herself against him, because in her fate and faith she was opposed to his ruin' (Berry 2004, 152).

What we need more than anything, need to save us from our own destructive fixation on the future, is no less than an individual and collective moral revolution: a revolution that includes abandoning hope, caring without hope and a commitment where we quietly, almost submissively, prop ourselves against those forces in the world that are working to bring ruin. We often hear that people only change their ideas, and therefore their behaviour, in the face of crisis. But we forget that a crisis can be a moral crisis as well, a sense of revulsion for a life that we are living, a commitment to live differently and to be a different kind of person. We need The Great ‘Yuck!’ Yuck, what we are doing is repulsive. Yuck, this is not the way a responsible person lives. The Great ‘Yuck!’ can be followed by The Great ‘No!’ No, I will not live this way. No, I will not be this kind of a person, this kind of an agent in the world. Finally, The Great ‘No!’ will give way to The Great ‘Yes!’ Yes, I will live a life of respect, of humility, empathy, care and attentiveness. Yes, I will choose to live with dignity and grace, no matter what. But none of this—the yucks or nos or yes—is held hostage by the attainment of some future state. Each of us, right now, at this exact moment in time, has the power to choose to live the moral life, to live a life that is indeed worth living.

NOTES

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Chapter Ten

Singing Hope’s Praises

A Defense of the Virtue of Hope for Environmental Action

Lisa Kretz

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul—and sings the tunes without the words—and never stops at all.
—Emily Dickinson

I am interested in hope’s role in action and specifically positive action regarding a moral harm I take to be unprecedented in human history, namely the ecological crisis. Only at this moment can we destroy with such force, efficiency and completeness. I take as given that the anthropocentric destruction of Mother Earth is morally wrong. My interest is in how to motivate and sustain behaviours that help preserve and advance the health of Earth’s interrelated living members and systems. The focus in this chapter is on the potential that hope offers for motivating and sustaining human behaviours which positively impact the diverse entities and ecosystems that create the complexes of life as we know and value them on this planet.

I begin by defending the concept of hope that I adopt. Informed by the insights of psychology, hope has multiple manifestations, which include, but are not limited to, being a motivation for positive action and being a contagion. Moreover, hope can be taught, it enhances agency, hope is catchy, it has an abundance of beneficial outcomes, hope serves to empower and it is epistemically and socially grounded and responsive. I focus on the virtue of hope for positive ecological action as well as for personal well-being. Even with a multiplicity of beneficial outcomes to support the promulgation of hope, it is important to address potential counter-arguments. I explore worries about using hope as a tool for environmental action. These worries
include the following: hope fails to adequately reflect the present, which can have negative results in terms of action; hope paints a picture so rosy that it may promote inaction; and a problematic ontology exists at the root of many accounts of hope where hope and despair are dichotomized and hope is taken to be the sole motivator. I also focus on the concern that hope is not strong enough to depend on for securing ecological action, and that its focus on consequences serves to undermine positive ecological action rather than ensure it. Once these potential problems have been addressed, I look at methodologies for teaching hope. These methods serve as an aid for teachers whose course content presents sufficiently daunting issues that the spectre of despair overshadows what could instead be an opportunity for a hopeful engagement with the world through empowerment and activism. Ultimately, I argue that hopefulness is an emotional and dispositional orientation that supports and enables positive ecological action. Contrary to accounts that contend hope is neither a virtue nor does it play a beneficial role for those seeking ecological health, I argue that hope, when conceptualized through psychological findings, is clearly a virtue and that it plays a crucial role in action. If positive ecological action is the goal, we must nurture the virtue of hope, and I give concrete methods for doing so in the classroom setting.

CONCEPTUALIZING HOPE

On my understanding, an adequate conceptualization of hope will, of necessity, reflect the insights psychology offers. I am a practical moral philosopher in that I am not just interested in the ‘why’ but the ‘how’ of moral action. As such, looking at human psychology, including what it can reveal for helping people better reflect their considered moral beliefs, is essential to moral theory. I am interested in what emotions more generally have to offer the project of motivating moral action, but I concentrate on hope in what follows. Hope, on my account, is psychologically informed, motivates positive action, can be taught, enhances agency, is catchy, has a multitude of beneficial outcomes, empowers and is epistemically and socially responsive (Kretz 2013, 926, 929). I will defend this vision of hope in what follows. If I am correct, then there are a number of prima facie reasons for nurturing the virtue of hope.

I take hope, broadly construed, to pertain to a multidimensional and dynamic life force characterized by an orientation to a future good which remains uncertain; the hoped-for good is both realistically possible and personally significant and has implications for action and interpersonal relatedness (Dufault & Martocchio 1985, 350). The criterion that it must be realistically possible demands that hope must be justified; in the absence of justification, hope would be irrational given its groundlessness (Kretz 2013, 932). Indeed, a sufficiently correct appraisal of, and a sense of concern about, the current state of affairs are both necessary for generating hope with traction. It is because we are dissatisfied with the current state of affairs that we hope for change. Richard Lazarus, for example, suggests that a crucial ‘condition of hope is that our current life circumstance is unsatisfactory—that is, it involves deprivation or is damaging or threatening’ (1999, 654; Halpin 2001, 395).

To be justified, hope must be responsive to real-world constraints where we build on our knowledge and experience of past blocks to achieving our goals, as well as previous successes, and use this understanding to imagine ways forward to achieve further goals. Through setting smaller, reasonable, achievable, intermediate goals that contribute to larger goals, those larger goals become possible. There is a positive response when intermediate goals are reached which can help bolster energy for investment in additional goals (Macy & Johnstone 2012, 224). People who possess high levels of hope often prefer ‘stretch goals’ which are slightly more difficult than previously attained goals which facilitates likely success at intermediate goals and further growth in the direction of the long-term hoped-for goals (Marques et al. 2014, 36).

