity, rights and duties. The organization eventually helps the children find 'their place' in society and a job. Each 'Menino de Rua', they say, 'is an island surrounded by omissions'

Key words: children, cancer, Hope, NGOs, ACACCI, Casa Lar.

An Italian poet, Eugenio Montale, ends one of his poems with these two lines: "But nothing comforts the child who grieves / for the balloon that's gone between the houses". Children have dreams but, sometimes, their hands are left empty by occurrences that in a split second change their lives forever. A child that is told he has cancer, a child who finds himself alone in the street, with no place or person to go to, has lost the balloon that was making him look at the sky, a far-away target. Those children need somebody who patiently and carefully weaves that thin invisible thread, so necessary in life, which is called 'hope'.

Interestingly enough, in Portuguese the verb 'to hope' and the verb 'to wait' are expressed with the same word 'esperar'. It seems as if, at least in

the Brazilian context, the two concepts are intertwined. You wait for something to happen and your waiting is practically your hope it will happen. This verb is also so common in various areas, from religion to politics, sport, but also love, joy, and projects. Actually, Brazilians, whether it's the football players commenting before a game or the janitor of a building talking about his future, or any other person, all end their thoughts about what they hope with 'Se Deus quiser', 'God willing'. It is hope in waiting. This attitude is implicit in the quite commonly used verbal form 'se entregar', which people use to refer to their attitude beneath this expression. The translation for 'se entregar' is, literally, to 'surrender, to yield' to the other you trust, which is also the term normally used in wedding formulas, when the spouse tells his or her own partner, that he/she 'se entrega', to him/her rather than 'I take you as...'. It is the total donation of oneself to the other in total trust that the other will lead you towards what is best for you, so as to fully live the experience, almost in a strict body and soul connection, so peculiar to this culture.

In 1988 the parents of a number of children with cancer, in the State of Espírito Santo, in Brazil, founded, in partnership with the Onco-Hematology Unit of Vitória Children's Hospital, the Espírito Santo Association against Children's Cancer, the ACACCI (*Associação Capixaba Contra o Câncer Infantil*). It is the only NGO dealing with this issue in this State and it is located in the State capital city, Vitória, though it also deals with cases of children living in the surrounding States. The inspiring principles relate to Laws concerning children's social assistance as well as to the Children's Statute itself. In particular the focus is on the assistance to children with cancer, living in shanty towns, belonging, therefore, to poor families or to families left poor, or poorer, by the illness. In most cases the financial collapse is due to the fact that the parent assisting the child, often the only one the child lives with, has to quit his or her job to assist his child. In some cases, sadly, the treatment is suspended because of the parents' financial situation or their feeling of inadequacy in a new and overwhelming situation, which requires a lot of radical changes in the family lifestyle. The Institution has developed a Project through which, up to the present time, have been supplied 101,150 benefits, such as: transport coupons, monthly 'food baskets' ('cesta básica', in Portuguese), maintenance medications, prosthetic equipment, disposable nappies, wheelchairs, financial and organizational support for funerals.

The 'whole assistance' policy, aims at making up for the lack of a social policy dealing with survival and dignity issues and has as objectives: a) the 'humanization' of cancer treatment through recreational activities and pedagogical support; b) making available financial resources; c) assuring

certainty of continuity in treatment; d) occupying fewer beds in hospitals, as the children, together with one parent, are hosted in the 'Family Home' building; and e) the minimization of the social impact of cancer both for the patients and for the parents, who, generally, are involved in language or handicraft classes, where they acquire new skills which will allow them to earn some money.

As stated in the Statute, the Board, the parents and most of the collaborators work on a voluntary base. Some people belong to the local Secretary of Education Department. The financial issues are public and are counterchecked by external people. The yearly balance is published in a widely read newspaper. The collaborators involved on a daily basis are 40, whereas the people working on a voluntary base for a limited number of hours are 121. The new 'Family Home' building, inaugurated on 23 September 2006, can host up to 60 children with cancer, undergoing treatment at the Children's Hospital and the parents accompanying them. Once the treatment cycle, often chemotherapy, is over, the children go back home and return for the next session. In the meantime other children arrive and are hosted in the various rooms.

