THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE FUTURE OF HOPE: ON CLIMATE INACTION AND MORAL AGENCY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

WILLA SWENSON-LENGYEL

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 2018

In memory of my father, Jerome,
for whom the life of the mind
and life in the world
were equally vital
for a life well lived.

May this work be an exercise in loving both.

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ..... **vi**

CHAPTER 1/A TAXONOMY OF INACTION **1**

1. A COMMON TAXONOMY 6
   1.a Ignorance 7
   1.b Theoretical Denial 12
   1.c External Constraints on Action 15
   1.d Internal Psychological Constraints 18
   1.e Moral Failure 20
2. PORTRAITS OF AGENCY 23
3. HOPE, INACTION, AND CLIMATE CHANGE 27
   3.a A Note on Methodology 30

CHAPTER 2/WHAT IS HOPE? **39**

1. DESIRE 43
2. COGNITION 44
   2.a Forms of Uncertainty 51
3. EVALUATION 59
   3.a The Good 60
   3.b The Valuable 63
   3.c Not Immoral 65
4. VOLITION 69
   4.a Actions and Emotions 75
5. CONCEPTIONS OF THE WORLD 79
6. CONCLUSION 84

CHAPTER 3/HOPE AND MORAL AGENCY **87**

1. MORAL AGENCY 88
2. HOPE RELATED ACTIVITIES AND MORAL AGENCY 90
   2.a Moral Motivation 90
   2.b Moral Reflection and Development 92
   2.c Virtue 95
   2.d Conclusion 97
3. INTEGRAL DEPENDENCIES 98
   3.a Hope and Agency 98
      3.a.i Other positions 113
      3.a.ii The Stoic Rebuttal 120
   3.b Hope in Morality 123
4. CONCLUSION: HUMAN AS HOPER 135

CHAPTER 4/HOPE AND CLIMATE CHANGE **137**

1. PRESSURES TO HOPE 140

1.a Cognitive Pressure 141
1.a.i Opacity 145
1.a.ii Totality 153
1.a.iii Continual Change 155
1.a.iv Hope and Climate Change 157
1.b Evaluative Pressure 163
1.b.i Trivialization 163
1.b.ii Moralization 167
1.c. Conclusion 170
2. MORAL AGENCY AND INACTION 170
3. POTENTIAL LOSSES 177
4. HOPE NEEDED 179
5. CONCLUSION: APORIA OF HOPE 185

CHAPTER 5/CHRISTIAN HOPING 187

1. CHRISTIAN RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE: SOME DIFFICULTIES 189
2. OVERCOMING PRACTICAL DENIAL 198
2.a Grief and Lament 201
2.b Whence? 204
2.b.i Lamenting our Sin 205
2.b.ii Lamenting to God 209
2.c Lament and Hope 215
3. OVERCOMING PARALYSIS 217
3.a Vocation and the Content of Hope 219
3.a.i Trivialization and Hoping 219
3.a.ii Moralization and Hoping 225
3.a.iii Vocational Reclamation of Hopes 229
3.b Courage and the Capacity of Hoping 231
3.b.i Learning to hope on less 232
3.b.ii Lament, the cross, and hope 236
4. CONCLUSION: VOCATIONAL, COURAGEOUS HOPE AND CLIMATE CHANGE 243

EPILOGUE 247

BIBLIOGRAPHY 252

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have been supported and guided by many people over the course of writing this dissertation, and I am immensely grateful for it. Thank you to my adviser, William Schweiker, who has provided extensive guidance and structure in the writing of this manuscript, as well as to my committee members, Kevin Hector and Lisa Sideris, both of whom have been careful and kind readers and interlocuters. Their influence on the shape and content of this dissertation has been considerable and the work is that much the better for it. My dissertation was also built upon the foundations laid by other mentors and advisers, including Sarah Fredericks, Chris Gamwell, Willemien Otten, Gene Outka, Edmund Santurri, and Fred Simmons. Their training and guidance have been essential to my education and I continue to learn from their insights.

I am also indebted to Professor Schweiker's dissertation reading group and the colleagues who have read and engaged drafts of my work, especially David Barr, John Buchmann, Kristel Clayville, Josh Daniel, Andrew Decort, Darryl Ferguson, Timothy Hiller, Michelle Harrington, Michael Le Chevallier, Herbert Lin, Young Hwang, Devin O'Rourke, Andrew Packman, Myriam Renaud, and Sara Jo Swiatek. I add to this other friends who have been steadfast encouragers, as well as study- and writing-mates over the last several years, especially Alison Davis, Mary Emily Briehl Duba, Hannah Mosher, and Russell Johnson.

Above all, thank you to my family, and especially my mother Nancy Lengyel and my husband Jacob Swenson-Lengyel, who have been immense supporters of this project, both by encouraging me in my work and by providing feedback and insight. I am immeasurably grateful for their love and their steadfastness during this long process.

Academic thought and work is necessarily forged in community and conversation and, for that, my debt to these friends, family, mentors, and colleagues is greater than these acknowledgements can ever do justice. Thank you.

CHAPTER 1: A Taxonomy of Inaction

Inaction in response to climate change in the United States of America (as well as elsewhere in the first world)[1] is startling at an individual, social, and governmental level. When one considers corporate action,[2] one sees little action, either governmental or social. For instance, despite scientific reports of grave and impending consequences, no significant, enforceable international climate accord has been agreed upon, despite more than 20 years of negotiations.[3] Even the Paris accord has the United States *voluntarily* reducing emissions by only 26-28% below the 2005 levels by 2025 and has China *voluntarily* peaking in carbon use only by 2030.[4] Compare this with the United Nation Environment Programme's assessment that 2020 ought to be the latest date by which we hit peak carbon dioxide emissions,[5] as well as with the Union of Concerned Scientists judgment that global emissions must be reduced by 80% of 2000 levels by 2050.[6]

[1] See, for instance, work by Kari Marie Norgaard on Norwegian inaction, work by Alexa Spence, Wouer Poortinga, and Nick Pidgeon on UK citizens' perception of climate change, and Pew studies that show the US, Canada, and Europe as being some of the least concerned citizenry about climate change threats. Kari Marie Norgaard, *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011); Alexa Spence, Wouter Poortinga, and Nick Pidgeon, "The Psychological Distance of Climate Change," *Risk Analysis* 32:6 (2012); Jill Carle, "Top Global Threat: Americans, Europeans, Middle Easterners Focus on ISIS as Greatest Danger," Pew Research Center, July 2015, http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/Pew-Research-Center-Global-Threats-Report-FINAL-July-14-2015.pdf.