Probabilities matter when it comes to justified hope. The probability of goal attainment spans from a very high to very low probability, and justified hope requires reflection of these probabilities (Marques et al. 2014, 36). High hope thinking involves identifying specific goals as opposed to vague goals (Snyder 2002, 250). Stopping all ecological destruction is a lofty goal to be sure, but it is also vague. More concrete goals would involve identifying a specific form of ecological destruction and putting energy into working against the harm in ways that will be effective. Perhaps, for example, one seeks to minimize carbon dioxide emissions generated by transportation. To this end, one might choose to own a bike instead of a car and choose to purchase local and in-season produce. This immediately cuts down on your own carbon dioxide emissions, including carbon dioxide emissions associated with the transporting of nonlocal and out-of-season produce, thereby serving as a tangible and immediate move toward your overarching goal. For political influence, one might petition his or her local government for bike-friendly roadways, enhanced public transportation methods and increases in community-supported agriculture. To this end, one might also form a coalition for generating action around enhancing sustainable forms of transportation and food production and distribution. If a successful model is created over time for improved local commitments to reducing transportation-related carbon dioxide emissions, the model can be shared with other communities.

Hope, like many other emotions, is infectious; it can be transmitted like a contagion (Braithwaite 2004a, 11; Cunningham 2004, 9; Elliott 2005, 11). Studies show that hope can be taught; therefore, one method of transmitting
include the following: hope fails to adequately reflect the present, which can have negative results in terms of action; hope paints a picture so rosy that it may promote inaction; and a problematic ontology exists at the root of many accounts of hope where hope and despair are dichotomized and hope is taken to be the sole motivator. I also focus on the concern that hope is not strong enough to depend on for securing ecological action, and that its focus on consequences serves to undermine positive ecological action rather than ensure it. Once these potential problems have been addressed, I look at methodologies for teaching hope. These methods serve as an aid for teachers whose course content presents sufficiently daunting issues that the spectre of despair overshadows what could instead be an opportunity for a hopeful engagement with the world through empowerment and activism. Ultimately, I argue that hopefulness is an emotional and dispositional orientation that supports and enables positive ecological action. Contrary to accounts that contend hope is neither a virtue nor does it play a beneficial role for those seeking ecological health, I argue that hope, when conceptualized through psychological findings, is clearly a virtue and that it plays a crucial role in action. If positive ecological action is the goal, we must nurture the virtue of hope, and I give concrete methods for doing so in the classroom setting.

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hope is teaching. There is evidence of the successful teaching of hope, and resultant increases in hope, at the middle school, high school and university levels (Cheavens, Michael & Snyder 2005, 126). A nonexhaustive list of the virtues of increased hope includes positive influences on academic and athletic performance, student self-esteem, physical health, optimism, affectivity, expectancies of positive outcomes, perceived problem-solving capacities, perceptions of control in life and psychological adjustment (Cheavens, Michael & Snyder 2005, 119, 126; Snyder 1995, 357). It is also recognized as an essential motivator (Drahos 2004, 19). Those with higher hope have more mental energy for, and pathways to, their goals; when faced with blocks to their goals, they conceptualize alternative routes and possess the agent thinking necessary for activating action (Snyder 1995, 357). High hope people have more goals and more difficult goals, which are perceived as challenges, and they have greater success at goal achievement, more happiness and less distress, superior coping skills, less self-reported work burnout and better recovery from physical injury (Snyder 1995, 357–58). Broadly, high hope is related to beneficial life outcomes, life satisfaction and well-being (Cheavens, Michael & Snyder 2005, 127; Marques et al. 2014, 38).

The agency associated with hope, in my view, is problematic if it is premised on an ontology of abstract individualism. Rather, the deeply social elements of self-construct and action need recognition for adequate approaches to achieving one’s goals. Radical dependency on others for the majority of that which sustains our existence must be flagged, ranging from our ecological dependence on healthy water, air and food (Kretz 2009, 109, 123) to social dependence on relationships with close and distant others (Young 2006). Communities of mutually responsive high hope persons generate a synergistic interanimation of others and one’s own hopes, providing mutual supports that contribute to hope’s energy (McGeer 2004, 109, 123). Networks of mutual support bring benefits such as higher levels of trust, enhanced health, lower suicide rates and less depression (Macy & Johnstone 2012, 123).

The version of hope I defend is a relational conceptualization of hope where hope is only possible in supportive relations. In the absence of such relations, hope is neither articulable (language, emotions and concepts are socially derived) nor justified (relations that support our projects are necessary for the achievement of goals). Darren Webb contends hope is a socially mediated human capability with varying behavioural, cognitive and affective dimensions (2013, 398). Achievement of individual hoped-for goals depend on wider circles of action by others (Drahos 2004, 20). Goal-directed and hopeful thinking is learned in the context of other people (Snyder 2002, 263). When individuals are moved by a shared vision, they become a community with a common purpose and what is achievable as a community surpasses that of individuals (Macy & Johnstone 2012, 163). Hope occurs in environments where a supportive atmosphere, meant to help meet individual and collective goals, grounds interactions; such environments enhance the perception that one has both the pathways and agency to succeed (Snyder 1995, 359). The relational dimensions of hope help to highlight the ways in which existing oppressive relations might undermine the development and sustenance of capacities for hope. It is essential to remedy blocks to the development of positive human capabilities. For example, neglect and physical abuse result in decreases in hope (Snyder 2002, 263). So too does witnessing family members or friends being subject to interpersonal violence (Marques et al. 2014, 38).