The objective of such an institution, therefore, is to supply support within the new situation developing after the onset of the disease but, at the same time, to try and supply a life context as close to normality as possible. The 'Family Home' is a building in which the bedrooms are located on the third floor, strictly reserved for children and their mothers, whereas the ground floor, the first and the second floors are spaces reserved for socialization. On the ground floor there is a wide lounge where meals are served but which can be used as a meeting place for the mothers, who can sit around a table and chat, while drinking a coffee or a soft drink, or watch TV. The brand new self-service counter and the whole of the kitchen equipment have recently been donated by the Consulate of Japan. As the weather is good most of the year, the mothers can also sit in the yard, where there are comfortable benches. The first and second floors are reserved for all the children's activities. There is a large playroom equipped with a great number of toys and fancy costumes, all donated by different shops, so that children can perform with the numerous actors and clowns who regularly dedicate some time to involve children in creative activities together with them. Further down along the corridor there is the library, equipped with some computers and a good number of books, a room for praying, whatever the religious inspiration, and two classrooms reserved to studying, so as not to miss out too much whilst being away from school, during the therapy cycle. Children who start experiencing sight problems or have already become blind, are taught the Braille system so that they can still be involved in learning. The hospital, too, hosts some classrooms where teachers, from the Secretary of Education, make up for lost lessons for the most seriously ill

children. It happens, too, that some of these children have never been to school so they are offered the chance to learn how to read and write. Downstairs there is a 'bazaar' shop and a workshop. These two spaces are reserved for the mothers who, as a counterpart for what they receive, produce handicraft which is sold so as to supply part of the money necessary to assist the children. The whole of the 'Family Home' is based on the principle of cooperation and responsibility. The mothers, for instance, are given a fixed quantity of appropriate products for washing their own clothes and the linen supplied to them; they keep their rooms clean and tidy and also take turns in cleaning the common areas. They are also given instructions and directions as to the relevance of hygiene in their daily life habits and the importance of eating properly, both for them and above all for their sick children. Junk food is not allowed either inside the Home or in their outings. In order to help everybody to accomplish that they all go out without any money. Every necessity is covered by the people from the institution who take them to places, so both the mothers and the children do not 'fall into temptation' and, at the same time, acquire the habit of ignoring all the 'extras' which, nowadays, have almost become the main issue in going out.

In Brazil, childhood cancer is the third cause for the death of children and adolescents. The rate is about 420,000 new cancer cases each year, 3% in children. The good news, though, is that, at present, 70% of these children can completely recover if the disease is detected at an early stage. Most of these children will practically be able to lead a normal life.

The disease represents a huge life change in each component of the family, the greatest being in the sick child's life. The main issue is how to turn this change into something 'constructive', whatever the final result. Some mothers, when interviewed, explained how being in such an environment was an unexpected and wonderful experience in the context of the tragedy they were living. They spoke of the sense of despair when they learned their children had cancer, and how the very sense of despair triggered an intense hope, which gave them a strength never imagined before. Their minds focused only on getting results from the therapy no matter what pain for them and the children. It was only the result that mattered. Sharing the experience with other mothers and children living through the same emotions made them re-evaluate the meaning and the relevance of sharing; it made them feel like better people. They found themselves joined in a motherhood that included all the children, a motherhood in which there was even space for a smile for somebody else's result, among the tears for one's own failed result. Every child's recovery points at the principle: if it happens to one child, it may happen to all children. It is a thorough reframing of their beliefs and values in the discovery of new strategies and tools aimed at surviving the cancer experience.

The idea behind these projects is to create a series of Social Support Homes, which then become reference points for parents dealing with their children's diseases. It is not a charity system where people get help and go back to the loneliness of their own problems. It is a whole series of modules aimed at involving the parents and their children together with specialized personnel and voluntary collaborators, so that they can learn how to be strong and deal with the problems that changed their lives. In poor families the vulnerability of one of its members affects all the others. The sick child has to face new aspects of life never experienced before, like pain, social isolation from other children and school, invasive medical treatment, and vast changes in physical appearance. All of this, and the internal psychological exploitation of it, leads the child to experience a sense of 'guilt', as he or she holds him or herself as responsible for all the problems his/her family is going through. The child feels defenseless; he or she is totally lost and dependent on whoever has a 'solution' to his or her problems. Reactions vary, from intense sudden crying to obstinate silence. A difficult time is when children see their friends go away and never come back; they know it may happen to them, too. The families, too, apart from all the practical problems face a new feeling: 'fear'. A different, stronger fear from the one they usually face when thinking of their future as poor families in shanty towns. This time the experience arrives like a punch in the stomach: a doctor is telling them their child has a serious disease and is talking about the chance of 'death'.