[2] Throughout the dissertation, I use the term 'corporate' to refer to people acting together or to groups acting. I do not mean to refer to businesses or companies.

[3] There has been a stark failure of international leadership and more particularly of the United States in this regard. From the early-on ambiguous naming of the carbon dioxide emissions targets in the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change treaty, weakened due to pressure from the United States government, we see an unwillingness to commit to stringent and binding response to the threat of climate change. This continues in the United States' refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol in 2001 (even though the protocol was already limited in the targets it set), as well as the international community's refusal to adopt a binding treating at Copenhagen or at Paris. See Joyeeta Gupta "A History of International Climate Change Policy," *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* 1:5 (2010); and Raymond Clémençon, "Two Sides of the Paris Climate Agreement: Dismal Failure or Historic Breakthrough," *Journal of Environment and Development* 25:1 (2016).

[4] Clémençon, "Two Sides of the Paris Climate Agreement," 15-16.

[5] See United Nations Environment Programme, *The Emissions Gap Report 2015*, (Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme, 2015), https://uneplive.unep.org/media/docs/theme/13/EGR_2015_301115_lores.pdf: 3-7.

[6] Union of Concerned Scientists, "Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change: A Target for U.S. Emissions Reductions" (Cambridge, MA: Union of Concerned Scientists, 2007),

Reaching this target would require a reduction of emissions of 4% per year, *starting 8 years ago*, in 2010; the United States' current reductions have only been around 2% *total*.[7] Unfortunately, this slight reduction has been tied to lower recession-level spending rather than structural changes.[8] With the stalling of the Clean Power Plan in 2016 and the US withdrawal from the Paris Accord in 2017, these reductions are not expected to continue.[9]

Not only at a corporate level, but as individuals, insufficient action marks American response. The residential sector alone accounts for around 20% of carbon dioxide emissions in the United States. This energy use in US households has increased, rather than decreased, over the last 30 years by around 9%.[10] Moreover, carbon dioxide emissions associated with per capita consumption of goods and services has also steadily increased over the last 20 years by around 15% total.[11] In other words, as individuals, Americans are consuming more and emitting more greenhouse gases as a result. This holds in transportation as well: 76% of American still drive alone to work and the number of miles driven per year in America *has increased by 96%* since

http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/legacy/assets/documents/global_warming/emissions-target-fact-sheet.pdf: 3.

[7] Union of Concerned Scientists, "Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change," 4.

[8] Kuishuang Feng *et al*, "Drivers of the US CO_2 Emissions 1997-2013," *Nature Communications* 6:7714 (2015): 3.

[9] For information about both the stalling of the Clean Power Plan and the US withdrawal from the Paris Accord, see the following: Lawrence Hurley and Valerie Volcovici, "U.S. Supreme Court Blocks Obama's Clean Power Plan," *Scientific American*, Feb. 9, 2016, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/u-s-supreme-court-blocks-obama-s-clean-power-plan/; Umair Irfan, "What Rolling Back the Clean Power Plan Means for the US Climate Fight," *Vox*, Dec. 29, 2017, https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2017/10/10/16450288/epa-rollback-of-the-clean-power-plan-scott-pruitt; Brad Plumer, A.J. Chavar, and Susan Archer, " Trump Will Withdraw U.S. From Paris Climate Agreement," *The New York Times*, June 1, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/climate/trump-paris-climate-agreement.html.

[10] U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Drivers of Household Energy Consumption, 1980-2009," U.S. Department of Energy, February 2015, https://www.eia.gov/analysis/studies/buildings/households/pdf/drivers_hhec.pdf: 9.

[11] Feng *et al*, "Drivers of the US CO_2 Emissions 1997-2013," 2.

1980.[12] On the whole, only about a quarter of Americans make regular consumer decisions ("often" or "very consistently") about what to buy with environmental impact in mind[13] and only 20% of adults say that they consistently try to act to protect the environment in their daily life.[14] Combined, this does not present an encouraging portrait of American response to climate change.

Turning from individuals as consumers to individuals as citizens and political agents, inaction is also very widespread. For instance, in 2013, only 13% of adults contacted an elected official to discuss climate change. This number had held steadily since 2010.[15] Socially and politically, the norm seems to be inaction in response to climate change. The norm also seems to be inattention. As of October 2017, 62% of American adults say they have either rarely or never discussed climate change with family or friends and 35% say they have only heard the news media discuss climate change a few times *if ever*.[16] As individuals and socially, we do not act very much and we tend not to notice or talk much about climate change.

So, there is some action in response to climate change by Americans: some people alter their behaviors to reduce their carbon emissions, some cities and states have altered laws and

[12] This statistic is not per capita. See Center for Sustainable Systems, "U.S. Environmental Footprint Factsheet," University of Michigan, http://css.umich.edu/sites/default/files/U.S._Environmental_Footprint_Factsheet_CSS08-08_0.pdf, accessed July 1, 2017.

[13] Connie Roser-Renouf *et al*, "The Consumer as Climate Activist," *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 4771. It is important to note that the lowness of this number may in part be due to a lack of belief in efficacy of one's actions (4769).

[14] Cary Funk and Brian Kennedy, "The Politics of Climate Change," Pew Research Center, October, 2016, http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2016/10/14080900/PS_2016.10.04_Politics-of-Climate_FINAL.pdf: 17.

[15] A. Leiserowitz *et al*, *Americans' Actions to Limit Global Warming, November 2013*, Yale University and George Mason University (New Haven, CT: Yale Project on Climate Change Communication, 2014), http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Behavior-November-2013.pdf: 5. I cannot find more recent data on this subject.

[16] A. Leiserowitz *et al*, *Climate Change in the American Mind: October 2017*, Yale University and George Mason University (New Haven, CT: Yale Program on Climate Communications, 2017), http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Climate-Change-American-Mind-October-2017.pdf: 17-18.

structures to attempt to mitigate and adapt to climate change.[17] However, by and large, this action is insufficient and spotty—many people do not consider climate change when making decisions, and at the level of structural changes, governmental and social, far too little has been done, given the gravity of the predictions coming out of the climate sciences.[18]

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), if greenhouse gas emissions are not significantly curtailed, more than a 2 degree Celsius increase in global mean surface temperature is likely to occur by the end of the century, with consequent sea level rises of up to 0.82 meters and warming of the ocean also up to 2 degrees Celsius, along with alterations to basic ocean currents.[19] These changes create the conditions for mass human death and ill-health in low-lying coastal regions and island states; extreme weather events causing harm to infrastructure, health, and emergency services; increases in mortality due to extreme heat; global food insecurity due to drought, flooding, and extreme weather; loss of access to fresh water; and extreme loss of biodiversity, to name but a few projected consequences of climate change.[20]

The question that arises from all of these facts about inaction and climate change is the

[17] For instance, California has enacted much more stringent carbon emissions laws. See "California Climate Change Legislation" for a summary of the current laws regarding carbon regulations and taxes, accessed April 4, 2018, http://www.climatechange.ca.gov/state/legislation.html.

