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ARTICLE

Hope and Hopefulness

Jack M. C. Kwong

Department of Philosophy and Religion, Appalachian State University, Boone, NC, USA.
Email: kwongj@appstate.edu

Abstract
This paper proposes a new framework for thinking about hope, with certain unexpected consequences. Specifically, I argue that a shift in focus from locutions like "*x* hopes that" and "*x* is hoping that" to "*x* is hopeful that" and "*x* has hope that" can improve our understanding of hope. This approach, which emphasizes hopefulness as the central concept, turns out to be more revealing and fruitful in tackling some of the issues that philosophers have raised about hope, such as the question of how hope can be distinguished from despair or how people can have differing strengths in hope. It also allows us to see that many current accounts of hope, far from being rivals, are actually compatible with one another.

Keywords: Hope; hopefulness; despair

Introduction

The topic of hope has recently received a lot of attention. Most discussions begin with an examination of the standard or orthodox account of hope, according to which to hope for an outcome *x* is to desire *x* and to believe that the realization of that desire is possible, that is, neither a certainty nor an impossibility. These discussions then try to show that such an account is incomplete or false because it fails to explain some central features of hope, such as its value, its power to motivate and shape our thoughts and actions, its rationality, or its difference from despair. As a remedy, these discussions either attempt to improve the standard account of hope or to recommend an altogether different approach. Some theorists supplement the standard account with further conditions (e.g., Bovens 1999; Kwong 2018; Martin 2014; Meirav 2009; Milona and Stockdale 2018; Pettit 2004), while others argue that the concept of hope cannot be analyzed in terms of belief and desire (Blöser 2019; Segal and Textor 2015).[1] The literature on hope in philosophy is therefore well stocked with theories of hope, with little or no consensus.

This paper proposes a new framework for thinking about hope. It argues that the predominant strategy adopted by many accounts of hope, which analyzes locutions such as "*x* hopes that" or "*x* is hoping that," is ineffective in addressing some of the central issues and questions. Philosophers would do better to shift their attention away from thinking about hope as a verb, and to focus instead on the concept of *hopefulness*, thereby approaching hope as something that we can possess. On this approach, the key locutions to analyze are "*x* is hopeful that" or "*x* has hope when." This shift in focus not only can resolve some current debates in the literature on hope, such as the question of how hope can be distinguished from despair or how people can have differing strengths in hope, but can also allow us to see that many contemporary theories of hope, far from being rivals, are actually compatible with one another. Lastly, distinguishing between "*x* hopes that" and "*x* is

[1]Still, some try to defend the standard account. Michael Milona (2018), for instance, has argued that the standard account, suitably revised, has the resources to explain substantial hopes and answer certain normative questions about hoping.

hopeful that" can offer a useful way to classify current theories of hope and clarify their respective explanatory agenda.

The paper will proceed as follows. In the first section, I illustrate how contemporary theories of hope tend to approach the study of hope by focusing on and analyzing the locution "*x* hopes that" and its cognates. I then propose a new way of thinking about "*x* hopes that," and argue that it does not illuminate our understanding of hope, at least in regard to some of the debates that have dominated the literature. In the third section, I introduce the concept of "hopefulness," and argue that it can help reshape the way we categorize and think about current theories of hope.

"Hoping that . . ."

Many discussions of hope begin with the standard account, which is often attributed to J. P. Day (1969). Accordingly, to hope for *x* is to desire *x* and to believe that there is a chance for *x* to be realized. For example, Ozzie hopes for a speedy recovery from shoulder surgery when he has a desire to quickly return to a healthy state and believes that such an outcome has some chance of obtaining; in other words, that its realization is neither a certainty nor an impossibility. This way of thinking about hope has been criticized as false or incomplete (Meirav 2009). One difficulty that it faces is that it cannot distinguish between hope and despair. Another is that it cannot explain how people can have differing strengths in hope. Consider Adrienne Martin's discussion of Bess and Alan, two cancer patients, both participating in an experimental drug trial which they are told has a less than 1 percent chance of success (2014). Both have a desire to live and believe that a cure, given the dismal low probability, is only in principle possible. Under the standard account, both should hope that they will be cured since they have the requisite desire and belief. Yet, in actuality, only Bess can be said to hope, or to "hope against hope," whereas Alan despairs; the former, for instance, appeals to the faint possibility of cure as her reason for enrolling in the program, whereas Alan, who thinks cure is unlikely, participates in the trial principally to benefit cancer research. The standard account lacks the resources to distinguish hope from despair in such cases.

There are other problems, as well. To identify a few of these, Luc Bovens (1999) points out that the standard account's definition of hope is insufficient since a person can have the relevant desire and belief, yet not be said to hope. Philip Pettit (2004) claims that the standard account cannot explain the nature of substantial hopes—in particular, how such hopes can significantly structure our lives and motivate our thoughts and actions. Claudia Blöser (2019) argues that not all cases of hope require that we have the belief that the outcome is possible or that we have the desire for the outcome. The consensus seems to be that the standard account is inadequate. Attempts have been made to improve it. Bovens points out that hope, in addition to the requisite desire and belief, requires an expense of mental energy in thinking about the desired outcome (1999). Pettit suggests a cognitive resolve on the hoper's part that the outcome is going to obtain (2004). Meirav proposes that we can be said to hope when we conceive of the external factor causally responsible for bringing about a desired outcome as good—that is, being in line with our aims or interest (2009). Finally, Martin incorporates desire into our justificatory scheme so as to license our participation in certain "hopeful" activities, like fantasizing about the outcome (2014). Other theorists argue that we should reject altogether the standard account. Segal and Textor (2015), and more recently Blöser (2019), advocate that the concept of hope is irreducible, and that any attempt to analyze it in terms of beliefs and desires is misguided.