The objective of the support institutions is to catch both parents and children whilst they are plunging into the dark sea of despair and lead them towards a different path, where they can discover new objectives, new strategies, new ways of dealing with their lives, based on the hope and the belief that what matters is to do as much as they can, at their best, in the situation they are in, looking at the future and not comparing it to the past. They learn to move on, without wasting their time in indulging in the fear of the unknown. They understand that their strength is based on the hope that they can make a difference. The limits will be only those things outside their powers.

The experience in the Support Family Homes teaches them to believe that they can make it, and to be consistent with these beliefs by passing on to other parents the strategies and tools that helped them go through the treatment of the disease. It teaches them the value of sharing positive and non positive experiences. It all leads, as well, to 'educating' parents and children to examine their health and acquire an appropriate life style, which, in the context of the disease the children suffer from, is even more relevant an issue. Redirecting the focus of the attention on something constructive, though starting from the negativity of the disease, gives parents and children strength and a new direction to follow. It is like getting a new

chance to live or trying to live in a different way, in the hope and in the belief that it will work and the death of the child will be put off.

The somewhat paradoxical aspect of this situation is that the children report amazingly positive experiences, something they would have never dreamed of previously. They are regularly taken to the cinema, to the theatre, to the circus, to concerts, to walks in the parks and to open air events. Christmas time is a big celebration, with donations of toys, toiletries, clothes, caps and bonnets of all kinds as they are regularly used by the children who totally lose their hair from chemotherapy. Food is donated in a larger quantity than they are used to. The sick children are not the only ones who receive presents, but their brothers and sisters also receive gifts so that there is no perceived discrimination in the family.

The paradox continues as discrimination, however, will be something these children will have to face when returning to the outside world where healthy children and their families live. Society still has a long way to go before fulfilling the ideals of equality, dignity and participation of every citizen, something which is claimed in so many public events. The Social Support Homes, however, aim at reaching a wider range of people in need. The diseases are certainly a very relevant issue, but other children face a different kind of threat: the death of their own rights as citizens and of their own dignity as human beings.

'Meninos de rua', 'homeless children', wondering around the streets of shanty or elegant towns so apparently autonomous and fearless represent 'islands surrounded by omissions'. They have to make up for the adults' absence or lack of intervention; they can only rely on themselves and their initiative. Indeed their whole life is paradoxically based on hope and lack of hope simultaneously; the hope they make it through each day of their lives and the lack of hope in the others' support. Their determination in confronting people in street corners, even at midnight and later, in big cities like Rio de Janeiro (nearly 12 million people) or São Paulo (nearly 20 million people), is the proof of their hope to be able to survive, which at the same time is a desperate act of survival.

In the leaflet about the 'Casa Lar' in Vila Velha, a town a few minutes away from the capital city of the State of Espírito Santo, Vitória, we may read that 'street children', 'Meninos de Rua', do not exist. What do exist are children outside the families, outside schools, and outside the community; children who only need a chance. The 'menino de rua' is actually an island surrounded by omissions on all sides and the responsibility is to be attributed to everybody living around them. 'Children', is stated metaphorically, 'are the richest raw-material of the country, and to disregard them is like committing a crime'.

This NGO was started by Carlos Barcelos, a manager of the 'Companhia Vale do Rio Doce', the largest mining company in Brazil and

the second largest in the world. The Casa Lar has been working for over twenty years with only the support of donations. The idea beneath this project is to select a married couple available to take up the role of 'parents' for about 20 'meninos de rua', street children, children who have either been abandoned by their parents, or live with just one parent in a homeless context. It is not always certain that the person they are with is really their parent. These children are approached by selected personnel, mostly catholic, and invited to enter the 'Casa Lar' becoming members of a 'family' together with other street children as their 'brothers', all with the same rights and duties. These children can stay in this place until they are 18. At that point they have to leave the house, as they all have already got a job and can support themselves. They can take with them their belongings acquired over the years such as clothes, objects, books and whatever else. Their life in the family has meant going to school, practicing sports - generally beach sports trained by voluntary coaches - and acquiring computer skills, as well as general life skills. The children who leave are replaced by new younger ones.

