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Hope, Solidarity, and Justice

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Abstract

This article defends an account of collective hope that arises through solidarity in the pursuit of justice. I begin by reviewing recent literature on the nature of hope. I then explore the relationship between hope and solidarity to demonstrate the ways in which solidarity can give rise to hope. I suggest that the hope born of solidarity is *collective* when it is shared by at least some others, when it is caused or strengthened by activity in a collective action setting, and when the reciprocal hopeful expressions of individual group members result in an emotional atmosphere of hope that extends across the group. In the context of social movements, collective hope emerges alongside the collective intentions and actions of the solidarity group; namely, in the pursuit of a form of social justice that inspires the movement. I then suggest that the object of collective hope born of solidarity is the guiding ideal of justice and reflect on what it might mean to hope well for justice.

Keywords: hope, collective emotion, solidarity, social justice, feminism

1. Introduction

> *In these moments of rupture, people find themselves members of a "we" that did not until then exist, at least not as an entity with agency and identity and potency; new possibilities suddenly emerge, or that old dream of a just society reemerges—and—at least for a little while—shines.*
>
> —Rebecca Solnit

My aim in this paper is to understand what it means to hope *together*, to capture the feeling of being swept up by a hope that is larger than oneself. Hope was, for example, quite central to the civil rights movement, contributing in powerful ways to the collective struggle for racial justice. More recently, the Me Too movement has inspired many women and feminist allies, renewing feminists' hope that women's humanity and rights might someday be affirmed. But what is the nature of hope in these contexts, and can it be captured by the hopes we have as individuals? When Oprah Winfrey called for hope in her acceptance speech at the 2018 Golden Globes—

declaring that a "new day is on the horizon!"—what was the hope that many felt in that moment?

I propose an account of collective hope to make sense of at least one form of hope that arises in collective struggles against oppression. I begin by reviewing some recent literature on the nature of hope. I then explore the relationship between hope and solidarity to demonstrate the ways in which solidarity can give rise to hope. I suggest that the hope born of solidarity is *collective* when it is shared by at least some others, when it is caused or strengthened by activity in a collective action setting, and when the reciprocal hopeful expressions of individual group members result in an emotional atmosphere of hope that extends across the group. In the context of social movements, I argue that collective hope emerges alongside the collective intentions and actions of the solidarity group; namely, in the pursuit of a form of social justice that inspires the movement. I then suggest that the object of collective hope born of solidarity is the guiding ideal of justice and reflect on what it might mean to hope well for justice.[1]

2. What Is Hope?

There is growing literature in philosophy on the nature and value of hope. Philosophers typically agree that hope is a paradigmatically future-oriented attitude involving at least the *desire* for an outcome and a *belief* that the outcome is possible (Downie 1963; Day 1969). This is what has become known as the standard or orthodox definition of hope (Meirav 2009; Martin 2014). But many scholars have argued that the standard account of hope as a combination of belief and desire does not quite capture the nature of our significant hopes (Bovens 1999; Pettit 2004; Meirav 2009; Martin 2014; Calhoun 2018).[2] A number of competing theories have emerged in recent decades to explain what hoping for an outcome involves beyond desire and belief. For example, Luc Bovens (1999) suggests that hope consists of "mental imaging," or conscious thoughts about what it would be like for the hoped-for

[1] Some readers might reject the possibility of there being social groups and collectives at all. My aim is not to do the metaphysics behind group ontology but to engage with those who believe that groups exist and to show how some of those groups might hope. Thanks to Barrett Emerick for urging me to be more explicit about this goal.

[2] One of the central problems is that it is possible for two people to have equivalent desires and to assign the exact same probability estimates to the desired outcome, while one person hopes and the other *despairs* (Meirav 2009). In other words, despair—that is, the opposite of hope—also involves the belief in the possibility (but not certainty) that a desired outcome will obtain. Obviously, something is missing from the belief-desire account. Emerging theories of hope attempt to resolve what that missing element is.

outcome to obtain. Adrienne M. Martin (2014) defends an account of hope as a way of seeing the possibility that a desired outcome might come about as licensing hopeful activities such as fantasizing about, planning for, and anticipating the hoped-for outcome. And Cheshire Calhoun (2018) defends the view that hope is a phenomenological idea of the future as one in which the desire constitutive of hope has been fulfilled. Although there are clear differences between these and other accounts of the nature of hope in the literature, Martin (2019) suggests that a consensus view has emerged according to which hope is an attitude that consists of the desire for an outcome, the belief that it is possible, and a positively toned "what if" attitude toward the hoped-for end.