We thus have a variety of competing views, each motivated by the claim that it alone can capture some important features of hope.[2] Thus, Pettit argues that an appeal to the hoper's cognitive resolve can explain why people who have substantial hopes are not, among other things, easily swayed by

[2]Blöser is an exception given that she rejects the search for a theory of hope (2019). According to her, hope is not a concept that can be defined and should instead be construed as a family-resemblance concept. I am appreciative of Blöser's view and

setbacks. Meirav claims that we can explain the difference between hope and despair by assessing whether the external factor acts in favor of or against our interests. And Martin observes that we can explain the phenomenon of "hoping against hope" by examining how our desires can be incorporated into our scheme of ends. For now, I do not want to enter this debate; I will return to it in the next section. What I would like to do instead is to draw attention to a methodological assumption employed by all these theories: That an account of hope can be derived by studying locutions such as "*x* hopes that *y*" or "*x* is hoping for *y*." In other words, these theories approach hope as a verb, and so conceive of it as something that we do. Examples abound. Here is Meirav on Day: "A hopes that *p* if and only if . . . A desires that *p* [and] A believes that it is in some degree probable that *p*" (2009, 219). Building on this definition, Meirav then claims that hoping requires A to believe that some external factor acts in his interests. Similarly, Bovens explicitly claims that "hoping *is* just having the proper belief and desire in conjunction with being engaged to some degree in mental imaging" (674; emphasis in original). What hope is, then, is determined by the conditions under which these locutions and their cognates are true. Indeed, one way to characterize the debate over the nature of hope is to identify various attempts to fill in the following blank: "*x* hopes that *y* when *x* desires *y*, believes *y* to be possible, and _____."

Taking hope to be something that we do is a natural assumption. In the next section, I argue that analyzing these locutions does not actually reveal much about the nature of hope, at least in terms of answering some of the central questions raised by philosophers in the literature, such as its motivational force, rationality, and value.

Registering desires

What is it to hope or to be hoping that *x*? I suggest that when we employ hope as a verb, we are *registering* that we have a desire of a particular sort, the realization of which we believe to be possible. Thus, when I hope that it does not rain, all I am doing is registering to myself the fact that I have a desire that it does not rain and that I believe that there is a chance that it will not rain. Restricting the scope of our desires only to those outcomes that we take to be possible distinguishes hoping from wishing, which can be entertained over outcomes that we take to be impossible.

Because hoping functions only to register a particular desire, it has primarily an expressive role. When I register that I have a certain desire, I am explicitly and consciously entertaining this desire for whatever purposes I may have.[3] When I see that dark clouds are approaching as I am about to go out for a run, I may hope that it does not rain, which is to register to myself this new desire that I now have in light of my current circumstance. Similarly, when I am searching for a parking spot and there is none to be found within sight, I may hope that I can find one. Hoping in this sense is a reaction or response to my surroundings. It highlights what we desire at the moment or in a given context. Once we register that we have these desires, we can do a number of things with respect to them. Sometimes, we do nothing about them, as when we pick up a bag of chips at the grocery store and think, "I hope this new flavor is good!" Other times, we devise plans to see how the desired outcome can be realized. Still others, we fantasize or obsess about their materializing. Whatever we

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think that many of the considerations which she uses to draw her conclusion can be used as background support for my contention below that the word *hope* as employed in the literature is ambiguous.

[3]In this regard, I agree with Bovens that hoping has to be occurrent in that some mental energy must be expended on the desired outcome in order for a person to hope for it. However, unlike Bovens, who construes such expense broadly to include any "mental imaging" of "what it would be like if some projected state of the world to materialize" (1999, 674), my account holds that mental energy need only be expended over the registration of a desire that is neither impossible nor certain. One advantage of restricting the expense of mental energy this way is that it does not commit us to the unwelcome consequence, noted by Bovens, that hoping "has intrinsic value in that mental imaging provides for the pleasures of anticipation" (674). As I will shortly argue, and as others, like Stockdale, have pointed out, hoping is not always positive or accompanied by such pleasures. One can, for example, have a fearful hope.

do with our registered desires, however, has nothing to do with hope per se on the view that I am characterizing. Hoping's function is simply to register the desire; what we do with such a desire, if we do anything with it at all, is due to some *other* mental function.