This Family Home has five bedrooms, each hosting four children of a similar age. At present, the couple selected has also a child of its own. He is treated exactly like all the others, sleeps in the same room where the others are, and follows the same rules. These rules are imposed on all the components of this new family by the Board, which deals with the whole project. The money necessary to pay a salary to the couple, to buy the food and everything necessary for the maintenance of the house, comes from donations and social events organized for fund raising. The couple, acting as parents, gains a salary, the possibility to live in the big Family Home, the 'Casa Lar', and total support and directions from the Board, whose decisions are mandatory.

The very name of this project, of this home, 'Casa Lar', is an extremely interesting element. The term 'Casa' in Portuguese corresponds to the English term 'house'; the term 'Lar' is the Latin word for the divinities (lares) protecting the family living in the house; it leads to the English concept of 'Home'. The two terms joined give the children the idea that they have first of all a place to stay that is not the street, but also that they can 'feel' that this place is something more than a physical container. It has to be a 'Home' where they will find more than a shelter. They will live with emotions and feelings based on the principle of sharing, respecting and building together, all of this having a common aim, to 'be' a family. It will mean for them a place and the time where they might realize the hope to be equal to others, to have a chance to really live and not just exist.

It has become quite common, for the children who leave the 'Casa Lar' to return and offer voluntary help in looking after the new young ones. They know the issues very well and know exactly how these children feel. Their presence is the living proof that changes are possible. It only takes

belief and hope then becomes the necessary trigger for the system to start working. Through the experience of living in a 'family' children understand the real concept of family. They see that it is not only birth that makes you part of a family. It is possible for these children to feel part of a small society called a 'family' in order to learn how to become members of a greater social group, called a society. They start realizing that they, too, have something to say and give, and that their life is worth more than just begging and living on leftovers found in trash bins.

NGOs like this one work from the basic concept of family, the first place in which all children should find themselves, so as to develop the knowledge of the world through gradual steps supported by people who believe in them and are there for them, whatever the circumstances. Children may be very strong, against our predictions, but it is the strength of the people around them which makes them strong. Indeed, they are only children.

The path to dignity follows the principle of equality, where each human being is allowed a chance. When it is not possible to take street people away from the streets and insert them into a healthier environment, then it is the Social educators' and the Health professionals' jobs to join them and help them improve their conditions in their own environment. One such example comes from the IBISS (*Instituto Brasileiro de Inovações em Saúde Social*, the Brazilian Institute for Innovations in Public Health) where trained people develop various projects concerning those who live in the streets for different reasons. In Rio de Janeiro, for instance, one project deals with paper and trash collectors. These people are helped to understand how they can organize their work better, even form 'cooperatives', and how they can look after their health. Information is already a remarkable change for them. Another project addresses the issues surrounding people involved in street prostitution. They are convinced to participate in systematic workshops, both for women and for men, on specific themes they themselves propose. Their social and health situation is greatly and positively affected by the information they get and the discussions they get involved in. They are all given condoms, whose price often discourages them from using them, and learn more about issues like STD (sexually transmitted diseases) and AIDS (Acquired ImmunoDeficiency Syndrome). These people would normally never go to a hospital to be treated, both because they cannot afford it and because they do not want to show their state. This is the reason why NGOs have to count on voluntary paediatricians, gynaecologists and general clinic doctors who go around the streets to meet and help these people. Another project gathers former street children and involves them in school education, ecology projects, Brazilian culture studies and computer science. Where possible these children are helped to go back to their families and leave behind the desperate state of abandon in which they were living. Whether they collect paper and garbage, or trade their bodies in the street, these people

are all helped to understand their rights as citizens and their relationship with the dynamics of the big cities in which they live.