But one might ask for a fuller characterization of this positively toned "what if" attitude characteristic of hope. My own view is that the third element of hope is a way of *seeing* or *perceiving* in a favorable light the possibility that the desired outcome obtains. Hope is thus similar to other emotions which are perceptual-like experiences of their objects. Christine Tappolet (2016) identifies key similarities between emotions and sense perceptions that can be extended to capture the crucial "what if" attitude in hope. For example, both emotions and sense perceptions are conscious states with a phenomenological character or "what it is like" experience. There is something that it is like to have the visual perception of an object as blue, just like there is something that it is like to have the experience of fear and to see something as dangerous (Tappolet 2016, 19). However, our "what it is like" experiences are not directly chosen or a result of inferences (as in active mental states like belief and judgment). Instead, we are struck by them as largely passive responses to our environments. When I walk outside, I see (through my visual perception) mountains in the distance; and when I witness a bike being stolen, I see (through my emotional experience of anger) the act as wrong. Such experiences are analogical: their content is sensitive to variations in what is perceived. When we see red objects, our visual perceptions are sensitive to fine-grained variations in redness (e.g., faint red vs. bright red). Similarly, our emotions come in variations of intensity. I might be mildly angry when a close friend forgets my birthday (seeing the act as only slightly offensive) but strongly angry when a friend says something blatantly sexist (seeing the act as strongly offensive).

When we *hope*—that is, when we see in a favorable light the possibility that a desired outcome one believes to be possible obtains—this seeing-as emotional experience can be understood as analogous to sense perception. Hope, like sense perceptions, is a conscious mental state with a phenomenological character: there is something that it is like to hope for an outcome. It is also a largely passive response to situations over which we do not have direct or immediate control (see, e.g., Solomon 1976). We *find ourselves* with hopes that we did not directly choose to have, though we can (as in the case of other emotions) attempt to acquire or abandon

hopes through focus, positive thinking exercises, confronting evidence, and so on.[3] Hope has what Elijah Chudnoff (2012) refers to as presentational phenomenology: in hoping, the situation appears a certain way to the agent (Milona and Stockdale 2018). In particular, it appears as though the hoped-for outcome might really come about. And like other emotions, hope comes in degrees of intensity: we can be mildly, moderately, or strongly hopeful. I might, for example, be only *mildly* hopeful about getting a job because of how competitive I know the job market to be, but *strongly* hopeful about receiving an offer after an interview that went very well.

Hope, then, seems to be analogous to sense perception in a manner parallel to other emotions. Hope involves seeing in a favorable light the possibility that a desired outcome obtains—a kind of nondoxastic representation of the agent's situation. But as we have begun to see, hope is also affective in character. As Peter Goldie (2004, 96) explains, "When an emotion is directed toward its object, then this is a sort of feeling toward the object." The relevant feeling is not a physiological feeling (although it may accompany physiological changes), like the feeling of one's heart pounding or the feeling of sweaty palms. Rather, it is an emotional feeling: a feeling that is directed toward an object in the world "beyond the bounds of the body," a feeling that is bound up with how we take in the world of experience (Goldie 2009, 238). And seeing in a favorable light the possibility that a significant desired outcome obtains certainly feels a certain way to the person hoping. As Margaret Urban Walker (2006, 45) argues, when we hope, "there is a sense, and it can be an actual feeling, of 'pulling for' the yet undetermined resolution one desires." Martin (2014) describes this feeling as *anticipating* the hoped-for end's obtaining.

My aim is to make sense of how the emotion of hope emerges through solidarity in agents' pursuit of a more just world.[4]

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[3] By "passive," I just mean to emphasize the ways in which hope sweeps over us similarly to fear, despair, pride, and so on. And though we can't choose our emotions in the same way that we can choose our actions, we can exercise some control over hope by engaging in activities aimed at cultivating, increasing, or paring down our hopes. See Milona and Stockdale (forthcoming) for a more in-depth discussion of hope and control.

[4] There is a further question of whether hope might also be a virtue. It is famously one of the three Christian virtues; and there is emerging interest in the question of how hope might be an intellectual, moral, democratic, and political virtue (e.g., Moellendorf 2006; Snow 2013, 2018; Milona 2020). Some philosophers have argued that there might even be a form of "existential" hope (Ratcliffe 2013) or "basal" hope (Calhoun 2018)—that is, a feeling of hope without an object. Others insist that hope is always about something, even if the hope in question takes the whole world as its object (Milona and Stockdale 2018). So there remains ongoing debate not just about

3. Solidarity and Emerging Hope

Feminists have long defended the role of solidarity in struggles against sexist oppression (e.g., hooks 1986; Mohanty 2003; Scholz 2009). There is also an emerging interest in the concept of solidarity in moral, social, and political philosophy, and in bioethics. In an increasingly complex and global world, philosophers have begun to recognize that the concepts and commitments most familiar to us—such as individual rights and autonomy—are incapable of generating adequate moral guidelines for how we should live (Sherwin 2012). In shifting focus away from the individual towards the collective, the concept of solidarity challenges us to think not just about how I should live and act but how we should live and act together. Thus solidarity, some philosophers have argued, holds promise for helping us to understand our moral obligations in addressing threats that target whole social groups—in the case of global threats such as climate change, the whole planet—and to build a better world (Jennings and Dawson 2015; Doan and Sherwin 2016; Kolers 2016; Sherwin and Stockdale 2017).