[18] Governmental and structural action will be required to effectively mitigate and adapt to climate change. Individuals live within social and governmental structures and their lives are in many ways dictated by those structures. As such, individual action is to a certain extent limited. That said, structural change will only take place when there is sufficient individual concern to motivate social and governmental change. As such, I see both individual and corporate insufficient action as problematic.

[19] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "Summary for Policymakers," in *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013): 5-11.

[20] Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, "Summary for Policymakers," in *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 13-20.

following: why is inaction so widespread when the consequences of that inaction are so severe?[21] Why do we not act, when, both practically and morally, it seems we ought to? By practical, I simply mean something like acting on the hypothetical imperative, *if* one values the continuation of the human species (or, more particularly, your immediate descendants or, more broadly, biodiversity on earth), *then* one should act to mitigate and adapt to climate change. By moral, I mean at least something like, vast suffering and death will result from climate change effects, both for humans and nonhumans; morally, if there is something we can do to minimize this suffering, we ought to do so. These questions are about human moral anthropology: I am asking who we are, as humans, and what moral and practical possibilities, limits, and faults we have as agents.

These questions—about inaction and human agency—frame this project. I will ask, why are we inactive in response to climate change and how might we overcome this inaction? My hunch is that one primary and underexplored reason for inattention and in-(sufficient)-action in response to climate change is that climate change potentially threatens the conditions of our being human agents. By examining how that is so, I believe this investigation can both help us to understand *why* we are inactive and *what* challenges we must overcome in order to so much as fully respond to climate change.

More particularly, I will argue that the experience of anthropogenic climate change provides the occasion to investigate more thoroughly the role of hope in sustaining human agency, precisely because anthropogenic climate change pressures many humans' capacities to so hope; this threat, in turn, helps to make sense of some of the tendency to inaction and inattention in response to climate change, especially among privileged actors, as they turn away from the threat

[21] I will use the term inaction to cover both complete inaction and insufficient action, understanding that this is a somewhat fuzzy term.

to their agency and into 'practical denial.'[22] This argument is meant to be particularly illuminating with regards to the behavior of privileged first world actors who simultaneously profess environmental values and 'belief in' the reality of climate change, while in much of their daily lives remaining inattentive and inactive in response to the problem. That said, I believe that my analysis of hope and its role in the moral, agential life is descriptive of many people (if not most), and as such, its utility may well extend beyond the privileged actors I investigate here.

In this chapter, I will first examine several popular reasons given for the inaction that mark insufficient response to climate change, before turning to unpack the presuppositions about human moral anthropology that undergird these explanations. By examining these other reasons for inaction and their presuppositions about moral agency, I mean to be accomplishing two ends: 1) to clarify that I do not mean the argument of this dissertation to be an explanation for all inaction, either among privileged actors or more widely, and 2) to show the way in which these other accounts of reasons for inaction are insufficient on their own, insofar as their portraits of human agency and their explanations for our inaction are incomplete. Once this ground has been cleared, I will turn to briefly introduce the claims of this dissertation, before ending with a note on the methodology of the project.

1. A Common Taxonomy

In this section, I will explicate a multiplicity of reasons for inaction in response to climate change, all of which have been highlighted in various scholarly literatures and/or in the popular media. While there could be a scholarly impulse to reduce these reasons to one basic or true cause of inaction, such an approach would do injustice to the complexity of both the situation and human

[22] I will define and discuss practical denial at length in Chapter 4.

living. Instead, my aim is to show that there is one crucial reason for inaction that is missed—namely, the important role of hope in moral agency. This reason for inaction should be understood as a necessary supplement, rather than a substitute for these other, also important, reasons for inaction. By calling this supplemental reason necessary, I mean that without understanding and responding to this need for a preservation of hopes as a reason for climate denial, we most likely cannot expect successful response to climate change among privileged actors. In other words, even if all the other reasons for inaction were overcome or at least minimized,[23] without attending to the interplay between hope and inaction, we will still see among Americans (and, most likely, in other first world individuals and groups) a tendency toward inaction and inattention to climate change.

With this clarification in place, I will turn now to discuss five commonly-given reasons for inaction in response to climate change: 1. Ignorance in various forms; 2. Theoretical denial; 3. External structural constraints; 4. Internal constraints; and 5. Moral failure.

1.a Ignorance

To start the taxonomy, let us examine one of the most immediately obvious reasons for inaction, namely ignorance. This inaction arising from an information-deficit has led many environmental thinkers to focus on transforming individuals' actions through science education. The thought traditionally went, if people only knew the facts, they would act.[24] The locus of this ignorance, however, could be in several places.

[23] Although, I would also argue that these other hurdles most likely cannot be overcome or minimized without attention to the problems facing our agency.

[24] See, for discussions of this claim and its insufficiency, Robert Brulle *et al*, "Shifting Public Opinion on Climate Change: An empirical assessment of factors influencing concern over climate change in the U.S., 2002–2010" *Climatic Change* 114:2 (2012); Susan Moser and Lisa Dilling, "Communicating Climate Change: Closing the Science-Action Gap" in *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*, eds. John Dryzek, Richard

For one, a person could lack understanding of or exposure to the science of climate change. This is what is most commonly meant by ignorance when discussing climate change.[25] To be sure, there is widespread lack of knowledge about the behavior of greenhouse gases.[26] People have not received the basic science education needed to understand that these gasses absorb the reflected energy of the sun, preventing that energy (transformed into heat) from being lost to space, such that when their concentration in our atmosphere increases rapidly due to fossil fuel use and industrial agriculture, they will necessarily 'heat up' the earth. For some unfortunate reason, the public debate about climate change has focused on empirical evidence—yearly recorded temperatures—without supplementing this evidence with the requisite scientific understanding of the behavior of these gases.[27] On its own, however, the yearly recorded temperatures simply show variance, which people can fairly easily (mis-) attribute to 'natural' (low- or non-forced) cycles or variability to the climate.[28] Undoubtedly, it is the case that scientific literacy is quite low, especially in the United States, and without adequate understanding of the science, many might be not

Norgaard, and David Schlosberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 163-164; and Kari Norgaard, *Living in Denial*, 64.