On this construal of hoping, hope plays a limited role in our cognition: its function is *only* to bring to mind certain desires that we have. Another important implication of hope's limited role is that it can be accompanied by a variety of feelings that we may have over the chances of the registered desire's obtaining, feelings that are distinct from those we may have over the desire itself. I may register a desire that it does not rain when I see dark clouds looming. Although I feel positively about this desired outcome and want it to be realized, I may feel differently about its chances of obtaining: I may feel bad, anxious, uncertain and so on, about them. Whatever feeling I experience will be determined by some factor other than mere hoping (e.g., by how I feel about the fact that the outcome has a certain probability of obtaining). On my account, merely observing that a person hopes or is hoping for a particular outcome says nothing about whether he is positively or negatively oriented toward the chances that the desired outcome will obtain (more on the notion of orientation in the next section).[4] The concept of hope (as something that we do) or hoping is neutral—neither positive nor negative—with respect to how a person feels about the likelihood that the outcome will be realized.

Let us consider another example. Suppose I hear on the radio that a fatal accident involving a yellow SUV with black lightning stripes has occurred near my house. Let us also assume that a friend who lives nearby drives a vehicle of the same description. As I hear the news, I immediately hope that he is not involved in the fatal crash by thinking or saying out loud "Please do not let it be him. I really hope it's not him." Moreover, I can do so with a deep and much dreaded suspicion that my friend *is* involved in the deadly crash. As such, I can hope that he is safe and simultaneously experience severe panic and anxiety. On my account, this is possible because in hoping, all I am doing is registering that I have the desire that my friend is safe. But once this desire is brought to my attention, my thoughts now turn, among other things, to its chances of obtaining, which in this case I regard as dim given the uncommon color and decal of the car involved in the accident. Hoping therefore need not be accompanied by "upbeat" and positive feelings; on the contrary, it can be filled with extreme trepidation. The way we feel about the chances that our registered desires will obtain, however, has nothing to do per se with the act of hoping. To reiterate, all hoping does, on the view that I am espousing, is make us aware that we have certain desires.

One benefit of construing hope as an act of desire registration is that doing so can clarify certain cases that have perplexed philosophers. The cases in question, which include Alan and Bess, the cancer patients mentioned above, Andy and Red from the movie *Shawshank Redemption*,[5] Meirav and his wife in the lottery case (2009, 223–24), all share a similar form: each case involves two people who are stipulated to have a desire for some outcome and a belief that the chances of the outcome's being realized are low. Yet, one of them displays a cheerful attitude toward the outcome, while the other despairs over it. In the literature on hope, these cases are considered perplexing because if hope is supposed to be constituted by having the relevant desire and belief, both people in the example, by virtue of being so constituted, should display the same attitude. The fact that they do not—that is, the fact that one hopes whereas the other does not (or has a significantly weaker hope)—supposedly shows that hope cannot be a matter of merely having the aforementioned desire and belief.

My take on these cases is that they are not in fact perplexing. If we understand hope to play only a desire-registration role, and interpret the question of what hope is in terms of what it is *to hope*, we

[4]For instance, we cannot infer "*x* is hopeful that *P*" from "*x* hopes that *P*."

[5]*Shawshank Redemption,* a 1994 film based on Stephen King's short story *Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption*, explores the role that hope (or its lack thereof) plays in the lives of Andy and Red, two convicted murderers serving life sentences. Despite the fact that both prisoners possess the same desire to escape from prison and the same belief that the chance of success is slim, only Andy entertains hopes of escaping and freedom, whereas Red, who thinks that such hoping is dangerous, experiences despair.

see that these cases actually mischaracterize the two people when they describe one person as hoping and the other as not (or as someone who hopes in a much weaker sense). In my view, both people in the above examples should be characterized as hoping for the outcome. In the case of the cancer patients, for instance, both people are stipulated to have a desire that they believe to have some chance of being realized, namely, to be cured. So long as they register this desire, they both, on my account, can be said to hope to be cured. There is no reason why Alan, the despairing cancer patient, cannot think to himself, "I hope this treatment cures my cancer"; after all, he does not want to die. But his hoping in this manner *does not* imply that he must have a positive attitude about his chances of being cured by the treatment; the act of hoping merely registers that he has a desire to be cured. However, once he realizes just how improbable it is for his desire to come true, a realization and attitude that are distinct from and beyond his mere hoping to be cured, he experiences despair. In this regard, the sense in which Alan hopes is much the same as mine from the earlier example when I hoped for my friend's safety. The fact that Alan does not feel good about the chances does not rule out the fact that he hopes for it.

By virtue of having and registering the same desire, which they believe has the same chances of being realized, both people in the above cases then can be said to hope for the same outcome. It would be a mistake to hold that one hopes while the other does not.[6] This is a welcome result, for it now accurately returns the verdict that Alan, too, hopes to be cured. To maintain otherwise would effectively be to deny a legitimate way in which we use the word *hope*: it would be to deny that Alan has a desire to be cured, which falsely characterizes his outlook. For instance, when asked, "Do you hope to be cured?" Alan plausibly will answer "of course, I do. I don't want to die." Except he would immediately follow up with, "but I don't have a good feeling about its happening," or "I don't think it will happen." Despite these despairing and hedging remarks, he nevertheless can be said, in a minimal sense, to hope to be cured. He just is not hopeful about his chances of being cured.