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF NURTURING THE VIRTUE OF HOPE

Action

There are a number of reasons, many which have already been articulated above, as to why one ought to nurture the virtue of hope. For those interested in positive ecological action, hope plays a necessary role in successful activism. What follows are pragmatic rationales for nurturing the virtue of hope if positive action is desired. Thus, one of hope’s primary virtues is its motivating power for action.

First, at a basic level, hope is a prerequisite for action (Stotland 1969, 20–22). In the absolute absence of hope for successfully generating the result hoped for, there is no rational motivation for action. Examples of the importance of hope for action are gleaned by Ezra Stotland from schools, controlled laboratory experiments, concentration and prisoner-of-war camps, hospitals and peace-time disasters—all of which attest to the importance of hope for action, even action to prevent the greatest of all disasters, death (Stotland 1969, 20–22). Having hope for the future is necessary for the continuation of life (Elliott 2005, 14; Farber in Snyder 1995, 358; Freire 2011, 2; Lazarus 1999, 659; McGeer 2004, 100; Stotland 1969, 8, 21–22). Although we may have more or less hope, healthy or unhealthy amounts, the requirement for hope in human beings is pervasive.

Hope is linked to action in that when you are hopeful you act in ways to bring about what is hoped for (Braithwaite 2004b; Cartwright 2004; Drahos 2004; Snyder 1995). My account of hope is strongly informed by that of Charles Snyder, who is a psychologist specializing in positive psychology. On Snyder’s account, hope reflects ‘individual’s perceptions regarding their capacities to (1) clearly conceptualize goals, (2) develop the strategies to these goals (pathways thinking), and (3) initiate and sustain the motivation for using those strategies (agency thinking)’ (Snyder et al. 2003, 122–23). Pathway and agency thinking are additive, iterative, reciprocal and
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positively related; both are necessary for sustaining successful goal pursuit and they are insufficient when they occur in isolation from each other (Snyder 2002, 252; Snyder et al. 2003, 123). The active element of hope is thereby highlighted. Pathway thinking increases the likelihood of goal achievement through conceptualizing multiple pathways to achieve goals when blocks are discovered, and agency thinking provides the sort of self- and community conceptualization that engenders success at achieving hoped-for goals. Colloquially put, agency thinking is 'the will' and the pathway thinking is 'the way' (Snyder 1995, 355). The power of one's agency is explored when planning produces action and the results of that action contribute to further planning (Drahos 2007, 22).

In Joanna Macy (a renowned deep ecologist) and Chris Johnstone's (a medical doctor specializing in the psychology of behaviour change) book *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We’re in Without Going Crazy*, they identify the formative role for hope in facing ecological crisis. When facing challenges, the kinds of responses we form, as well as the degree to which we believe they are relevant, are directly shaped by the way we think/feel about hope (Macy & Johnstone 2012, 2). Active hope, in their analysis, is a practice; it is something we do as opposed to something we just have (Macy & Johnstone 2012, 3). The narratives we tell ourselves about our past, current and future abilities shape the story to come. Macy & Johnstone encourage developing inner resources and community resources to enhance the strength of our capacity to face challenges and respond with resilience (2012, 6). Thus, the relevance of healthy community is highlighted. Ideal power is recognized as growing, of necessity, through and with healthy community. Ideal power structures are recognized as being collaborative; power is construed relationally as power-with rather than power-over (Macy & Johnstone 2012, 7, 109). One must first recognize the ecological harms taking place, for example, with regard to climate change, weather-related diseases, floods, droughts, and major hurricanes, to assess the state of affairs honestly and to correctly assess what changes need to be made (Macy & Johnstone 2012, 20). It is crucial to honour our pain for and with the world through a healthy response to the appropriate distress that is felt through exposure to large-scale and unnecessary destruction, as well as to express these feelings in ways that facilitate empowerment (Macy & Johnstone 2012, 66–67).

If positive ecological action is desired, then adopting a hopeful attitude which manifests as hopeful action is essential. Acting in hopeful ways serves to bring into being hoped-for goals that would be impossible in the absence of hopeful action. If you maintain the status quo, if you do not try to make things better, then the status quo will remain the case. If you try to improve the world, learn from your errors and build on your successes, then further related goals can be generated. If people truly believe an ecologically responsible society is not possible, this belief results in a sense of hopeless malaise where it is pointless to try, thereby making the belief that society cannot change a self-fulfilling prophecy (Milbrath 1995, 108, in Lueck 2007, 253). If, instead, people believe change is possible, they engage in the behaviours required for positive change, learn from failures and successes and build on that knowledge base for future action. Hope provides tools for plan creation and thereby aids in the planning, action, outcome and feedback loop that serves to generate or alter expectations and hopes (Lueck 2007, 252).

Hope is thus not only a precondition for action; it is a precondition for positive change. Future states of the world are dependent causally on the choice to hope or not to hope (Bovens 1999, 671). As I have argued elsewhere, there is a bootstrapping (hopeful action itself substantiates and generates further hopes) and snowballing (hope's catchiness generates increasing amounts of persons acting hopefully, which increases what groups can achieve and hope for) effect with hope (Kretz 2013, 940).