Scholars have distinguished between many different kinds of solidarity including feminist solidarity, Black solidarity, and other forms of race-based solidarity (hooks 1986; Mohanty 2003; Shelby 2005; Blum 2007; Scholz 2009). I want to focus on what I think of as *moral-political solidarity*, namely, solidarity based in a shared moral vision carried out through political action. Within moral-political solidarity, there will certainly be what Sally Scholz (2008) refers to as social solidarity: solidarity based on common experiences and identities, such as women's common experience of sexism in a patriarchal society. This form of solidarity brings people together based on their membership in the same social group, and a shared sense of identity that includes "cultural forms, practices, or ways of life" (Young 1991, 43). There is, for example, social solidarity amongst women, Black people, and Indigenous people who find themselves in solidarity with others based on their shared social location. But it is not only members of oppressed social groups who share a moral vision for the elimination of their oppression, and who undertake political actions to eliminate it. People from many different backgrounds voluntarily join in solidarity with others against sexism, racism, colonialism, and other forms of oppression. I want to understand the relationship between hope and this form of moral-political solidarity as it brings people together across difference, united not always by shared experiences or identities but by their sense of what has to be done together in the pursuit of justice.

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the nature of hope and how to characterize various kinds of hope, but also about hope's value to our moral, social, and political lives. I set some of these questions aside to focus on developing an account of one form of collective hope.

Scholz (2008, 81) explores the role of hope in solidarity in her *Political Solidarity*, arguing that "hope is the only necessary feeling for political solidarity." She says:

> Political solidarity is primarily a movement of social change. . . . Hope means that they believe the future can be better than the present. The moral sentiment of hope motivates activity within solidarity because it fosters the desire for the final ends or goals . . . of political solidarity. (81–82)

It is not exactly clear how hope might be necessary for solidarity. One interpretation is that hope is necessary for moral motivation to join in solidarity. As Scholz suggests, "Without [hope] there would be no reason to act collectively" (82). It is certainly right that hope *can* motivate people to come together in solidarity against injustice. But it is also the case that the beginnings of a solidarity movement are evidence not of hope for some participants but rather its loss or absence. For example, the emergence of solidarity and corresponding resistance efforts can reveal a loss or absence of hope that traditional means of realizing moral and political goals—such as government and law enforcement—will pull through. As journalist and activist Sarah Jaffe (2018) writes in the context of the Me Too movement:

> Perhaps one of the deepest assumptions of the #MeToo movement is that the society we live in provides us no real options for justice. The court system does not work for survivors and HR is a tool of the boss. The tools we need do not exist yet, so we must build from the ground up.

So hope in the court system, for example, is *lost*. Yet it seems that social movements like Me Too can themselves create or restore hope for those of us who might otherwise find ourselves in despair. Hope can, in other words, be *produced* by solidarity.

The hope born of solidarity begins with the recognition that there exist other people who are committed to standing by oneself against injustice. We can learn about this form of hope from testimony of those who join in solidarity movements. For example, Rita Wong, Canadian writer and environmental activist, recounts finding hope through participating in the Healing Walk in Alberta's tar sands. She says:

> On my own, I think I would have shrunk down into despair or numbed myself because I felt incapable of addressing the huge, overwhelming scale of the destruction. Yet, on this walk, the sick feeling co-exists with

> a quietly hopeful one, invoked by the efforts of my co-walkers, as well as the many people we know who cannot make the journey to Fort McMurray, the epicentre of tar sands extraction in Northern Alberta, but who ask us to carry their wishes and prayers for the healing of the land with us. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015, 103)

Wong's testimony of the "overwhelming scale of destruction" captures the threat to hope that Indigenous and environmental activists face as they challenge powerful institutions to fight for Indigenous lands and waters and for the health of the whole planet. But Wong's testimony also embodies a renewed hope that arose through solidarity. Wong found hope in the recognition that her co-walkers share her moral vision for a healthy planet on which Indigenous lands and waters are protected from environmental damage, and that they, too, are ready to stand with her in opposition to the people and institutions standing in the way of this shared vision. Similarly, Patrisse Cullors, one of the founders of Black Lives Matter, explained that Black Lives Matter seeks to "provide hope and inspiration for collective action to build collective power to achieve collective transformation, rooted in grief and rage but pointed towards vision and dreams" (Solnit 2016, xiv).

These examples suggest that there is a way to collectively *recover* hope, for those of us who might be struggling to find hope on our own. As Victoria McGeer (2004, 122) suggests, "Recovering hope depends on discovering some new way of relating to others, specifically a way that recognizes the interdependence of the self and other in generating the best confidence for keeping hope alive." Perhaps the hope that is generated through solidarity manifests, at times, as an existential or basal emotion—a felt sense of hope without an object (Ratcliffe 2013; Calhoun 2018). But I think that the hope born of solidarity is often a renewed or strengthened hope *for* some form of justice. It is a kind of collective hope for justice.

4. Collective Hope

What exactly does it mean for a hope to be collective? I begin with the intuition that there seems to be something fundamentally different between hoping for one's own happiness alongside others who share the hope for happiness and hoping for gender justice as part of the Me Too movement alongside others who share the hope for gender justice. In the happiness case, it would seem odd to construe the hope as a *collective* hope even though most of us, as human beings, hope for happiness. Each of us who hopes for happiness constitute an *aggregate* in virtue of this attribute—namely, that we each hope for happiness (see Young 1991, 43). In other words, we share the hope for happiness in the minimal sense of hoping for the

same outcome.[5] But the hope of the Me Too movement is different. It seems to belong not to each individual who hopes for gender justice, but to a collective: women and feminist allies who share in the hope of the movement.