To be sure, there are decided differences between the two individuals in these cases. The present claim, however, is that *hoping to be cured* is not one of them. Before we explore some of these differences, an objection needs to be addressed. On my construal, Alan would be characterized as hoping and despairing at the same time, which seems to be a contradiction. How is this possible? In my view, such a characterization of Alan is not a contradiction, nor does it signal that Alan is wavering back and forth in his thinking. Alan can hope and despair simultaneously because hope (or hoping) understood in my sense is *not* the opposite of despair.[7] Rather, hoping is compatible with a person's feeling despair or, conversely, hopeful about the outcome; the former functions to register the desire whereas the latter is an attitude we hold about the chances of the outcome's obtaining. In the present context, I am using the word *despair* in the same sense as those philosophers who discuss the above perplexing cases. For instance, Meirav characterizes despair and the individuals who experience it (e.g., Red from *Shawshank Redemption* and Meirav's wife in the lottery case) as resisting and suppressing hope, not being hopeful, lacking enthusiasm,

[6]Another conclusion that we can draw is that hope *is* a matter of having the relevant desire and belief, at least when we construe hope as something that we do (i.e., what it is *to hope*). Does this mean that any theory that also contains such a desire and belief component is now made plausible as an account of what it is to hope? Not necessarily. As I remarked earlier, many contemporary theories of hope are premised on the idea that the standard account of hope is insufficient and therefore, aim to specify the missing condition required for hope (e.g., an external factor, and seeing a pathway to the outcome). Although these theories maintain that hope requires the possession of the relevant desire and belief, they also posit an additional condition that, in many cases, would falsify them as accounts of what it is to hope. Consider the earlier example in which I pick up a bag of chips and think, "I hope this flavor is good." It seems highly implausible that in order for me to hope for this outcome, I am required to believe that some external factor is working in my favor or that I see a way forward to this outcome (Meirav 2009; Kwong 2018). As I will argue later, these conditions are better thought of as pertaining to hopefulness or what it is to *have* hope.

[7]Contrast this with Milona and Stockdale (2018) and Milona (2018). For instance, Milona claims that "one cannot hope for something and despair over it at the same time" (3).

remaining unconvinced, indifferent, and skeptical (2009, 222–24).[8] On this understanding, hoping and despairing play distinct mental roles. Making this distinction—in particular, identifying and highlighting this registration sense of hope or hoping—is important. We see now that hope can be used to explain Alan's eventual despair: because he registers a desire that has a highly improbable chance of being realized, he experiences despair.[9]

Let us take stock of the argument. I have been arguing that locutions like "*x* hopes that *y*" or "*x* is hoping that *y*" bring to mind certain desires that we may have given the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Because these locutions function primarily to register such desires, they are neutral with respect to how we feel about their chances of being realized; that some desired outcome is believed to have a low probability of being realized does not necessarily determine how we feel about its chances of obtaining. Since the act of registering one's desires is distinct from how we feel about the likelihood that they will be realized, a person could then coherently say or think "I hope that *x*, but I am not hopeful that it will come about."

What these observations suggest is that hope is *not* the same thing as hopefulness.[10] More importantly, they also suggest that the concept of hopefulness, rather than hope (at least taken as a verb), is perhaps what philosophers are *really* after when they discuss the types of cases cited above. To see this, let us return to the example of the cancer patients. Instead of characterizing Bess as the only patient who hopes, which I argue mischaracterizes Alan and fails to account for his despair, we should instead describe *both* patients as hoping. In light of this new characterization, we are now in a position to locate differences between the two patients who hope to be cured: Why is Bess hopeful about being cured when the odds are so low? How does being hopeful structure and motivate Bess's life as a cancer patient? Why does Alan not feel good about the chances of being cured when he faces the same odds as Bess? Keeping hope and hopefulness distinct helps to highlight that what is ultimately at issue is how each cancer patient feels about the chances of his or her hope's obtaining and why each feels the way that he or she does. The crucial question is really one about their hopefulness (or lack thereof) and not about whether they hope or not.[11]

Distinguishing between hope and hopefulness also helps to make better sense of some other questions that are raised in the literature, such as how hope can motivate us and structure our agency, why hope is valuable, and why hope is upbeat. On the view of hope that I am espousing, there is no immediate reason to think that hope has any of the above features. Given that the

[8]Crucially, despair is *not* to be understood as hopelessness in the sense of believing "that there is no possibility at all of getting the desired object or outcome" (Govier 2011, 247). Indeed, it cannot, for the cases in question are perplexing precisely because both individuals are *stipulated* to maintain a belief that the desired outcome has some chance of being realized. Incidentally, the distinction that I am drawing in this section between hope and hopefulness can perhaps be used to motivate a further distinction between despair and hopelessness. Roughly, we experience despair when we have a negative attitude toward the chances that our hopes (qua registered desires) will be realized, and hopelessness, when we lack such desires (whether the desire for the specific outcome or such a desire without the belief that it can obtain. Recall that, on my account, to hope is to have a desire believed to have some chance of being realized). On this construal, despair would be the opposite to hopefulness, and hopelessness, to hoping. A defense of this distinction requires further elaboration and must be reserved for another occasion.