The fight to make everybody feel equal and part of a society, in practical terms, continues to be developed in other kinds of NGOs as well, like the one addressing the issues of children affected by Down Syndrome or other mental deficiencies. The APAE (Associação de Pais e Amigos dos Excepcionais, Association of Parents and Friends of the Exceptional people) was founded in Brazil in 1954 by an American lady who belonged to the diplomatic staff and was a mother of a girl affected by the syndrome. The association quickly developed throughout Brazil and at present, in its 53 years of activity, has become the largest philanthropic movement in Brazil, as well as in the entire world, dealing with this issue. To be inspired by the hope for equality of rights, social inclusion and a better quality of life; to feel proud for being able to reach out for one of these children's hand and make him/her feel 'special' in the right sense – for being unique - is what makes all the work worthwhile. The poster publicizing the 'National Week for Exceptional people' shows a smiling young girl playing with the colours of some paint on her fingers. The words at the top left of the poster are: 'the great artists are like this: different, sensitive and special'. The focus is, indeed, on the qualities present in these children, not on the ones which are missing. It means showing children with problems that there is a place for them, too, rather than giving them the sensation that they do not fit in. The language used to refer to children with these characteristics, 'the exceptional' is, also, a very interesting point. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, in fact, translates the word 'exceptional' as i) unusual ; ii) unusually good, outstanding. Very intriguing, indeed.

The real issue with so many children, whether they live in the streets or suffer from some kind of deficiency, is exactly the lack of a role available for them in a society which seems to squeeze them out, rather than welcome them in. Shanty towns and slums are places of hopelessness because of the abandon and lack of hope in a future different from the present. However, in shanty towns where some projects have bet on some of the brave adolescents living there, the result has been the birth of the 'young black leaders'. This group of teenagers has decided to patrol the area, settle arguments and disputes, improve the relationship between the people living in the slum and people living outside. The chance given to them to have a role, has made them fit into that role and accomplish meaningful work.

Emotions and feelings play a great role in the boosting of one's sense of dignity. Another NGO, the Afecc (Associação Feminina de Educação e Combate ao Câncer) among some predictable activities has a Project named 'Live smiling project'. It started after observing that the evenings in hospitals were the most melancholic and solitary time for the patients. A series of performances was organized, based on the contribution

of voluntary musicians, in the Hospital Auditorium, in the evenings. Music is an intrinsic element to the Brazilians' life; it is in their blood. To listen to music, their music, when the body is struggling against a dark enemy, is like giving an injection of fresh blood to them. It is like being taken back to better times and starting over from there with a renewed energy that feeds the mind with hope and willpower. The musicians involve the patients in singing and even dancing when possible. This activity helps bring out the smothered silent pain and puts a forgotten smile on quite a few lips. Another project hinting at rescuing self-esteem and hope for life, takes place in a beauty salon on the Hospital premises. Voluntary personnel offer hair styling, cosmetic treatment, nail care and even massages. The body, one's physical appearance, is another relevant element in the Brazilian culture. To let oneself go, to neglect one's appearance, is going to affect one's mood in a remarkable way, and that is not going to be useful in treatment and recovery periods. As it happens in the Casa Lar, here too former patients go back to the hospital and join the experts in the meetings with the patients so as to pass on their experience and prove that to hope for an improvement does not mean to fool oneself; it is possible to survive and hope is a right, not an illusion. The meetings include also dealing with the psychological preparation for things like amputation, both for the people experiencing it and for the people who live with them. The idea beneath all of these projects is never to leave the person alone in the fight against the different occurrences in life but, at the same time, enabling the person to proceed on his or her own once the worst is over. Above all, it means never stripping a person's dignity away. It is fear and despair, in fact, that prevent people from resisting and winning their battles.

Indeed, a social project can be considered effective if it assures the independence of the individual in relation to the program itself in a definite span of time. To teach someone to hope means creating in him or her the wish and the enthusiasm for expectations, whose outcomes he or she has the right to live at full in his or her own time and space. How people say and do things means more than what they say and do, especially if there is no consistency between the what and the how. Indeed, it is not enough to believe and act. It is necessary to make other people believe and act. If you really hope that things will change, you have to make other people feel that hope for the change. To have courage does not mean not to be scared; it means to have the strength to do things even if they scare us.

Everybody has the right to be respected as a citizen, to feel like a citizen, like any other person, whatever happens in his life. Nobody should feel ashamed of having difficulties to face. It is the people, the social institutions, the governments who created or did not deal appropriately with those difficulties, who have to feel the shame for their 'omissions'.

Being different should not take away the right to be equal. The 'otherness' is a right. Shakespeare, in *The Merchant of Venice* (Act III, sc.i), makes Shylock say:

what's his reason? - I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die?

Religion, skin colour, mental abilities, physical qualities; so many different words for so many peculiarities: the outcome is always the same, a human being.

Author's Note

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