There are at least two routes to take in order to make sense of the hope of the Me Too movement. The first is to argue that the hope is an aggregate of and reducible to the hopes of individuals, and the second is to argue that there is a kind of hope—collective hope—that is appropriately ascribed to the *movement* or to the solidarity group.[6] I want to take the second route and propose an account of collective hope. I argue that collective hope often emerges alongside a collective intention of the solidarity group; namely, an intention to pursue the form of justice that inspires the movement. As we will see, the reductivist about collective hope faces the challenge of capturing the phenomenology of collective hope—a felt experience of hope which is quite different from the phenomenology of standard individual hopes.

I have suggested that hope involves seeing or perceiving in a favorable light the possibility that a desired outcome obtains. Building from this understanding of hope, hope becomes collective when the following conditions are met:

> (1) The hope is shared by at least some others;
> (2) The favorable perception of the possibility that the desired outcome might obtain, and corresponding hopeful feelings, is caused (or is strengthened) by activity in a collective action setting; and
> (3) The reciprocal hopeful expressions of individual group members result in an emotional atmosphere of hope that extends across the collective.

The first condition is relatively straightforward: in order to have collective hope, or any genuinely collective emotion, the emotion must be experienced by more than one person. (I say more about what it means to "share" a hope below.) The second condition captures the causal and dependency relations between the group and the hope: the hope is caused or strengthened by a collective action setting and depends

[5] This is not to say that shared hopes are not often powerful. The shared hope to find a vaccine for the novel coronavirus of 2019, for example, is a hope that almost all people in our world share at the time of writing. It can motivate actions in the pursuit of a vaccine (for those of us who can affect the outcome), and it can help to sustain at least some of us through a profoundly difficult time.

[6] I use "solidarity group," "movement," and "collective" interchangeably to include members of the relevant oppressed group and their allies. I acknowledge that there is much more to say about who is a member of these collectives and who counts as an "ally."

upon collective activity for its existence. For example, a woman might have very little hope about women's rights, and she might participate in a protest out of anger and a strong sense of justice despite seeing no instrumental reasons for doing so. But joining a group of women and allies coming together at a march, perhaps to take action on sexual violence against women and to promote women's reproductive rights, might cause the woman to feel a sense of hope for women's rights, seeing the possibility of gender justice in a more favorable light in that moment than she otherwise would.

The second and third conditions capture the difference between hoping for one's own happiness alongside others who also hope for happiness and hoping for gender justice as part of a solidarity movement. In the former case, I see in a favorable light the possibility of achieving my own happiness. Although other people (e.g., my loved ones) might also see the possibility of my attaining happiness favorably, there is no group formed around the goal of achieving my happiness. When I hope for gender justice alongside others in a collective action setting, in contrast, the hope belongs to the group whose goal is to achieve justice for women and whose members intend to pursue the outcome *as* a group. The hope is part of a collective rather than the possession of multiple individuals who happen to share the same hope.[7]

But understanding how, exactly, hope emerges at the level of a collective requires a deeper understanding of the collective itself. Philosophers interested in collective activity have explored the ways in which collectives might have beliefs, intentions, and actions, and—more recently—emotions of their own. I suggest that collective hope born of solidarity emerges from the joint commitments and actions of the solidarity group. To borrow from Margaret Gilbert (2002, 125): "A population *P* has a collective intention to do *A* if and only if members of *P are jointly committed* to intending *as a body* to do *A*." For example, I might be personally committed to gender justice. But if I express a readiness (verbally or through other behavior) to commit alongside others to gender justice, I contribute to the formation of a joint commitment to pursue gender justice. Joint commitments cannot be broken down into each individual's personal commitment, since they arise from individuals

[7] This is certainly not the only potential form of collective hope, and there are even cases in which a group *is* formed around the goal of achieving another person's happiness or wellbeing. For example, patients in psychiatric facilities often have a team of health-care providers assigned to their case: physicians, psychologists, social workers, nurses, and so on. Since the team of health-care providers makes up a collective formed around a common goal—namely, to improve the patient's wellbeing—they might share in a collective hope to improve the patient's wellbeing. In this paper, I remain focused on cases of collective hope that arise through solidarity. But there are other potential cases of collective hope that are interesting and important too.

together determining what they intend, as a group, to do. Consequently, I might be jointly committed to intending to do *A* as part of a body without a personal commitment to intending to do *A*. I might, for example, be jointly committed to pursuing gender justice as part of the Me Too movement even if I have no personal commitment to pursuing gender justice on my own. (Perhaps I judge that such a pursuit would be futile.)

Social movements have their own goals and intentions, which direct the activities of the collective.[8] And it is not difficult to find out about the goals, intentions, and actions of social movements currently at work; this information is readily available on official websites and social media pages through "missions" and "vision statements." On the Me Too website, we find that the Me Too vision is, broadly, justice for women with respect to holding perpetrators of sexual violence accountable for their actions. Within this broad goal, the focus is primarily on helping survivors (especially young women of color from low-income communities). As the movement has grown, this vision has broadened: "What started as local grassroots work has expanded to reach a global community of survivors from all walks of life" (Me Too, n.d.). The vision states:

> Our goal is also to reframe and expand the global conversation around sexual violence to speak to the needs of a broader spectrum of survivors. Young people, queer, trans, and disabled folks, Black women and girls, and all communities of color. We want perpetrators to be held accountable, and we want strategies implemented to sustain long term, systemic change. (Me Too, n.d.)