[9]The claim is *not* that Alan despairs *solely because* he sees that his desire has an improbable chance of being realized. As I discuss in the next section, other factors come into play that cause him to have a despairing attitude.

[10]It is worth pointing out that the distinction between hope and hopefulness has on occasion been noted in the literature of hope (e.g., see Milona 2018n13). The present paper is an explicit study of this underappreciated distinction and explores in detail its implications with respect to contemporary theories of and debates concerning hope. I would like to thank an anonymous referee for drawing my attention to this point.

[11]Here is another way to analyze these cases. They are thought to be perplexing because they are (a) premised on the idea that both patients supposedly hope (by virtue of having the relevant desire and belief) and yet, (b) only one of them *actually* hopes whereas the other one does not. As I have argued, these cases are not in fact perplexing for it is a mistake to maintain (b). The word *hope* used in (b) is really targeting hopefulness or having hope, which is distinct from what *hope* in (a) is targeting, namely, having a registered desire believed to have some chance of being realized. Once we recognize and distinguish these two senses of hope, we see that these cases raise meaningful questions about hopefulness: Given that both Alan and Bess hope to be cured, why is the latter hopeful while the former is not? This question, far from being perplexing, is a sensible one to ask.

function of hoping is simply to register our desires, it is not necessarily motivating, valuable, or upbeat. Some philosophers, on separate grounds, have reached similar conclusions about hope's limited role. For instance, Blöser has argued that hope does not always have motivational force: "[W]e might hope for a just society and deliberately fail to do anything to promote it, and we might even hope to pass an exam without doing our part to realize it, instead 'just hoping' for good luck" (2019, 7). Similarly, Katie Stockdale has stated that hope need not have a positive valence and, in some cases, can even be completely negative in nature (2019b). People living under oppressive or nonideal conditions, for instance, may entertain fearful hopes with an affective tone that is "*entirely* negatively valenced" (121).

Why, then, is hope thought to have such features as motivational force and positive valence? My contention here is that in many instances, what philosophers really have in mind when they talk about hope or use the word *hope* is *hopefulness*. Insofar as hopefulness is understood, at first glance, to be a positive attitude in response to certain desires that we have and their chances of obtaining, the aforementioned questions suddenly take on a new character; it now makes more sense for us to ask why being hopeful might be valuable, upbeat, and motivational, whether being hopeful about some desired outcome is rational when its chances of being realized are perceived to be extremely low, why being hopeful demands justification, and so on. This is not to say that we cannot ask the same questions about hope construed as a verb. For instance, we can reasonably ask, as some philosophers have, whether hoping (as opposed to hopefulness) might be valuable, upbeat, and motivational.[12] The present point, however, is that these latter questions have a different target than the ones I have mentioned.

As an illustration, consider whether hope has a positive valence. On the one hand, if the word *hope* takes *hoping* as its target, then the answer may well be no; as Stockdale and others have pointed out, having a desire believed to have some chance of obtaining need not be accompanied by a positive phenomenology. On the other hand, if the word *hope* has hopefulness as its target, then the answer is yes (or at least a strong maybe), for being hopeful or having a hopeful attitude is positive in nature. As another example, consider the question, "Is hope valuable?" One reading of it asks whether it is valuable to have and register desires that are believed to have some chance of obtaining. Another reading of the same question, one that now construes the word *hope* to target hopefulness, asks whether it is valuable to be hopeful. Although the answer may be yes to both readings, these questions are clearly distinct and the reasoning behind their affirmative answers will differ. What the foregoing discussion highlights is that the word *hope* is polysemous: It could mean either hoping or being hopeful.

Being Hopeful

A central thesis of this paper is to establish that, in addressing some of the questions in the current hope literature, it is more promising and fitting to discuss hopefulness as an attitude that we have, rather than hoping, as a mental act that we perform. The following account of hopefulness is merely a preliminary attempt and does not pretend to offer a necessary and sufficient definition of it.

The hopefulness with which I am concerned is an intentional state in that it is always directed at some desired outcome. For instance, my feeling hopeful that it will not rain is directed at the weather and my feeling hopeful that I will not be selected for jury duty is about not wanting to be picked for the onerous task. These outcomes need not always be specific, as people can sometimes be hopeful about outcomes that are vague in content, as when a college graduate is hopeful that he will do something meaningful with his life.[13]

[12]For instance, see Bovens's discussion of the role hope plays in love (1999), and Milona's and Stockdale's, in non-ideal social and political contexts (Milona 2018; Stockdale 2019a).

[13]This sense of hopefulness is to be contrasted with that which refers to a general rosy outlook that some people have, as when we characterize someone as having a hopeful disposition or character trait. For accounts of hopefulness in this general sense, see Matthew Ratcliffe (2013) and Cheshire Calhoun (2018).

What is it to be hopeful about some specific desired outcome? One way is that a person is hopeful about *x* when he is oriented positively toward the chances of *x*'s being realized; that is, he has, on balance, positive thoughts or feelings about the likelihood that the desired outcome will be realized. His positive orientation may consist of a favorable evaluation or judgement, or of an agreeable feeling, about its chances. For example, Mary is hopeful that her spouse will recover quickly from shoulder surgery when she feels positively about its chances of happening. Her hopefulness may be grounded in her thinking that he has recovered smoothly from previous surgeries, is generally a resilient person, and so on.