**Well-Being**

Another reason for nurturing the virtue of hope is the impact it has on one's own experience of life. The absence of hope is despair, and despair carries with it the sense of being overcome by futility or defeat— it is to believe the possibility of getting the desired object or outcome does not exist (Govier 2011, 247). Paolo Freire takes despair and hopelessness to be 'the cause and consequence of inaction or immobilism' (2011, 3). Hopelessness involves disengagement; it is a release of agency where there is no belief that any action can make a difference, and as such, no effort is made (Lueck 2007, 251). Educators and conservation psychologists worry that despair leads to terror management, and terror management is demonstrated through downplayed problems and hyper-materialism being used as ineffective coping mechanisms (Kelsey 2012). Lower hope scale scores for college students are related to suicidal ideation (Range and Penton 1994, in Snyder 2002, 261). High hope people encounter goal blocks with flexibility and find alternative goals, whereas low hope people ruminate about feeling stuck and engage in escape fantasies (Michael 2000, Snyder 1999, in Snyder 2002, 261). Such avoidance behaviour and disengaged coping have counterproductive consequences generally (Snyder and Pulvers 2001, Stanton and Snyder 1993, in Snyder 2002, 261). Low hope persons continue in their passivity because they are preoccupied with avoidance thoughts and fail to learn from past experiences (Snyder 2002, 261). Low hope people also tend to be unforgiving of other people, fearful of interpersonal closeness and lonely (Thompson et al. 2002, in Snyder 2002, 262). Indeed, Snyder goes so far as to propose hope and meaning in life are companions; through self-reflection about personal goals and perceiving progress, life meaning is constructed (Snyder 2002, 262).
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The personal narratives we generate have a significant impact on our sense of self-worth and what we are capable of achieving. High hope people tend to have an affirming and positive internal dialogue (Snyder et al. 1998, in Snyder 2002, 251). Agency thought, which is taken to be the motivational component in hope theory, refers to the perceived capacity to use pathways to reach desired goals (Snyder 2002, 251). High hope people embrace agency phrases such as ‘I can do this’, which play an essential role in navigating blocks to goal achievement (Snyder et al. 1998, in Snyder 2002, 251). Hope has been found to correlate positively with positive affect and negatively with negative affect (Snyder 2002, 261). Higher hope is associated with self-reports of fewer negative thoughts and increased positive thoughts (Snyder et al. 1996, in Snyder 2002, 261). Findings likewise confirm high hope generates feelings of confidence, inspiration, being energized, being challenged by life goals, elevated self-worth, satisfaction and low levels of depression (Chang 1998, Kwon 2000, Snyder et al. 1991, Snyder et al. 1996, Snyder et al. 1997, in Snyder 2002, 261). Hope is crucial for enhancing life quality as it generates thoughts and actions used to establish optimal functioning and satisfaction (Snyder 2002, 268). Nurturing the virtue of hope is thus a form of a self-kindness as well as kindness to others given the positive action hope produces. Serendipitously, in this case, enhanced personal well-being supports the probability of increased positive action, which also benefits the community.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST HOPE

Although the advantages to nurturing hope are impressive, it is important to consider the potential downside to nurturing hope in the context of ecological crisis. In ‘Abandon Hope’, Michael Nelson and John Vucetich provide a series of key critiques which must be grappled with if hope theory is to play a central role in environmental theory and practice. They argue against construing hope in environmental ethics as a prime motivator of behaviours that generate critical mass and against conceptualizing hope as a fundamental virtue (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 32–33). In particular, they are concerned about times in which hope for a sustainable future is taken to be the fundamental reason for changing one’s relationship with nature (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 33). Advocating an approach to remediating environmental harms primarily through appeal to a sole reason is destined to fail; no singular approach will, in isolation, meet the complex dimensions of anthropogenic environmental harms. Hoping, as an isolated approach, will be insufficient for ameliorating or removing ecological harms. Rather, multiple, creative, context-sensitive approaches will be required. But this is not to say that hope is, on principle, of concern. Nor is it to say that, on principle, hope cannot be a crucial ingredient for environmental action. Thus, I will focus on the particular construals of hope that concern Nelson and Vucetich and respond to each in turn.

Delusional

To highlight their underlying worry about hope being perceived as a fundamental virtue, Nelson and Vucetich illustrate a circumstance where hope is deluded and has detrimental results. In the example given, a terminally ill person postposes mending broken relationships because she is hopeful that she will live; here hope is interpreted as believing in a certain outcome when instead the individual should have recognized this as an unfulfilled desire (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 33). My conceptualization of hope does not fall subject to this criticism given the criterion of justifiability influencing the viability of hope. Justifiability is what, on my account, separates wishful thinking from hope. Contrary to the notion that hope encourages delusions about actual states of affairs, people who score high in the hope scale appear to calibrate goal expectations using relevant boundary conditions (Snyder 2002, 264). It is those with extremely low hope that evidence extreme delusions about reality, and these delusions interfere with attaining desired goals (Cramer and Dyrkacz 1998, Irving et al. 1990, in Snyder 2002, 265). Concern about the proposed virtue of hope will need to stem from a different source. The threat of inaction is just such a potential source.