[25] See, for discussion of the poor state of American education climate science literacy, Mark McCaffrey and Susan Buhr, "Clarifying Climate Confusion: Addressing Systemic Holes, Cognitive Gaps, and Misconceptions Through Climate Literacy," *Physical Geography* 29:6 (2008).

[26] See A. Leiserowitz *et al*, *American's Knowledge of Climate Change*, Yale University and George Mason University (New Haven, CT: Yale Project on Climate Communications, 2010): 7, http://environment.yale.edu/climate/files/ClimateChangeKnowledge2010.pdf. For instance, as of 2010, only 45% of Americans understand that CO_2 is a greenhouse gas that, when in the atmosphere, traps heat from Earth's surface. Additionally, many people confuse the hole in the ozone layer with greenhouse gas effect.

[27] There is, of course, a coordinated effort on the part of corporations to sow doubt about the reliability of climate change data. For discussion of this process, see Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, *Merchants of Doubt: How a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming* (New York: Bloomsbury Books, 2010).

[28] Non-forced scenarios or low-forced scenarios are climate contexts in which there are no 'non-natural' impacts on the climate. 'Non-natural' are considered human impacts, in general, but not solely. An asteroid hitting the earth would also be considered non-natural, as in not-internal to the climate system itself. See, for discussion, Roman Frigg, Erica Thompson, and Charlotte Werndl, "Philosophy of Climate Science Part I: Observing Climate Change," *Philosophy Compass* 10:2 (2015): 953-964.

cognizant of the threats.[29] This ignorance would lead quite obviously and easily to inaction, as people ignorant of the problem would see no reason to alter their behavior or press for change at a social or political level.

Of course, one might instead have inadequate understanding of the *predictions* of climate change, even with the (most) basic scientific understanding of the mechanism of climate change. A second form of ignorance leading to inaction is then the ignorance of *consequences* of climate change.[30] Someone might say: "Well, I've always enjoyed the heat! I'll just buy more shorts." Such a person is ignorant of that which is entailed by such an increase in global temperature: the various weather changes, primarily moving toward more extreme and unpredictable patterns, the changes to basic ocean currents, including the gulf stream, the rapidly increasing desertification, the increased rates of extinction, and the rise in sea levels.[31]

In addition to ignorance of the science or the consequences of climate change, a person could be ignorant of what steps to take to combat it.[32] For example, a person may be unsure as to what to do to ameliorate or adapt to this situation, either in their individual or in their political and social lives. As individuals, they may simply not know the benefit of properly insulating their home, or washing clothes in cold water, or solar panels, or the impact of their car-use, or any other

[29] In 2010, 57% of Americans polled knew that the greenhouse effect refers to gases in the atmosphere that trap heat, 50% understood global warming is caused mostly by humans, and 73% mistakenly believe that the hole in the ozone layer contributes to global warming. A. Leiserowitz et al, *Americans' Knowledge of Climate Change*, 26.

[30] For instance, from a 2010 poll, a majority of Americans think that global warming will cause equal warming in all countries, not recognizing that some areas will see dramatic increases in temperature. See A. Leiserowitz *et al*, *Americans' Knowledge of Climate Change*, 12.

[31] It should be noted that this is in addition to other forms of environmental degradation: deforestation, pollution, extractive industries, etc., all of which are already contributing to the high rate of extinction currently being experienced worldwide. See Matthew Schwartz, "Ecosystem Shift: How Global Climate Change is Reshaping the Biosphere," Science in the News Blog, June 30, 2014, http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2014/ecosystem-shift-how-global-climate-change-is-reshaping-the-biosphere/.

[32] This could also play out at a corporate level as well as an individual level. Countries or social groups may not have access to the requisite knowledge regarding what to do in response to climate change.

daily step one could take.[33] Similarly, as political actors, people might be unaware of organizations they could work with, or policies one could advocate for, and so on.[34]

These three forms of ignorance in relation to climate change (of the science, the consequences, or the technique to respond) all take the form of a simple information deficit. If people had been properly educated or had proper access to relevant information, the problem would subside. However, ignorance specifically regarding what to do could be more basic than this, in at least two ways.

First, one may lack adequate ethical knowledge to guide one's response. In other words, one may have all the science one needs and yet not know what is right or just to do. As Willis Jenkins writes, "Ethics seems overwhelmed by climate change. None of our inherited moral traditions anticipate practical responsibilities for managing the sky, nor construct institutions of justice to discipline power across cultures and generations, nor imagine harming and loving neighbors through diffuse ecological flows. Adequate responses to climate change elude us in part because atmospheric powers outstrip the capacities of our inherited traditions for interpreting

[33] This could be either a problem of knowledge *simpliciter* or a problem of knowledge about proper prioritization under conditions of finitude. In other words, with regards to prioritization, someone might know what sort of actions to take, but not know how to prioritize them. For instance, one might not know whether it is more important to insulate one's home or cease long-distance flying, in order to cut down on one's 'carbon footprint.' Alternatively, one simply might not know which actions to take at all. By and large, prioritization seems to be more of a problem than simple lack of knowledge. There does seems to be fairly widespread knowledge of basic steps to take to lower carbon emissions and mitigate climate change among climate change. Knowing which are most important, however, might be more difficult. "Large majorities of Americans correctly understand that the following actions would reduce global warming if they were done worldwide: switching from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources (75%), planting trees (81%), reducing tropical deforestation (73%); switching from gasoline to electric cars (75%), driving less (76%), increasing public transportation (67%), switching from regular incandescent to compact fluorescent bulbs (69%), insulating buildings (65%), and switching from fossil fuels to nuclear power (59%)" Leiserowitz *et al*, *Americans' Knowledge of Climate Change*, 12.

[34] For instance, as of May 2017, two-thirds of registered voters claim that they have "never been contacted by an organization working to reduce global warming" (A. Leiserowitz *et al*, *Politics and Global Warming, May 2017*, Yale University and George Mason University (New Haven, CT: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, 2017): 5, http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Global-Warming-Policy-Politics-May-2017.pdf.)

them."[35] Among ethicists, this is a popular analysis. Various inadequacies of our inherited moral frameworks are emphasized and analyzed by such thinkers, tending toward emphasis on insufficient notions of responsibility, an over-attention to the individual and his or her intentions, coupled with arguments of inadequate intergenerational and global ethics.[36] While this is a problem of ignorance—a lack of knowledge—the 'fix' is not simple spread of information already in hand; instead, a far deeper transformation will need to take place in order for people to have the requisite ethical knowledge they need to respond adequately to climate change.