These goals and priorities ("*our* goal," "*we* want") belong to the group itself, not just any one individual desiring, intending, or acting alone. Although Tarana Burke as an individual founded the Me Too movement in 2006, and thus her personal intention to pursue social justice with respect to sexual violence against women has certainly helped to shape the movement, Me Too is essentially a collective endeavor. It is a product of individuals coming together and negotiating the movement's goals, intentions, and priorities, and how the group will pursue its ends.

But the joint commitment to intend to pursue gender justice as part of the Me Too movement will not necessarily secure the outcome; it is quite possible that the collective intentions and actions of the group will fail. Thus, individuals who are jointly committed to pursuing gender justice as part of the collective might form the hope

[8] As bell hooks (1986, 138) explains, "To experience solidarity, we must have a community of interests, shared beliefs and goals around which to unite, to build Sisterhood. . . . Solidarity requires sustained, ongoing commitment."

that their efforts will be successful. Of course, they might hope in the standard individual sense (as when a bystander hopes that the Me Too movement succeeds in its aims) or as a member of the group (as when I form the group-based hope *as a woman* that the Me Too movement succeeds in its aims). But they might also hope in the collective sense: desiring gender justice; believing that success in securing the outcome is possible but not certain; and seeing in a favorable light (or more favorable light) the possibility of achieving gender justice, with new or strengthened hopeful feelings, through participating in the collective actions of the solidarity group. Importantly, one might not have an individual or group-based hope yet share in the collective hope. A male ally might not be hopeful about achieving gender justice on his own, and I might not be hopeful (as a woman) that sexist oppression will ever be eliminated. But when the ally and I jointly commit alongside others to pursue gender justice as part of the movement, and when we show up in a collective action setting, we might find ourselves sharing in a collective hope for gender justice.[9]

But what, exactly, does it mean to share in a collective hope? I suggest that sharing or participating in a collective hope is phenomenologically different from both individual hopes *and* shared hopes in the minimal sense of hoping for the same thing as others (e.g., as in the hope for happiness).[10] In the individual and minimally shared cases of hope, hope is an affective state that feels like something for the individual who hopes. But the affective character of collective hope episodes—how, exactly, collective hope is experienced—is different. Seeing in a favorable light the possibility that *our* (those of us here, in this moment) desired end might be attained feels differently from seeing in a favorable light the possibility that *my* desired end might be attained. New research in the philosophy of mind supports this hypothesis. For example, Joel Krueger (2014) discusses the possibility of what he calls environmentally extended emotions: emotions that are extended beyond an agent's

[9] Gilbert (2014) discusses another way in which her theory of collective intention might make sense of collective emotions. She argues that collective emotions are emotions to which group members are jointly committed. I think this view requires too strong of an endorsement of one's emotion. I might not be committed to hope, though in jointly committing to an end and participating alongside others in a collective action setting, I might find myself swept up in a collective hope that we will succeed. Collective hope, on my view, is an affective state that is appropriately ascribed to groups. It is not a joint commitment to experiencing the emotion itself.

[10] I imagine that two individuals sharing a hope might also have a phenomenological character distinct from that of individual hopes; for example, pair figure skaters' hope that they (together) will win nationals might have a phenomenological feel distinct from a solo skater's hope that they win nationals. I set these interesting cases aside to focus on hopes born of solidarity.

body in such a way that the emotion itself is constituted by factors external to the agent. Krueger uses the example of environmentally extended emotions through music. Emotions become environmentally extended through music in the sense that the listener "integrates with musical dynamics in a reciprocal, mutually-modulatory way"; or in other words, that what the listener hears determines how he responds by way of the emotions, and those responses shape what the listener hears, which then informs further responses (Krueger 2014, 544). Krueger argues that emotions might become collectively environmentally extended when they are shared by two or more individuals. As he puts it: "The emotion is something that emerges over time as a group-level trait; it extends across the various individuals making up the group" (536). For example, at a funeral, the subdued nature of funeral music combined with the presence of other people grieving results in a collective experience of grief which shapes the character of grief for individuals. The dynamic results in an emotional convergence between them: when others react (for example, when they cry), one feels one's own responses align with the emotional responses of others nearby (Krueger 2014).

I want to suggest that emotional convergence between individuals is what results in a *sharing* of hope that goes beyond hoping for the same outcome. As Dario Páez and Bernard Rimé (2014, 207) explain, individuals' gestures, movements, speech, and so on result in "an atmosphere of emotion and fervor" which transforms individual emotional feelings into shared emotional feelings. These shared emotional feelings, along with the experience of being in community with other people, combine in such a way that "participants evolve to a sense of group membership" and "experience the 'we' in place of the 'I'" (207). For example, in listening to a feminist activist's speech in a room full of supporters, the speech (including the content of words spoken, tone, and volume of voice) as well as the presence of others passionately listening (their facial expressions, verbal responses, and body language) shapes how individuals perceive and feel, including by way of their emotions. They come to see in a favorable light the possibility of the desired outcome's obtaining, often more intensely than they otherwise would, with new or strengthened feelings of hopefulness. Their hopeful expressions (e.g., smiling, nodding, cheering) then feed back into the group, enhancing the hopeful feelings of others. The result is emotional convergence, a shared feeling of hope, which transforms the sense that "I am hoping" into the sense that "we are hoping *together*." Individuals become aware of a hope that stretches beyond all of them, a hope in which each person can share but which belongs to the "we" that has formed in this moment.