Promotes Inaction

Nelson and Vucetich recount the story of Pandora opening the jar that was to be her dowry, thereby releasing the scourges of humanity (greed, vanity, slander, envy, etc.); she shuts the jar, however, in time to keep hope contained therein (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 32). It is postulated that hope might itself therefore be an evil (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 32). Hope is often associated with naïve and superficial optimism as well as with women and children (Smith 2005, 47). In addition, it is often seen as quaint and religious (Johnson 2005, 48). The association of hope with women, weakness and palliating properties finds its archetypical manifestation in the story of Pandora (Smith 2005, 59). Nelson worries that hope is a throwaway term, a vacuous sentiment, that is dangerous and counter-productive (Nelson 2011, 459). The hopefulness of women and children is often perceived as demonstrating a regressive disposition wherein fantasy predominates over reality (Smith 2005, 47). The unpalatable present is ‘dealt with’ through the avoidance hope provides via a projected, imagined future (Smith 2005, 47). Insofar as hope functions as a form of compensation, it ‘lends itself to passivity and indifference towards instigating change. To the extent that the hoper...
The personal narratives we generate have a significant impact on our sense of self-worth and what we are capable of achieving. High hope people tend to have an affirming and positive internal dialogue (Snyder et al. 1998, in Snyder 2002, 251). Agency thought, which is taken to be the motivational component in hope theory, refers to the perceived capacity to use pathways to reach desired goals (Snyder 2002, 251). High hope people embrace agency phrases such as ‘I can do this’, which play an essential role in navigating blocks to goal achievement (Snyder et al. 1998, in Snyder 2002, 251). Hope has been found to correlate positively with positive affect and negatively with negative affect (Snyder 2002, 261). Higher hope is associated with self-reports of fewer negative thoughts and increased positive thoughts (Snyder et al. 1996, in Snyder 2002, 261). Findings likewise confirm high hope generates feelings of confidence, inspiration, being energized, being challenged by life goals, elevated self-worth, satisfaction and low levels of depression (Chang 1998, Kwon 2000, Snyder et al. 1991, Snyder et al. 1996, Snyder et al. 1997, in Snyder 2002, 261). Hope is crucial for enhancing life quality as it generates thoughts and actions used to establish optimal functioning and satisfaction (Snyder 2002, 268). Nurturing the virtue of hope is thus a form of self-kindness as well as kindness to others given the positive action hope produces. Serendipitously, in this case, enhanced personal well-being supports the probability of increased positive action, which also benefits the community.

**ARGUMENTS AGAINST HOPE**

Although the advantages to nurturing hope are impressive, it is important to consider the potential downside to nurturing hope in the context of ecological crisis. In ‘Abandon Hope’, Michael Nelson and John Vucetich provide a series of key critiques which must be grappled with if hope theory is to play a central role in environmental theory and practice. They argue against construing hope in environmental ethics as a prime motivator of behaviours that generate critical mass and against conceptualizing hope as a fundamental virtue (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 32–33). In particular, they are concerned about times in which hope for a sustainable future is taken to be the fundamental reason for changing one’s relationship with nature (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 33). Advocating an approach to remedying environmental harms primarily through appeal to a sole reason is destined to fail; no singular approach will, in isolation, meet the complex dimensions of anthropogenic environmental harms. Hoping, as an isolated approach, will be insufficient for ameliorating or removing ecological harms. Rather, multiple, creative, context-sensitive approaches will be required. But this is not to say that hope is, on principle, of concern. Nor is it to say that, on principle, hope cannot be a crucial ingredient for environmental action. Thus, I will focus on the particular construals of hope that concern Nelson and Vucetich and respond to each in turn.

**Delusional**

To highlight their underlying worry about hope being perceived as a fundamental virtue, Nelson and Vucetich illustrate a circumstance where hope is deluded and has detrimental results. In the example given, a terminally ill person postpones mending broken relationships because she is hopeful that she will live; here hope is interpreted as believing in a certain outcome when instead the individual should have recognized this as an unfulfilled desire (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 33). My conceptualization of hope does not fall subject to this criticism given the criterion of justifiability influencing the viability of hope. Justifiability is what, on my account, separates wishful thinking from hope. Contrary to the notion that hope encourages delusions about actual states of affairs, people who score high in the hope scale appear to calibrate goal expectations using relevant boundary conditions (Snyder 2002, 264). It is those with extremely low hope that evidence extreme delusions about reality, and these delusions interfere with attaining desired goals (Cramer and Dyrkacz 1998, Irving et al. 1990, in Snyder 2002, 265). Concern about the proposed virtue of hope will need to stem from a different source. The threat of inaction is just such a potential source.

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relates to a given desirable outcome simply by waiting for it, hope becomes problematic not just from an ethical but also from a political point of view (Smith 2005, 47). Nelson worries hope might stifle our resolve rather than aid it; he is concerned that it is often a distraction or an excuse for not doing the work that needs to be done (Nelson 2011, 459).

Again, such critique is not correctly launched at a conceptualization of hope that recognizes what psychology points to, namely the pathway and agency components of hope. Contrary to the concerns articulated above, rather than hope being associated with a naïve optimism, hope for a better state of affairs entails a critical response to the current state of affairs. Hoping to generate alternatives reflects discontent with present circumstances, and it implies the space and freedom for change (Halpin 2001, 395). It can be a useful tool for visualizing a state of affairs that doesn’t yet exist, with anticipation helping to prepare the ground for what is yet to be (Halpin 2001, 395). Hope can serve to galvanize and redouble efforts when facing negative circumstances (Halpin 2001, 396). As opposed to hope being a threat to inaction, some postulate that despair frequently leads to a pessimism that contributes to a grudging acceptance of the status quo (Nesse 1999, in Halpin 2001, 396). Certainly hope as a psychological phenomenon instigates and sustains goal-oriented behaviour. Despair as a psychological phenomenon results in inaction. Sadly, when manifest as depression, it disproportionately results in permanent inaction through death at one’s own hand.

Moreover, the association of women with disempowering emotional proclivities merits its own analysis. However, given space constraints, I will only be able to gesture at this issue. There is a long history of feminist critique of the double bind many women and members of oppressed groups find themselves in when it comes to expressing emotion; it is simultaneously expected and used as a reason for ignoring the content of what one is attempting to express (Boler 1999; Campbell 1994, 1997; Frye 1983; Lloyd 1984; Spelman 1989). The devaluation that emotions (including hope), femininity, women and members of oppressed groups face is not unrelated.