The second more basic form of ignorance I want to note here is that which arises from basic epistemological limits to our knowledge, scientific and otherwise. We may simply not have access to all the knowledge we would like to have as a basis for making decisions with regard to climate change. The inherent uncertainty of weather systems, of human response to changes, of the behavior of forced systems all may make prediction and some consequent action itself difficult.[37] Ignorance rooted in basic limits to knowledge seems to dog our attempts to respond to climate change. For example, we see risk management theory and planners struggling to respond to climate change sciences and the more radical forms of uncertainty that attend climate change modeling and predictions.[38] How does one quantify insurance risk in a changing world, with increasingly

[35] Willis Jenkins, *The Future of Ethics* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013), 16-17.

[36] See, for instance, Michael Doan, "Climate Change and Complacency," *Hypatia* 29:3 (2014); Stephen Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 41-45; Dale Jamieson, *Reason in a Dark Time: Why the Struggle Against Climate Change Failed and What it Means* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 144-178; Jenkins, *The Future of Ethics*, 16-67; Hans Jonas, *Imperative of Responsibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 3-27. It should be noted that Jenkins sees this inherited moral incompetence as a potential good, calling it "the creativity of incompetent responses" (19).

[37] This form of ignorance will become important in Chapter 4, to explain inaction and hope.

[38] For examples of the difficulties facing planners and risk management fields, see Donald Ludwig, "The Era of Management is Over" *Ecosystems* 4:8 (2001); L. Phelan, "Managing Climate Risk: Extreme weather events and the future of insurance in a climate-changed world," *Australasian Journal of Environmental Management* 18:4 (2011); Brian Walker *et al*, "Resilience Management in Social-Ecological Systems" *Conservation Ecology* 6:1 (2002). This discussion of uncertainty will be fleshed out in Chapter 4, at which point it becomes important for discussing pressures to hope.

unpredictable extreme weather events? How does one decide on city planning proposals, when various climate scenarios are possible? What to do and how to do it can, at times, be beyond our comprehension and our ability to know.

I would argue, however, that these latter two forms of ignorance are somewhat limited as reasons on their own for the problematic in-(sufficient)-action we see among Americans and other first world peoples. Most basically, this is because neither ethical ignorance nor epistemological limits are alone severe enough to undermine actionable knowledge. In other words, we understand the science and the consequences at least at a broad strokes level and, as such, we do have some sense of what we ought to do morally and practically. Lowering carbon dioxide emission, for instance, would be a very obvious place to start.[39] Generally, these various forms of ignorance are widespread and make sense of much inaction and insufficient action in response to climate change. That said, ignorance—even in all these different forms—does not completely describe American response to climate change, for the simple reason that many people are not ignorant of the claims coming from the climate sciences and yet do not act.[40]

1.b Theoretical Denial

In addition to ignorance, a second widely reported reason for inaction is simple denial of climate change. One can call this theoretical denial: it is a matter of belief and people do not *believe in* the reality of anthropogenic climate change. It is the case that large minorities, at least in the United States, are theoretic deniers of climate change.[41] Largely fueled by a misinformation

[39] Additionally, some uncertainty can itself be basis for actionable knowledge, rather than grounds for ignorance, insofar as the unknowns of our future should encourage significant diminution of carbon emissions, to attempt to keep us as close to our current climate regime as possible. See Stephan Lewandowsky, Timothy Ballard, and Richard Pancost, "Uncertainty as Knowledge," *Philosophical Transactions A of the Royal Society* 373, 2.

[40] This is in several ways, to be explored below.

[41] As of 2016, 11% of Americans claim that "climate change is not happening" and 34% think that if it is happening, it is due to natural changes. A. Leiserowitz *et al*, *Climate Change in the American Mind: March, 2016*,

campaign on the part of United States corporate industries, and furthered by particular alliances between certain forms of Christian evangelicalism and anti-science or anti-intellectual trends in America, climate denial has a complicated and varied history.[42] Between 1997 and 2015, the percentage of residents in the United States who believed that climate change will *never* happen actually *almost doubled*, from 9% to 16%.[43] This means that, as of October 2015, one in six Americans deny the very possibility of anthropogenic *or* natural climate change. Moreover, an additional 33% of Americans polled claim that climate change is happening, but deny that it is anthropogenic, and claim instead that alterations to our climate are due to natural variation.[44] Even more strikingly, as of 2017, majorities of representatives and senators in both the House and Senate are climate skeptics or deniers.[45]

Some of this widespread theoretical denial is due to a lack of confidence in the scientists, who are considered to be influenced by political ends. As of June 2016, 27% of US adults polled agreed that "climate scientists' research findings are influenced by the scientists' own political leanings most of the time."[46] One can see this form of denial in (confused and manufactured) scandals such as the 2009 'Climategate,' in which hacked emails from climate scientists

---

Yale University and George Mason University (New Haven, CT: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, 2016): 3, http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Climate-Change-American-Mind-March-2016-FINAL.pdf.

[42] See for discussion of corporate, economic, and government involvement in misinformation about climate change, Oreskes and Conway, *Merchants of Doubt*, 169-215.

[43] See both A. Leiserowitz *et al*, *Climate Change in the American Mind: October, 2015*, Yale University and George Mason University (New Haven: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication), 6, http://environment.yale.edu/climate-communication-OFF/files/Climate-Change-American-Mind-October-2015.pdf, and Frank Newport, "Americans' Global Warming Concerns Continue to Drop," *Gallup*, March 11, 2010, http://www.gallup.com/poll/126560/Americans-Global-Warming-Concerns-Continue-Drop.aspx.

[44] Leiserowitz, *Climate Change in the American Mind: October, 2015*, 7.

[45] Sarah Emerson, "The Climate Change Deniers in Congress," April 28, 2017, *Motherboard*, https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/pg5zqg/a-guide-to-the-climate-change-deniers-in-congress.

[46] Funk and Kennedy, "The Politics of Climate Change," 6. It should be noted that majorities of Americans have confidence in scientists more generally, but are wary of climate scientists in particular (7).

supposedly showed scientists altering data about global temperatures for liberal political agendas.[47] This distrust of scientists leads people to think of climate change as a fake controversy, created to benefit certain groups of people and to harm others.