This is not to say that how collective hope feels is equivalent amongst members of the collective. The collective "we" notably includes people who occupy different social locations which affect how they emotionally experience the world, and consequently how they hope (Stockdale 2019). For example, Indigenous women

and white women may collectively hope for gender justice, yet how they experience collective hope in response to an Indigenous woman's powerful call to action at a rally will likely vary. Hope is relational, even at the collective level. This is consistent with the existence of a collective hope for gender justice in which all participants who are jointly committed to gender justice can participate. Just like each person's actions as part of a collective action depend upon who they are in relation to others and to the cause, so too each participant's emotional experience as part of a collective hope depends upon who they are in relation to others and to the cause.[11]

I have argued that the collective hope born of solidarity thus emerges from shared experiences of hope between members of a collective who are acting together in the pursuit of justice. These reflections suggest that there are good reasons to think that a form of collective hope emerges in social movements when individuals come together in solidarity. I have argued that collective hope emerges alongside the collective intentions and actions of a solidarity group, and that collective hope is phenomenologically different from individual hope. I suspect that what is "collective" about collective hope, or what is not easily reducible to the hopes of individuals, is the phenomenological character of the emotion. Although it is felt and experienced by individuals, the hope extends beyond them *in* and *through* the collective, resulting in an emotional atmosphere of hope that is appropriately ascribed to the collective itself.[12] Research in philosophy and the social sciences on "emotional convergence" and "emotional atmosphere" helps to illustrate how collective hope emerges, paving the way for new and insightful ways of understanding collective emotional phenomena in solidarity movements. But there remains much room for debate about how to best characterize collective hope and how collective hope might manifest differently in different contexts. My aim has been quite modest: to provide a starting point for theorizing one form of collective hope in the pursuit of justice.

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[11] This feature of the account of collective hope I am offering weakens the sense in which hope can be collective, since collective hope does not require each individual to feel the exact same thing. But I suspect that those who insist on a theory of collective hope (and other emotions) that explains how each person feels the exact same thing will end up with skepticism about the possibility of collective hope and other emotions altogether. It's my view that a theory of collective hope should accommodate rather than explain away variation in emotional experiences based on personal and social difference.

[12] As Bennett Helm (2014, 47) suggests, "The idea is not that the group itself has a mind and mental states in exactly the same way as individuals do; rather, it is that there is a phenomenon at the level of the group that can properly be understood to be an emotional phenomenon and that is irreducible to the states of mind of the individual group members."

But what is the *object* of collective hope? Solnit suggests that the "old dream of a just society" emerges in these moments of rupture, moments in which individuals find themselves as part of a "we" through which new possibilities emerge. The emergence of collective hope born of solidarity thus raises the question of how we might hope *well* for justice. For some of us, our hopes for justice are modest, as we hope for small victories that will improve the world for the better, however slightly and however long those improvements last. For others, their hopes for justice are ambitious; and some people even sustain hope for justice itself. I want to suggest that these two ways of hoping for justice, what I call modest hope and utopian hope, are ways in which we can individually and collectively hope well for justice.

5. Hoping Well for Justice

When we hope for racial justice, the elimination of sexist oppression, and a world in which all people have the income and resources they need to live a good life, we are hoping for outcomes that would contribute to the collective project of achieving that dream of a just society: a state in which there would be no more moral work left to do but to maintain the end we have reached. The *utopian* hope for complete justice is thus a hope whose realization would radically transform the world such that a moral ideal of complete justice (hereafter, justice), the object of hope, is obtained. Although I wish to remain neutral about what theory of justice is correct, if any, I understand the utopian hope for justice as a hope to achieve the moral ideal of justice.[13]

As Luc Bovens (1999, 674n4) aptly puts it in his discussion of the value of individuals' hopes, it is "notoriously difficult to make sense of utopian hopes." The difficulty is that, for some people, the utopian hope for justice functions as a guiding ideal that directs their more modest hopes, but it is itself *not really a hope*. In other words, some agents appeal to the moral ideal of "justice" to form hopes the realization of which would constitute progress toward the ideal, even if they do not

[13] We might reasonably rule out some utopian hopes, such as the hope that "America will be made great again," where "greatness" seems to refer to a history of colonialism, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of oppression envisioned in some sort of utopian American future. We might also rule out utopian hopes that are unrealistic, such as the utopian hope to live in a world of only altruists (see Howard 2019, 300). Although there is much more to say about the nature of and justification for particular utopian hopes, I limit my focus to utopian hopes for justice where the conception of justice envisioned does not clearly miss the mark, about both what is just and what is possible. I don't suppose most agents who hope for justice have a well-worked-out theory of justice either, though they might still testify to having the hope for justice, nonetheless. And their expressions of hope are genuine.

hope that we will ever reach the ideal in reality. For example, one might hope to prevent the construction of a pipeline that will be detrimental to Indigenous lands, waters, and health; and the hope to prevent the pipeline from being built is part of the hope for environmental justice. The hope for environmental justice is, then, part of the hope *for justice*. But not everyone who has the first hope has the second; and not everyone who has the first and second hopes has the third. It is possible to hope to prevent a pipeline from being built while having *no* hope that environmental justice, and (by implication) justice, will ever be attained.