**Problematic Ontology**

The ontology of hope to which I ascribe, where hope is precondition for positive action in the world, is potentially called into question by Vucetich and Nelson. They recognize that, according to some theories, not being hopeful constitutes despair, and as such advocating action in the absence of hope might be unacceptable if not incomprehensible (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 34). Contrary to this view, they question the hope/despair dichotomy being postulated as the sum of all ethical motivators (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 35). I contend, however, acknowledging that hope motivates behaviour and despair does not, is not to say that these are the sum of all potential ethical motivators. There are a bevy of motivations for action, for example health, kindness, generosity and curiosity. However, if you had no hope that you could achieve health through your proposed actions, no hope that you could express kindness or generosity through your actions or no hope that your curiosity might be satisifed through exploration, then there would be lacking motivation to complete said action. Acting without hope for achieving your goal is irrational, and it certainly ought not to be promoted as a virtuous trait to nurture. This, however, worrisomely seems to be the direction that is gestured at by Nelson and Vucetich.

**Too Concerned with Consequences**

Nelson and Vucetich worry about the hold that utilitarian philosophy continues to exert in the conceptualization of ethical problems and their solutions, and instead advocate a virtue approach. They worry that theorists of hope who focus on probabilities for particular outcomes of behaviours are overly committed to the consequentialism encapsulated in utilitarian approaches, and they worry about the focus on the future as opposed to the present that is implied by such approaches (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 35). We often do not have control of the situations we are faced with, and we often cannot control outcomes; thus, we need a method for acting morally when consequences are beyond our control. When Al Gore’s sister died of lung cancer, their father ceased farming tobacco, not because his actions would impact the future but because he saw it as the right, the virtuous, thing to do (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 35). Extrapolating from this case, it is suggested that we should live in environmentally responsible and caring ways because such action is right; future effectiveness may be irrelevant or inappropriate as a consideration (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 35). Sustainable living ought to be premised on manifesting basic virtues, recognized as good in and of themselves, as opposed to being premised on hope for a better future (Nelson and Vucetich 2009, 35). In such an analysis, whether critical mass for a better future is likely or possible is not the correct focus. Of course this need not be an either/or—either base your entire moral theory on attending to consequences or ignore them entirely—but, the main point is that enacting environmentally virtuous behaviour regardless of outcomes potentially ensures moral behaviour in circumstances where uncontrollable consequences are on the horizon.

I question the proposed disconnect between virtuous action and consequences. Acting without taking into consideration the consequences would generate behaviour untethered to the world and what matters and why. Consequences are tied to contexts and contexts are tied to relationships. Aristotle, an esteemed virtue ethicist, notes that one must, for example, get angry at the right person, in the right amount, at the right time and for the right end
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Advocating action without hope and fortitude without the emotional content needed to keep it afloat fails to adequately reflect the role of emotion in motivation. Nelson recommends a moral revolution wherein one abandons hope and cares without hope (2011, 462). He advocates a robust recognition of how bad things actually are and then deciding to live with dignity and grace, with humility and empathy, and with care and attentiveness, regardless of what life presents us with (2011, 462). To illustrate the problem with this recommendation, let us consider an example with someone who fundamentally lacks hope. Telling someone who is clinically depressed, someone truly depleted of hope, to keep going through the motions indefinitely regardless of how he or she feels and with no legitimate hope that things will change for the better, at minimum fails to reflect the disempowering psychological results of despair and more strongly exhibits a lack of care. When one is that depleted of hope, what is needed is treatment. So too when activists are seeking to continue protesting ecological harm and feeling the pull of despair, they need therapy and connection to communities of hopeful people achieving change, not a demand for action without the required emotional, psychological and community support. When action without the requisite emotional support is advocated, there is a failure to recognize the necessary role particular emotions play in bringing to realization and sustaining action. Hope depletion does serious damage to the human psyche and results in decreased efficacy regarding action. A healthy psyche is needed for a realistic identification of the ecological challenges being faced and it is required for performing well in relationships. In other words, it is needed for performing virtuously, \textsuperscript{11}
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Given the above defence of hope's virtues, I will now turn to methods for generating and supporting hope in classroom settings. An effective hope scale (for adults) and a children's hope scale (ages eight to sixteen) have been developed by Snyder and his colleagues to ascertain hope levels (Marques et al. 2014, 36–37; Snyder, Cheavens & Symson 1997, 109). Such a tool is essential for measuring the efficacy of attempts to increase hope and generate the positive impacts of hope in individual and communal life. As was already noted, it has been confirmed that hope can be successfully taught at the middle school, high school and university level (Cheavens, Michael & Snyder 2005, 126). One such course can be found at the University of Wyoming, which has a college class aimed at teaching hopeful thinking, and it successfully raises student's levels of hope, as well as their self-esteem and academic performance (Curry et al. 1999, in Snyder 2002, 259).

Hope interventions tend to benefit students with the lowest levels of hope the most; however, virtually all students experience an increase in hope levels through participating in school-administered hope programs (Marques et al. 2014, 41). Thus, there is a case to be made for making courses in hope available to all. There is also a case to be made for hope playing a role specifically in environmental classrooms where, given the scope of ecological harms, the threat of pessimism, despair and a general culture of doom and gloom loom large.