Alternatively, some deny the reality of anthropogenic climate change due to a lack of trust in the science itself, which is understood to contradict truths considered to be obtained through revelation. As of March 2015, 26% of Americans agreed that either to some extent, to a large extent, or exclusively, "when scientific explanations about the natural world conflict with my religious or spiritual beliefs, I accept what my religious or spiritual beliefs tell me."[48] This sort of worldview, that sees scientific explanations as in deep conflict with religious commitments, can obviously be a hindrance to accepting evidence in support of climate change and action in response to the evidence. For example, a Christian might claim humans do not have the kind of power necessary to alter or destroy creation; only God can do this. This belief would then prompt one to disbelieve climate science, given the sciences' claims about human disruption of the climate.

Given the numbers of individuals who claim to disbelieve anthropogenic climate change, both among private citizens and lawmakers, this theoretic denial most likely accounts for a good portion of inaction in American response to climate change. Combined with ignorance, these are two oft cited reasons cited for inaction in America. But, while they do explain much of the insufficient action that plagues us, they are not themselves sufficient for explanation. Consider: as of 2017, 54% of individuals *do* accept the reality of anthropogenic climate change and the

[47] For a helpful conglomeration of the reports on the controversy, see Union of Concerned Scientists, "Debunking Misinformation About Stolen Climate Emails in the "Climategate" Manufactured Controversy," accessed April 10, 2018, http://www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/solutions/fight-misinformation/debunking-misinformation-stolen-emails-climategate.html#.WZMXzYqQyRs.

[48] A Leiserowitz *et al*, *Climate Change in the American Christian Mind: March, 2015*, Yale University and George Mason University (New Haven: Yale Project on Climate Change Communication): 24, http://environment.yale.edu/climate-communication-OFF/files/Global-Warming-CCAM-March-2015.pdf.

predictions arising from the climate sciences.[49] Moreover, while detailed scientific literacy is low, there is widespread knowledge of the concrete individual steps to be taken.[50] This suggests that there is a good number of individuals who accept the climate sciences and their predictions, and have some understanding of what needs to be done and yet, little action is taken in response to that information.[51] How do we account for this?

1.c External Constraints on Action

In addition to ignorance and theoretical denial, one must acknowledge that much insufficient action may be due to external structural constraints, which make it difficult to take the steps needed. This can be the case in terms of individual consumer decisions and political actions, as well as corporate social and political behavior.

Consider just a few constraints on individual consumer's decisions. For one, a large portion of non-commercial carbon use in America is due to the need for home heating and cooling, combined with home electricity use.[52] For those without the resources or ability to weatherize or green their home or residence, their use of carbon will be surprisingly steady, despite other steps they might take.[53] For another, consider that green products and services tend to be higher in price than their conventional alternatives, pricing out a large group of people in America. And these

[49] Leiserowitz *et al*, *Climate Change in the American Mind: October 2017*, 7. This number does fluctuate some, but since 2014 a majority think that global warming is happening and is anthropogenic; it ranges between 51%-58%.

[50] Leiserowitz *et al*, *Americans' Knowledge of Climate Change*, 12.

[51] For interesting data regarding inaction despite knowledge, see, for example, Norgaard, *Living in Denial*, especially 1-3.

[52] As of 2011, residential carbon emissions made up 21% of the United States total carbon emissions. Of that 21%, it is estimated that almost 40% of those emissions are due to "residential energy," or heating, cooling, and electricity. See Md Rumi Shammin, "The Role of US Households in Global Carbon Emissions," in *Greenhouse Gases: Emission, Measurement and Management*, ed. Guoxiang Liu (Rijeka, Croatia: Intech, 2012), https://www.intechopen.com/books/greenhouse-gases-emission-measurement-and-management: 173,178.

[53] To see this, simply take a carbon footprint test, for instance, https://www3.epa.gov/carbon-footprint-calculator/.

sorts of constraints are not solely due to prohibitive cost: most rural areas do not have reliable public transport, requiring people to use cars; recycling services are difficult to access in many areas; the planning of many cities has developed with the assumption that individual households will make use of a car on a daily basis—to get their groceries, to get to work, to find entertainment, and so on.[54] The structures that enable life in America tend to so heavily depend upon fossil fuel use that living without dependence upon those fuels becomes in many cases itself a privilege, open only to those who can afford to create lives not depend upon the structures already in place.

Similarly, as individual political agents, various constraints stifle advocacy for climate change policies. The state of democratic politics in the United States is far from rosy—for instance, voter disenfranchisement is widespread. This is accomplished in a multitude of ways: through the use of voter ID laws, by limiting voting hours, through the disenfranchisement of people convicted of a felony, and by gerrymandering districts to lessen the power of some votes.[55] Aside from voting, access to one's governmental representatives can be quite difficult: one small example would be that many senators and representatives do not have phone voicemails, making it difficult to reach them outside of business hours or if there are high volume of calls. These kinds of hurdles make it such that even if one supports climate change policy change, the ability to voice that support in an effective manner is not easy, given the current political landscape. Moreover,

[54] For information on rural access to public transportation, see Sarmistha Rina Majumdar and Corliss Lentz, "Individuals' Attitudes Toward Public Transit in a Rural Transit District," *Public Works Management and Policy* 17:1 (2012): 83-84; for information about access to recycling, see Drew Desilver, "Perceptions and Realities of Recycling Vary Widely from Place to Place," *Pew Research Center*, October 7, 2016, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/07/perceptions-and-realities-of-recycling-vary-widely-from-place-to-place/.

[55] For examples, see information about felony conviction and voting rights, see "Felony Disenfranchisement Laws Map" ACLU, https://www.aclu.org/issues/voting-rights/voter-restoration/felony-disenfranchisement-laws-map, accessed April 11, 2018; and for information about voter ID laws and suppression, see Zoltan Hajnal, Nazita Lajevardi, and Lindsay Nielson, "Voter Identification Laws and the Suppression of Minority Votes," *The Journal of Politics* 79:2 (April 2017).

consider that, as of March 2016, 25% of people think it is *impossible* for them to convince US Congress to pass legislation to reduce global warming.[56] Note that this is prior to the election of Donald Trump and the current legislative makeup; that number may well be much higher today. Yet even in more favorable conditions, one in four Americans believe they do not have the political power to affect climate change policy.

Moreover, political engagement via green organizations is not particularly high, in part because 67% of people say that they have *never* been contacted by organization working to reduce global warming and 78% say they have never been asked to contact an elected official about global warming by *anyone* at all.[57] This speaks to a lack of exposure to the means by which one may be empowered and informed to some much as politically engage in advocacy.

In addition to individual constraints on action, there are corporate level constraints as well—although perhaps less so in the United States than in other countries with fewer resources. In developing countries, for instance, trying to weigh increases to carbon dioxide emissions and development that can improve current quality of life for one's citizens can be a struggle.[58] In cities and states in America with insufficient funds, this sort of conflict can arise as well.