This characterization of hopefulness as a positive orientation toward a desired outcome's chances of obtaining is admittedly vague and I will shortly elaborate on it. Suffice it for now to point out that hopefulness as I understand it is to be contrasted with a person's principally negative orientation toward the chances of his desired outcome's obtaining. Thus, when a person has predominantly negative feelings and thoughts about the chances that something that he hopes for will obtain, he cannot be characterized as being hopeful. Let us return to the example of the car accident. Upon hearing the news that a car accident has occurred nearby, I immediately hope that my friend is not involved in it despite having a sense "deep down" that he most likely is. Even though I recognize that there is a possibility that my friend is not involved in the crash, I cannot help but dwell on the *other* possibility that he is hurt and entertain other dreadful thoughts. My hope, in other words, is filled with dread, worry, and trepidation. I may say or think, "I hope that my friend is not one of the drivers involved in the crash, but I don't have a good feeling about it," which, on my account, indicates that I register a desire that my friend is safe, but I am not very hopeful. In such a case, on balance, I feel bad and have negative thoughts about the chances that my desired outcome will be realized.[14]

It might be tempting to distinguish between hope and hopefulness in terms of Pettit's distinction of prosaic or superficial hopes, and substantial hopes. This would be a mistake. Prosaic hopes share some features as the expressive sense of hope: we can entertain them momentarily and doing so need not have much, if any, effect on our agency. However, Pettit's distinction fails to capture the descriptive richness that my distinction between hope and hopefulness can offer. On my view, a person could hope for a low-stakes outcome by registering that he has such a desire. Even though such a desire might be over some mundane matter and its obtainment would be inconsequential to him, it still makes sense for us to ask the *further* and *distinct* question of whether or not he is hopeful about it. How he feels about the chances of his desire's obtaining and what he desires are separate questions. These questions are conflated in Pettit's distinction. In my view, hope or hoping *is* superficial in that it only has the function of registering our desires. But superficiality in this sense is distinct from what Pettit has in mind. Similarly, a person who hopes for a high-stakes outcome (in my sense of the word) can either be hopeful or be in despair about the chances of its realization. But as I have argued above, the fact that he is not hopeful about his chances does not preclude the fact that he indeed hopes for the outcome. This distinction is needed to adequately explain cases of hoping against hope and those involving subjects having different strengths in hope, as well as the possibility of despair.

[14]It is important to emphasize that the relevant feelings and thoughts for determining whether or not someone is hopeful must be directed at the chances of the desired outcome's obtaining, and not at, say, the nature or content of the desired outcome. Consider Stockdale's example of Suzie and her hope that the man aggressively catcalling her does not assault her (2019b, 121). According to Stockdale, Suzie experiences fearful hope because she hopes for an outcome the content of which is "perceived as threatening." As such, Suzie's hope is shaped by fear, and she experiences anxiety and panic. In Stockdale's words, her hope is entirely negatively valenced (121). Notice, however, that we cannot determine from Stockdale's example alone whether Suzie is hopeful or not. No information is provided about how she feels about the chances that her hope, however fearful, will obtain. Rather, all of her negative feelings are directed at the content of the outcome for which she is hoping. The question of whether or not Suzie is hopeful about her registered desire (i.e., fearful hope) therefore remains open; her having these negative feelings about the content of her hope (which is distinct from the chances of her hope's obtaining), I am inclined to think, is compatible with her either being hopeful or not being hopeful.

Let us now return to clarify the notion of hopefulness. First, hopefulness is compatible with having some bad feelings and thoughts about the chances of a desired outcome's obtaining. My definition stipulates that the hopeful person must feel positively about these chances *on balance.* When a person hopes, especially when he is aware of a possibility that his desired outcome may not be realized, he can reasonably entertain some negative thoughts about it. Thus, Mary can occasionally wonder whether her spouse will really make a full recovery given that he is now a much older patient with other ongoing medical issues. But she does not dwell on these doubts, which quickly give way to positive feelings or thoughts she has about the chances that the outcome will obtain. Since her orientation toward these chances is more positive than negative on balance, she can be said to be hopeful. Indeed, we can assess the degree to which a person is hopeful by gauging just how positively and negatively she feels overall about the outcome's chances of being realized. Thus, someone who entertains only positive thoughts and feelings about a particular hope's chances can be characterized as extremely hopeful, whereas someone who has predominantly negative feelings or thoughts cannot be said to be very hopeful at all. Those who feel or think just slightly more positively than negatively about the outcome's chances of obtaining, or vice versa, are either barely hopeful or somewhat in despair, respectively. Or they could be neither. These cases are difficult to judge, which is exactly what we should expect given their mixed thoughts and feelings.