Cynicism and apathy are linked to civic disengagement, and pedagogical choices can either support or work against them (Johnson 2005, 44–46). If a class constantly focuses on problems, without adequate attention to solutions, then a culture of doom and gloom is created (Johnson 2005, 47). In addition, authoritarian teaching methods generate apathy through learned passivity, boredom and disengagement (Johnson 2005, 47). Connecting social problems to individual behaviours helps students to see that their behaviour does in fact have an impact, while the failure to do so obscures the impact individuals have on changing or merely replicating existing social and political structures (Johnson 2005, 49). To achieve the goal of empowering students in their abilities to contribute constructively to communities and larger society, Brett Johnson recommends that teachers nurture civic responsibility, increase perceived civic efficacy (which increases the likelihood of engagement in civic behaviour), develop civic skills and increase knowledge about society (which increases the likelihood of competence) (Johnson 2005, 49–50). A nonexhaustive list of potential engagement methods includes the following: doing readings in class that advocate social action, engaging in positive deviance, having activist guest speakers, directing student participation in civic groups, analysing the effectiveness of social movement organizations, lessening teacher cynicism, supporting student-centred active learn-
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A concrete example of an environmental course that included a unit on hope is found in Shih-Jang Hsu’s study of an environmental education course focusing on investigation, evaluation, action training and fostering empowerment (Hsu 2004, 41). Students identify a local ecological issue and then generate, assess and execute their plan to contribute to remedying the issue. A unit on hope and empowerment, with stories of success and presentations by activists, is included to address the disempowering despair that might result from engagement with sizeable ecological harms (Hsu 2004, 41). Through pre-course and post-course testing, it was discovered that the course effectively generated a significant promotion in students’ responsible environmental behaviour, environmental responsibility, intention to act, perception of knowledge of environmental issues, perception of knowledge of and skills for environmental action strategies and locus of control (Hsu 2004, 41).

There are a number of concrete steps that might be taken to generate hope in a classroom environment. Steps for enhancing hope in students involve the following (Marques et al. 2014, 42): (1) Administer the hope scale. (2) Educate students about hope theory and its relevance for positive outcomes. (3) Have students list important life components, determine priority and discuss satisfaction levels with each. This helps to give structure to hope for the student. (4) Work with students to create workable goals that are positive, specific, salient for the student, and attainable. Also help the student develop multiple pathways for goal achievement and flag agentic thought patterns for the goals set. (5) Have the student visualize and verbalize the steps needed to reach his or her goals. Identify, in collaboration with the student, the most effective pathways and methods for agency. (6) Students can report back on the process of goal attainment and, through collaboration, make adjustments and modifications to disparities in action or thinking that are potentially hindering the successful achievement of desired goals. (7) The above process is cyclical, requiring continuous assessment. Over time, and with increasing successes, the bulk of the responsibility for implementing hope theory in their unique life experiences can be assumed by the student (Marques et al. 2014, 42). Hope is taught using such a methodology through practice and open dialogue about hope theory and its findings. Theory and practice therefore occur in tandem. I contend the behavioural ‘doing’ through engagement with the emotion of hope, as opposed to theoretical engagement alone, is essential to the success of teaching being hopeful (Kretz 2014).

Imparting hope to students rests on the foundation of helping them to set goals (Marques et al. 2014, 42). Breaking down goals into more manageable sub-goals is a useful strategy for engaging pathway thinking (Marques et al.
Through this practice, students can learn how to take a long-range goal and divide it up into manageable steps that lead to the end goal (Marques et al. 2014, 43). Helping students identify several routes to particular goals also is useful for helping students realize that potential blocks to success require revised plans as opposed to giving up outright (Marques et al. 2014, 43). It is also important to counter the negative, hypercritical, internal self-talk of low hope students through replacing perpetual self-criticism with realistic, positive and productive thinking (Marques et al. 2014, 44). Teachers can also engender hope in their students through developing and manifesting the characteristics of high hope individuals themselves (Marques et al. 2014, 44). The ripple effect of hope as a contagion in school settings can result in wider impacts (Marques et al. 2014, 46). The fact that teachers play a role in students’ hope is evidenced by the fact that hope scale scores correlate significantly with a scale measuring teacher encouragement (Culver 1999 in Snyder 2002, 259). It is important, however, that the goals are the students’ goals and not superimposed goals by their peers, parents or teachers (Marques et al. 2014, 43). When goals are imposed, they are not imbued with the same sense of motivation (Marques et al. 2014). It is crucial, then, when students are choosing action projects for achieving particular goals, that they be given the flexibility and support to choose actions and goals that are salient to them.

CONCLUSION

I have argued in favour of a psychologically informed conceptualization of hope where hope garners justification through epistemic and social reflectivity and responsiveness. When the current state of affairs is unsatisfactory, we hope for change. Hope acts as a contagion and can be transmitted through teaching. It is both intrinsically and extrinsically desirable given the multitude of positive behaviours and dispositions it facilitates. Hope is, of necessity, relational and socially constituted.

I outline hope’s fundamental role as a motivator for action. Hope theory identifies the capacities of high hoping persons which include clearly conceptualizing goals, developing pathways thinking (strategies) to reach those goals and agency thinking to initiate and sustain the motivation for utilizing those strategies (Snyder et al. 2003, 122–23). There is a snowball effect given hope’s function as an emotive contagion and a bootstrapping that occurs when an initial orientation to hope makes it possible to achieve further goals related to what is hoped for. Additionally, a hopeful disposition supports general well-being.