Often under-appreciated in the ethical and psychological literature, these sorts of constraints on action can keep even knowledgeable and willing people from acting to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. External constraints on inaction show the need for structural and international solutions that can enable individuals to live within good systems well. That said, ignorance, theoretical denial, and external constraints alone do not completely explain inaction and

[56] Leiserowitz *et al*, *March 2016,* 4.

[57] Leiserowitz *et al*, *May 2017*, 5.

[58] See, for instance, discussion of the trade-offs between development and air quality in New Delhi, Ari Shapiro, "India's Big Battle: Development Vs. Pollution," *All Things Considered*, May 13, 2016, https://www.npr.org/2016/05/13/477930821/indias-big-battle-development-vs-pollution.

insufficient action, precisely because they do not make sense of the fact that among people with the power and wealth to accomplish change, too little is done.

1.d Internal Psychological Constraints

There are additionally basic constraints rooted in our psychology that can also help make sense of why those with power to mitigate climate change do not act. In other words, there are internal constraints on action arising from human finitude and our particular psychological makeup. There are several aspects to this root of inaction.

First, as finite creatures, there is the simple fact that there are only so many things one can attend to at any given time. We cannot attend to and care for all things we value and desire at all times. If one is focused on feeding one's family within a tight budget and on a tight timeline, one may not, for instance, be attending to the climate impacts one's food purchases have. There are simply limits to attention that explain some inaction and insufficient action. Moreover, there are often competing, incompatible goods that people must weigh and attempt to decide between. Consider an individual trying to weigh seeing aging family on a regular basis and the plane travel and carbon dioxide output that is required to ensure such visits. Now, if there were fewer external constraints (for instance, if the infrastructure of the United States was more conducive to low-carbon travel) that would go some ways to reducing such conflicts between goods. But even in a more supportive environment, there will still be the problem of competing goods and limited time—where, to live 'perfectly green' and to respond to other obligations within one's life will be in conflict.

Moreover, we are creatures with idiosyncratic and evolutionarily-produced attributes that make us ill equipped to handle the problem of climate change. For instance, in contrast with the gradual and global nature of the climate change problem, psychologists emphasize our cognitive

bias for the sensory—the here and now—and for consequences that we can see.[59] Similarly, psychologists have studied the way in which humans discount future and spatially distant risks, and engage in riskier behavior in situations of uncertainty.[60] Given these and other psychological limitations,[61] we tend to ignore climate change, and engage in the riskier behavior of maintaining our carbon-intensive lifestyles due to the uncertainties related to the climate change predictions. Psychologists who focus on these roots for inaction emphasize that these aspects of our psychology cause a "growing mismatch" between the world and our species,[62] and that only if we can correct these "irrational" biases can we hope to address and face climate change.[63]

It is certainly the case that there are facts about human psyche and finitude that make it difficult to address the problem of climate change. Again, however, ignorance, theoretical denial, external constraints on action, and international constraints on action do not fully explain inaction

[59] See, for instance, Robert Gifford, "The Dragons of Inaction: Psychological Barriers that limit climate change mitigation and adaptation," *American Psychologist* 66:4 (2011): 291; Robert Gifford, "Dragons, Mules, and Honeybees: Barriers, Carriers, and Unwitting Enablers of Climate Change Action," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 69:4 (2013): 42-43; Dominic Johnson and Simon Levin, "The Tragedy of Cognition: psychological biases and environmental inaction," *Current Science* 97:11 (2009): 1594-1596; Susan Moser and Lisa Dilling, "Making Climate Hot: Communicating the Urgency and Challenge of Global Climate Change," *Environment* (Dec. 2004): 36; Sabine Pahl *et al*, "Perceptions of Time in Relation to Climate Change," *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* 5:3 (2014): 376-377.

[60] See, for instance, Gifford, "Dragons, Mules, and Honeybees," 43; Gifford, "The Dragons of Inaction," 292; Johnson and Levin, "The Tragedy of Cognition," 1598; Pahl *et al*, "Perceptions of Time," 380; Thomas Morton *et al*, "The Future that May (or May Not) Come: How framing changes responses to uncertainty in climate change communications," *Global Environmental Change* 21:1 (2011): 104.

[61] There are other cognitive limitations emphasized, including our tendency toward denial in the light of potential cognitive dissonance (Johnson and Levin, "The Tragedy of Cognition," 1597), as well as 'mortality salience' or the psychological claim that reminders of human mortality lead to an increase in denial and other responses that attempt to buffer anxiety about death (see Matthew Vess and Jamie Arndt, "The nature of death and the death of nature: the impact of mortality salience on environmental concern," *Journal of Research in Personality* 42:5 (2008)).

[62] Johnson and Levin, "The Tragedy of Cognition," 1600.

[63] Much of the literature has this tone of condescension with regards to human 'irrationality.' However, Johnson and Levin seem particularly prone to this sort of language. For instance, they write "Psychological biases have been widely identified as sources of *mistakes*, policy *failures*, and *disasters* in political and economic decision-making," and these psychological biases are what make us "deviate systematically from the predictions of 'rational choice theory'…" (1593, italics added). *If* we were rational, i.e. without psychological 'biases,' we wouldn't make such mistakes, and cause such failures and disasters.

and insufficient action, especially in the United States, if only because we have not yet discussed immorality and inaction.

1.e Moral Failure

In addition to these other reasons for inaction, it would seem that viciousness also marks some insufficient responses to climate change. Some people and/or groups are unmotivated to action, not because they disbelieve the climate sciences, but instead because they are simply not concerned for others' welfare, or the health of the earth, or the continued existence of human beings and other species. They are perhaps instead motivated by power, wealth, or their own comfort, among other possibilities.[64] By viciousness, then, I mean the pursuit of things that are explicitly *not* good as if they were good or, alternatively, the valuation of trivial goods at the expense of more basic or central goods (in other words, to grossly mis-order goods).[65]

Of course, by naming viciousness as a root cause of inaction, I am claiming some sort of standard by which to judge people's values and ends, although I mean to do so only in a minimal way. By this, I simply mean that I do take it to be the case that human and non-human suffering is bad, the continuation of the human species would be a good, and that degradation of physical environments harms people and non-human species. I limit my claims in this way given the clear possibilities for disagreement over what proper goods are and what proper evaluations of those goods would be.

[64] Combined with narrow understandings of what would allow for the maintenance and increase of their wealth, comfort, or power. Some people, for instance, might be motivated *to* act for climate mitigation due to a love of wealth, because of beliefs about climate change's potential effects on the economy.