We can see these different hopes for justice at work in collective action settings too. Some people might show up at a rally for environmental justice inspired by a recent approval for a pipeline to be built, participating in the collective intention to prevent the pipeline to protect Indigenous lands, waters, and health. We can imagine some participants attending the rally out of a sense of duty, even if they have no hope that collective efforts to prevent the pipeline from being built will be successful.[14] Others might participate out of the modest hope that environmental activists might prevent this *one* pipeline from being built, without hope that environmental justice will ever be attained. But even these participants who are unhopeful about the possibility of environmental justice itself, as individuals, might find themselves sharing in a collective hope for environmental justice. As they listen to powerful and inspiring speeches from Indigenous Water Protectors, read signs that say, "We Demand Environmental Justice!" and witness the hopeful verbal and behavioral expressions of others, they might find themselves swept up in the collective hope for environmental justice, perhaps even seeing in a favorable light the possibility of *justice itself*.

But what lessons can we learn from these collective experiences of hope? When the collective diffuses and we retreat to our homes and everyday lives, which of the above hopes should we attempt to sustain and pursue? Feminist scholar and activist Rebecca Solnit (2016) defends hoping only for small victories, not justice as a moral ideal. As she says: "This is Earth. It will never be heaven. There will always be cruelty, always be violence, always be destruction. . . . We cannot eliminate all devastation for all time, but we can reduce it, outlaw it, undermine its sources and foundations: these are victories. A better world, yes; a perfect world, never" (Solnit 2016, 78). So although the dream of a just society emerges at various moments in the form of collective hope, we can only reasonably sustain hope to achieve small victories, without judging that the realization of these hopes for small victories would

[14] See Tessman (2009), Stockdale (2017), and Norlock (2019) for discussion of agents who persist in their moral and political struggles without hope that their efforts will be successful.

constitute a step closer to realizing some moral ideal of justice in our not-yet-foreseeable collective future.

Similarly, Kathryn Norlock (2019, 11) suggests that evil and suffering will never be eliminated and argues that "there is no reason to believe that the future will be one in which evils cease to be." Although human beings are capable of changing for the better, their ability to do so is outmatched by the seriousness of the problems facing humanity. We are also *essentially* imperfect, according to Norlock. So the utopian hope for justice, which requires us to believe that achieving a moral ideal is possible, is not justified. It entails a mistaken understanding of what it means to be human. But this unhopeful stance toward the possibility of attaining justice itself is nevertheless compatible with forming and pursuing more modest hopes, hopes that are even guided by the moral ideal Norlock believes is impossible to attain. We can, she points out, engage in efforts aimed at constructing just institutions even if "our efforts may be inadequate, or undone, or not sustained after we die" (15). And Norlock rejects the charge that she is advocating for a Sisyphean existence, for moral agents to continue rolling a ball up a hill only to have it topple back down, over and over, for eternity. On Norlock's view, there is no hill; and "directional metaphors" are bound up with our wishful thinking that moral progress has an endpoint that we can reach if we just continue on in our moral and political struggles (16). We ought to, instead, just *do our best*, reveling in other goods of life including activism, recreation, and loving relationships as we navigate the necessarily imperfect world we share.

I share these feminist scholars' unhopeful stance toward the possibility of achieving complete justice some day in the future. I suspect many others will share this perspective, unable to see in a favorable light the possibility of obtaining justice in the future, even slightly, and unable to feel hopeful anticipation in thinking about a future state of the world that is just. Like Solnit and Norlock, such people might not feel pulled by the need to hope for justice itself; they might, instead, be motivated to pursue justice by pursuing the mitigation of *in*justice. And I think that this is one way of hoping well for justice. But I want to make room for utopian hopers: those who really do believe in moral progress and who continue to hope that we might someday succeed in living in a just world. Utopian hopers, too, can hope for justice well.

Utopian hopers desire justice, believe that justice is possible, see in a favorable light the possibility of attaining justice (perhaps pointing to moral improvements and advancements toward the ideal), and feel hopeful about the possibility of achieving justice in the future. The cynics among us might be inclined to reject the idea that the utopian hope for justice can be a reasonable hope to have: they might judge that the moral ideal is *nowhere* within reach and hoping for justice itself can be a distraction from the concrete, real-world actions we need to take to mitigate injustice in the here and now. But importantly, it might be morally valuable for people to form hopes related to their moral projects, even when those projects are wildly ambitious,

perhaps even doomed to fail. An agent's strong hope that sexist oppression will be eliminated in one's lifetime might be a morally praiseworthy attitude because of what it reveals about the agent's moral character, even if it is unfitting to hope for this outcome given the evidence available. The agent might hope well by preserving the hope that sexist oppression will end, just not in our lifetime. This revised hope is an example of what Michael Milona (2019) calls *patient hope*: a hope for an outcome in the very distant future, one which orients attention and action toward what one can do to make incremental progress toward the hoped-for end.