Second, being positively oriented toward the chances of a desired outcome's obtaining is *not* to be equated with, or necessarily premised on, thinking that the outcome has a high probability of obtaining. We naturally feel good about desired outcomes that we know have a good chance of being realized. Under such circumstances, the belief that it has a good chance of obtaining contributes to our having positive feelings and thoughts about it (e.g., I feel good about my chances *because* I stand a good chance of getting it). But the cases in which hope is most needed are ones in which we believe our desired outcome has a good chance of *not* obtaining. Nevertheless, we can still feel good or think positively about the chances of our desired outcome's obtaining *in light of this fact.*

Think of Bess, the hopeful cancer patient. Let us stipulate that she sincerely believes that the chances of the experimental drug curing her are less than 1%. The fact that her desired outcome has such a low probability of obtaining surely does not contribute to her feeling good about the drug trial. Rather, her positive feelings are grounded elsewhere in other considerations. One such consideration, which is cited by Martin, is that Bess focuses *not* on the probability but on the very *possibility* that she will be cured (2014). Bess judges the low probability to be "good enough" to license her engagement in activities associated with hope, such as imagining the desired outcome and planning a future premised on its realization. This switch in thought from probability to possibility disrupts her thoughts about imminent death and reorients her feelings toward the outcome. She now feels good on balance about the chances of her desired outcome's obtaining and therefore can be said to be hopeful. In sum, the fact that a desired outcome has a low probability of being realized does not prevent one from feeling good about the chances of its obtaining.[15]

Notice that Bess may have other reasons for feeling good about the chances of being cured of cancer. Here are two other possibilities. First, she may believe that some external factor—be it God, fate, or destiny—is looking after her interests and therefore feel good about her chances. When asked why she is hopeful, she may well reply, "God is looking out for me." Second, she may see a way to her desired outcome, however improbable it may be. Thus, she might think, "Maybe the researchers in the experimental drug trial will make an unexpected breakthrough," or "Maybe my DNA will be more receptive to the new drug." Each of these "maybes," which she recognizes to represent genuine possibilities, shows a path to the desired outcome. She feels good about her chances of beating cancer because this outcome, however unlikely, is at least not a dead end for her.

[15]Conversely, a person may be negatively oriented toward a likely outcome. He may be consumed with the thought that it may not obtain. Given that on the whole he feels bad about his chances of getting what he desires and has negative thoughts about them, he would not, on my account, be considered hopeful.

No doubt Bess may have additional reasons for feeling hopeful. Suffice it for now to note that Bess's hopefulness can be based on these reasons.

We are now in a position to point out an important implication of my account of hopefulness. Readers familiar with the literature on hope will quickly realize that the above candidate reasons correspond to some current theories of hope, namely Martin's, Meirav's and Kwong's. For instance, Meirav's view is that hope can be distinguished from despair depending on how we evaluate the external factor that ultimately realizes our resignative desires.[16] If we see this external factor as acting on behalf of our interests, then we can be said to be hopeful. By contrast, if we assess the same factor as acting against our interests, then we would have reason to despair. In the hope literature, these accounts of hope are seen to compete with one another: Meirav rejects Bovens's account due to its inability to distinguish hope from despair, and Martin rejects both of these accounts in favor of her incorporation analysis.[17] The resulting dialectic is that only one of these can be the correct account of hope: To hope is to have a positive assessment of the external factor, *or* to incorporate our desires into our scheme of ends, *or* to see a pathway to the outcome, and so on (where the "or" is used exclusively).

There is, however, an alternative way to think about these theories of hope. According to the account that I have been advocating, we see that these theories of hope are not in fact in competition with one another once we construe them not as targeting hoping but as targeting hopefulness. When we ask Bess why she feels good about the chances of being cured—that is, when we ask why she is hopeful—she could plausibly list any of the above three reasons as her justification. More important, she could also list them all as her reasons for being hopeful and be coherent in doing so. Thus, she could claim all of the following as grounds for her hopefulness: that God is looking after her interests, that she sees genuinely possible pathways to her desired outcome, and that she thinks the low probability of her desired outcome is "good enough" for her to view it as a possibility. This suggests that we should not think of Meirav, Martin, Kwong, and others as offering variant accounts of what it is to hope; instead, we should take them to be kindred accounts that tackle the distinct issue of how hopefulness is possible. Furthermore, when taken as accounts that explain why people are hopeful, these theories, far from conflicting with one another, turn out to be compatible; at the very least, no immediate reason exists as to why a person could not simultaneously hold all of the above reasons without contradiction as grounds for her hopefulness. If these theories indeed are compatible, then they collectively can yield a rather robust understanding of how hopefulness is possible (though the question "What is it to be hopeful?" remains neglected).[18] At a minimum, we now have multiple explanations concerning the conditions under which hopefulness is possible. Moreover, if these theories have *really* been targeting hopefulness all along, then their explanations of how hope has the features that it does—e.g., its rationality, value, motivational structure—can be adjusted and brought over to explain hopefulness.

[16]In the context of this discussion, it will be more accurate to characterize Meirav as saying that *hopefulness* can be distinguished from despair depending on the external factor.

[17]See also Kwong's assessment of these theories (Kwong 2018, sec. 2).