A number of important worries were presented about hope’s role in environmental action and were addressed in turn. I acquiesce that hope cannot be a stand-alone method for ameliorating ecological harm. No single approach will adequately address the complex dimensions of ecological harm that are currently occurring. Rather, multiple solutions engaging a variety of capacities will be necessary. To suggest, however, that hope is not a crucial ingredient for working against environmental harm fails to reflect the insights psychology offers. Contrary to the claim that hope encourages delusional thinking, statistically it is more likely low-hoping people will misread states of affairs than high-hoping people. For high-hoping people to generate appropriate goals and pathways, they must successfully read the actual state of the world. The feminization of hope and labelling it as weakness are likewise problematic for the sexism implied, for the devaluing of a vital emotion and for the failure to recognize hope’s sturdy resilience. High hoppers consistently generate new paths to their goals when faced with blocks to them, and they nurture the agency needed for fulfilling those goals. My conceptualization of hope is not subject to the criticism that it relies on an ontology where hope is the sole human motivator. I contend, rather, it is an element of motivated action but need not be the sole motivation. Last, I addressed the worries that hope generates too much concern with consequences and the claim that virtuous environmental action should happen regardless of the level of hope one has. First, I highlighted the necessary attention to consequences needed for correctly identifying virtuous behaviour. Second, I pointed to humans’ psychological need for hope for action. Given the virtues of hope, coupled with its role in action, I outline a number of methods for cultivating hope in classroom settings.

I started this chapter with a quote by Emily Dickinson where hope is a bird singing a song that imbues life with music forever. It is a fitting metaphor given the role that birdsong, and its potential obliteration, played in helping the environmental movement come to fruition in the west with Rachel Carson’s Silent Spring (1962). It is a comfort that I hear birdsong outside my window as I write this. A return to an Earth-responsive rhythm resonates with me as a method for bringing ecological hope and action into being. I imagine collective consciousness inspiring listening for the rhythm of the Earth beating heartfully. Such a vision requires intermediate and long-term goals happening across spans of individual and collective lives which will, given hope’s power, generate positive gestalts not yet imagined. That is, if we nurture the virtue of hope.

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2014, 43). Through this practice, students can learn how to take a long-range goal and divide it up into manageable steps that lead to the end goal (Marques et al. 2014, 43). Helping students identify several routes to particular goals also is useful for helping students realize that potential blocks to success require revised plans as opposed to giving up outright (Marques et al. 2014, 43). It is also important to counter the negative, hypercritical, internal self-talk of low hope students through replacing perpetual self-criticism with realistic, positive and productive thinking (Marques et al. 2014, 44). Teachers can also engender hope in their students through developing and manifesting the characteristics of high hope individuals themselves (Marques et al. 2014, 44). The ripple effect of hope as a contagion in school settings can result in wider impacts (Marques et al. 2014, 46). The fact that teachers play a role in students’ hope is evidenced by the fact that hope scale scores correlate significantly with a scale measuring teacher encouragement (Culver 1999 in Snyder 2002, 259). It is important, however, that the goals are the students’ goals and not superimposed goals by their peers, parents or teachers (Marques et al. 2014, 43). When goals are imposed, they are not imbued with the same sense of motivation (Marques et al. 2014). It is crucial, then, when students are choosing action projects for achieving particular goals, that they be given the flexibility and support to choose actions and goals that are salient to them.

CONCLUSION

I have argued in favour of a psychologically informed conceptualization of hope where hope garners justification through epistemic and social reflectivity and responsiveness. When the current state of affairs is unsatisfactory, we hope for change. Hope acts as a contagion and can be transmitted through teaching. It is both intrinsically and extrinsically desirable given the multitude of positive behaviours and dispositions it facilitates. Hope is, of necessity, relational and socially constituted.

I outline hope’s fundamental role as a motivator for action. Hope theory identifies the capacities of high hoping persons which include clearly conceptualizing goals, developing pathways thinking (strategies) to reach those goals and agency thinking to initiate and sustain the motivation for utilizing those strategies (Snyder et al. 2003, 122–23). There is a snowball effect given hope’s function as an emotive contagion and a bootstrapping that occurs when an initial orientation to hope makes it possible to achieve further goals related to what is hoped for. Additionally, a hopeful disposition supports general well-being.

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NOTES

2. My account includes a cognitive account of emotion though is not limited solely to a cognitive account.
3. I write from the perspective of an academic working in North America so my account of education is coloured and constrained by dominant North American educational models. Although I write from this perspective, and have been shaped by it, I do not contend these models are necessarily ideal.
4. In fact, Nicholas Smith hypothesizes that the most significant reason hope has generally been neglected as a topic of serious theoretical attention by philosophers and critical theorists is its association with religion. My account, in contrast, is a secular one.
5. Patients suffering from depression have a suicide rate at least several dozen times higher than that of the general population (Takahashi 2001, 360).
6. I say ‘many’ women to highlight the diversity of social and cultural expectations for differently situated women due to race, class, sexual orientation, gender manifestation, physical ability and so on. Intersectional forms of oppression importantly complicate any analysis if it is to be adequate.
7. Action here is to be understood as noncontingent and noncoerced.
8. This view, of course, runs contrary to the views of many deontologists and many consequentialists.
9. I have argued this elsewhere (Kretz 2013) in response to Andrew Fiala’s (2010) worry in ‘Nero’s Fiddle: On Hope, Despair and the Ecological Crisis’ that some may consider it rational to fiddle while Rome burns (a metaphor for the demise of life on our planet due to ecological harm).
10. Interestingly, the body suit in the analogy is used to protect the naked, vulnerable body underneath which takes to be hope. We protect what we value, thus hope’s role in the analogy is evocative of its continuing value. My thanks to Michelle Willms for helpfully pointing this out to me in an earlier draft.
11. As Allen Thompson (2010) argues in ‘Radical Hope for Living Well in a Warmer World’, given the large-scale social, political and geographical shifts that will result from ecological harms that have already been set in motion, new virtues will come into existence. Developing a robust capacity for hope, which is both a virtue itself and an aid to the exercise of other virtues, will help ground and bring into being these new virtues.
12. The above recommendations were made with regard to students working with school psychologists. I leave it up to the reader to ascertain their transferability to the teacher-learner relationship between students and teachers.

Bibliography