The revised hope, the hope that sexist oppression will someday end, might then be part of the hope for justice; and we can run the same argument to defend the hope for justice. Interestingly, too, it is difficult to criticize the hope for justice as a moral ideal. It is certainly fitting to see justice as desirable and the possibility that justice might someday be attained in a favorable light, individually and collectively, given the vagueness of the "someday" represented in the hope. It even seems fitting to be strongly hopeful about the possibility that all forms of oppression will eventually end and that justice "will someday prevail." When we have this hope, the "someday" referred to is so far into the future that it is barely even foreseeable—a faint, abstract future that is indeterminate. The utopian hope for justice is vague, open, and inarticulate; and this is precisely what makes criticizing it so difficult. It reaches for a moral ideal that we have never seen obtained before; and it might, then, be bound up with faith.[15] For example, in hoping that justice "will someday prevail," one might have faith in humanity, appealing to one's faith in human beings as justification for continuing to hope.[16]

More specifically, we might have faith in humanity that supports our belief in humanity's "goodness" in the Rawlsian sense of the term. To say that human nature is good, for Rawls (1999, 7) "is to say that citizens who grow up under reasonable and just institutions . . . will affirm those institutions and act to make sure their social world endures." And reflection on the contingency of historical evils and in the goodness of human nature demonstrates that "we must not allow these great evils of the past and present to undermine our hope for the future" (22). Rawls thus believes that a future just society is a realistic possibility for which we can reasonably hope.

[15] Martin (2014) argues that faith is hope for an unimaginable outcome whose nature and goodness would transcend our own ability to understand it. Through such faith, the agent adopts a kind of metaconfidence that nothing she experiences can give her reason to abandon that hope. See Stockdale (2021) for further discussion of the relationship between faith and hope in struggles against oppression.

[16] See Ryan Preston-Roedder (2013) for discussion of faith in humanity and Valerie Tiberius (2008, 137–156) for a similar defense of the virtue of optimism about human nature.

And in arguing that a just society "could and may exist," Rawls notices that justice is physically possible (that is, consistent with the natural order of how human beings are and how they might be) as well as possible for *our* future world—a world in which historical and current injustices continue to affect us (Howard 2019, 299–300). Inspired by Kant, Rawls's hope for justice rests on a kind of faith beyond what we see in the world right now, faith that might vindicate the hope for justice.

So we might faithfully hope well by recognizing that the utopian hope is not (right now) within reach, and thus attempt to form hopes toward the moral ideal that are more clearly in view. The hopeful agent might, in other words, shift the target of the utopian not-yet-graspable hope to more concrete, realistic outcomes the obtaining of which would make progress toward justice. For example, one might hope for gender justice as part of one's hope for justice by forming the less ambitious hopes for equal pay for equal work, an effective plan to implement recommendations to end the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women (as in Canada at the time of writing), and increased government support for reproductive rights. Or they might find themselves sharing in a collective hope for *gender justice itself* while remaining mindful of the obstacles we must collectively encounter before the hope born of solidarity can be realized.

Rawls seems to think that reasonable people are required to maintain the utopian hope for a just future, since doing so guards against feelings of futility and diminished moral motivation. But the claim that hope is required for moral motivation is too strong. People can be motivated to continue on in their moral and political struggles without hope that their efforts will be successful (Tessman 2009; Stockdale 2017). And as Solnit and Norlock teach us, people can also hope well for justice by hoping for small victories that will diminish harm and improve people's lives in the here and now—even if they have no hope in the attainability of justice itself.

I see both Rawls on the one hand, and Solnit and Norlock on the other, as taking two different but equally permissible stances toward the future. As long as the agent who hopes only for small victories does not lose her commitment and motivation to continue striving to attain her moral ends, she is justified in pursuing modest hopes while remaining hopeless about the possibility of achieving complete justice. And as long as the agent who hopes that justice "will someday prevail" has, as Rawls does, rational beliefs about the magnitude and severity of evil, suffering, and injustice in the world right now, they are justified in their ambitious hope. What is important is that the object of hope, or the guiding ideal—the elimination of all forms of injustice in the world—structures and guides individual and collective action; and that we do not lose sight of where we have been, how things are now, and where we need to go.

6. Conclusion

I have argued that, through solidarity, a new form of hope can emerge: a collective hope born of solidarity. In this form of collective hope, individuals' hopeful feelings converge with the emotional feelings of others, producing an emotional atmosphere of hope which transforms the experience of "I am hoping" into an experience of "*we* are hoping *as a group*." The object of the collective hope of solidarity is, I have argued, justice as a guiding ideal—often a particular form of social justice attached to the "vision" of a social movement. Members of a solidarity group jointly commit to pursuing a form of justice together, and in seeing that success in securing their goals is possible but not certain, they often form the hope—individually and collectively—that they will succeed. The hope born of solidarity thus raises the question of how we might hope well for justice. I have argued that, whether we ultimately sustain hope for justice itself ("utopian hope"), or whether we sustain hope only for small victories that might fade away as injustices under oppressive conditions take new shapes and forms ("modest hope"), both can be ways in which we can together hope well for justice.[17]

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