[18]It is important to distinguish between the questions "What is it to be hopeful?" and "How is hopefulness possible?" Consider an objection that can be raised against my account of hopefulness. If we take seriously my contention that some contemporary theories of hope have really been targeting hopefulness, and that hopefulness is construed as a positive orientation toward the chances of an outcome's obtaining, should we not expect these theories to include positive orientation as a constitutive condition for hope? The fact that they do not suggests that they do not have hopefulness as their target. In response to this objection, we can think of these theories as offering accounts of the conditions under which a person is hopeful, as opposed to what it means to be hopeful. Thus, given that what it means to be hopeful is to have overall good feelings or thoughts about the chances of the obtainment of the desired outcome, these theories are in turn trying to uncover the grounds on which such good feelings and thoughts are based. Thus, some answers that are hitherto available include the belief that some external factor is acting in our interests, the seeing of a way forward to the outcome, etc. If this response is on the right track, then we would not expect these theories to include positive orientation as an explanation (of why one is positively oriented).

We should take care not to overgeneralize the point. Not all current theories of hope can be reinterpreted as accounts of hopefulness. For example, Bovens's account, which states that to hope for a desired outcome, in addition to desiring it and believing that its realization is possible, is to expend energy in mental imaging what it would be like for the outcome to materialize. Although hopefulness often involves such mental imaging, Bovens's account cannot readily be viewed as an explanation of why someone would be hopeful; even people who despair (i.e., are not hopeful) can fantasize about the realization of a desired outcome. In light of this paper's distinction between hope and hopefulness, his account can be more plausibly read instead as characterizing a feature of what it is to hope *and* what it is to be hopeful (rather than the separate question as to *why* someone is hopeful): registering that one has a certain desire, which I have argued is the function of hoping, requires one to expend mental energy, as does feeling good and having positive thoughts about one's chances that the desired outcome will be realized. A similar assessment can be made about Pettit's account, which holds that hoping is a matter of adopting a cognitive resolve as if the outcome is going to obtain. This feature speaks *not* to why someone might be hopeful, but to a strategy that someone might adopt if he is already hopeful but worries that he might be too easily be swayed by "ups and downs."[19]

Even though Bovens's and Pettit's accounts are not concerned with the question of how hopefulness is possible, the effort to recognize the distinction between hope and hopefulness, and to be attentive to which of these concepts each theory is concerned with, can still yield a novel classification of current theories of hope. These theories are really addressing different issues and, in some cases, not disagreeing with one another. Thus, we see that some theorists (e.g., Bovens; Day; Stockdale) are principally concerned with what it is to hope in my sense of the word; some, with the conditions of hopefulness (e.g., Kwong; Martin; Meirav); some, with what we might do once we already are hopeful (e.g., Pettit). With respect to the question of how hopefulness is possible, there may be more consensus among theorists than previously thought.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have proposed a new framework for thinking about hope. Specifically, I have argued that a shift in focus away from locutions like "*x* hopes that" to "*x* is hopeful that" is more fruitful in tackling some of the questions and issues that philosophers have raised about hope. My proposal is that to hope is only to register a desire, and that we can hold a number of different attitudes, even despair, with respect to the chances of such a desire's obtaining. Given this role, hope may lack the features that theorists have often demanded of it, such as structuring our agency, being upbeat, and being valuable.

The more promising approach is to focus on the notion of hopefulness. A telling way to motivate the distinction between hope and hopefulness is to note that a person can coherently say "I hope that *x*, but I am not hopeful about it at all." In the above, I argued that a person is hopeful when, on balance, he feels good and has positive thoughts about the chances of his desired outcome's obtaining. Thinking of hope in terms of locutions like "*x* is hopeful that" or "*x* has hope that" makes it clear that some of the issues discussed in the hope literature are really about hopefulness. Given that hopefulness is understood to be a positive orientation toward the chances of a desired outcome's obtaining, it makes more sense now to ask how such an orientation structures our agency, whether it is rational, why it is valuable, and so on. In particular, I have noted that the question of how hopefulness is possible is revealing in that many current theories of hope, commonly held to be rivals, turn out to be compatible with one another; they are seen as competitors only if we take them to be answering the separate and distinct question of what it is

[19]Alternatively, Pettit's account could also apply to someone who is not hopeful but needs a strategy to be able to act. I would like to thank an anonymous referee for pointing this out.

to hope. We thus turn out to have quite a robust understanding of the conditions under which people are hopeful. Moreover, distinguishing hopefulness from hope helps us reclassify current theories of hope and see with more clarity which specific feature of hope or of hopefulness that is the explanatory target of each.

Plenty of questions remain unanswered, including how hopefulness might be rational, how it structures our agency, how my distinction of hope and hopefulness might map onto other locutions and uses of the word *hope*, whether there are other ways to explain what it is to be hopeful, how hoping and hopefulness are related, and so on. These questions must be reserved for a later occasion. My present aim has been to bring hopefulness into discussion and to show that it has promise in terms of how we might rethink some contemporary debates around hope.

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Jack M. C. Kwong is professor of philosophy at Appalachian State University. His main research areas lie at the intersection of philosophy of mind, epistemology, and ethics. Recent publications include "What Is Hope?" (*European Journal of Philosophy*), "Shame and Moral Autonomy" (*Ratio*), and "Is Open-Mindedness Conducive to Truth?" (*Synthese*).

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