[65] The latter problem—mis-ordered goods—should be carefully distinguished from the fact that there simply is a plurality of goods, and different people choose different goods to value in their own lives. This account of mis-ordered goods is not meant to characterize a flutist over a doctor or vice versa. Instead, the mis-ordered goods I am referring to here are the ones emphasized above, such as solely or over-valuing your own happiness or comfort or wealth. As I say in the next paragraph, there will always be disagreement about what amounts to mis-ordering, insofar as there is disagreement about what are true goods and what the proper ordering of those goods is.

I have found that viciousness is emphasized more popularly than academically,[66] but there has been emphasis by scholars on the vested interests of those who do not act in response to climate change. For instance, sociologist Kari Norgaard has analyzed and emphasized the vested interests of Norwegian citizens in oil, who deny their personal involvement or culpability in regards to climate change. As Kari Marie Norgaard writes, "Given that Norwegian economic prosperity and way of life is intimately tied to the production of oil, ignoring or downplaying the issue of climate change serves to maintain Norwegian global economic interests."[67] In this example, the way in which some citizens weigh the value of the wealth generated by Norwegian oil is considered to be wrongheaded, when compared to the value of future generations and the health of the earth.

Similarly, some philosophers emphasize the way in which western individuals continue to hold up false and harmful conceptions of the world (e.g. progressivist and/or capitalist, in which domination of the natural world is a good) given the ways in which that these world-concepts benefit us materially.[68] Here too, these thinkers argue that what people value and how people order those values has been malformed, leading to inaction on climate mitigation.

One can, perhaps, see this sort of misevaluation in polling around concern for climate change effects and wealth. There is a troubling inverse relationship between concern about climate change and the per capita CO_2 emissions of a country, wherein the greater a country's emissions, the less concern its citizens show about the effects of climate change.[69] One might consider such an inverse relation to indicate that the more a country benefits from the use of fossil fuels (the

[66] For instance, think of the popular rhetoric around politicians' inaction in response to climate change: they are in the fossil fuel industry's pocket or they care more about reelection than the environment.

[67] Norgaard, *Living in Denial*, 70. Norway is the fifth largest oil exporter in the world. The oil is state owned, and every citizen of Norway directly benefits from the wealth generated from oil production.

[68] John Foster, *After Sustainability: Denial, Hope, Retrieval* (London: Routledge, 2015): 87.

[69] Bruce Stokes, Richard Wike, and Jill Carle, "Global Concern about Climate Change, Broad Support for Limiting Emissions," *Pew Research Center*, November 2015: 15.

more vested interest it has in maintaining the status quo), the less people want to address the problem. One might argue that they have been formed to care for their wealth and their security *too* much, at the expense of the continued health of the earth and the well-being of other human beings.

Viciousness—the outright mis-ordering of goods or the valuing of objective 'bads'—does not alone adequately describe human moral failure and climate inaction. Additionally, humans are morally weak. In other words, humans simply do not live up to their own moral standards. One example of such moral weakness is *akrasia*, which I define as the experience of recognizing an obligation and, due to personal weakness, failing to fulfill it. I think a large majority of individuals experience *akrasia* in their daily lives in relation to environmental degradation and climate change: simple things like they believe they ought to walk to the store, but in a moment of weakness, they choose to drive.[70]

This weakness differs from the mid-ordering of goods in viciousness in the sense that the akratic individual, at some level, does properly order the goods, but then does not live according to that proper ordering. She knows what she ought to do and yet does not do it. Contrarily, the vicious person has no moment of weakness, but rather simply values the wrong things or values things in the wrong way. It is the difference between the person who simply values money above all other things and the person who values their family more than money, but often, in weakness, chooses to pursue wealth at the expense of their family's wellbeing.

[70] See, for instance, Sarah Fredericks, "Online Confessions of Eco-Guilt," *Journal of the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* 8:1 (2014); Lisa Kretz, "Climate Change: Bridging the Theory-Action Gap," *Ethics and the Environment* 17:2; Norgaard, *Living in Denial*.

The point regarding both viciousness and moral weakness is that a significant amount of inaction is most likely rooted not solely in ignorance nor theoretical denial, not in external or psychological inability, but in moral failure: either in outright viciousness or weakness of will.

Together, these short treatments are not intended as an exhausted catalogue of reasons for inaction, but instead give an overview of some of the popular reasons for climate inaction found in scholarship and the media.

2. Portraits of Agency

That said, each of these reasons for inaction is convincing only insofar as behind it lies a similarly convincing claim about who we are as human agents. As I emphasized in the introduction, the question of inaction is a question of moral agency: who are we, as moral agents, and what enables or inhibits us from acting? Each reason I have so far explored here assumes something about who we are, and about why and how we act (as well as why we do not do so). I will briefly draw out some of these assumptions about who we are from the five reasons for inaction discussed above. Through examining these images of agency, we will be able to assess their reasonability: combined, do these present a complete portrait of the human agent? Or, are there additional aspects of our agency missed, that are also implicated in our inaction with respect to climate change? In the following section, I will argue that one such ignored aspect is the role of hope in supporting our agency. For now, however, I turn to the portraits of agency that emerge from the five reasons surveyed above.

First, let's consider human ignorance as a root of inaction. When people discuss ignorance as a reason for inaction, humans are on the one hand assumed to be the kind of creature that is able to act in response to information or evidence given—their cognition affects their actions. We are

agents who act in response to evidence or knowledge. On the other hand, humans are also claimed to be the sort of creature that is not completely, or even particularly, knowledgeable, even about relevant evidence that *ought* to factor into their decision making. This is partly due to historic facts—poor education systems, for instance, that have hindered knowledge of the science, the consequences, or the concrete steps to take, either practically or ethically. Additionally, however, insofar as it is convincing that I claimed that some of our ignorance is basic, given limitations to our knowledge as such, this human creature is one with significant limits to its power to obtain the requisite information needed to so much as make completely informed decisions. We are *blinkered* agents, in part due to accidents that could be mitigated through education and reflection, and in part due to necessary constraints given finite knowledge.

Second, when theoretical denial is discussed as a reason for inaction, several things about human agency are assumed. First, we are a considered to be a necessarily hermeneutical agent—we are bound to interpret the world around us in non-neutral ways, and that interpretation impacts the way in which we act. In theoretical denial, people interpret the world around them differently than those who accept the climate sciences and predictions—they treat different evidence differently. Scripture, for some, holds a different authority than scientific method.

Additionally, insofar as it is convincing to treat theoretical denial as a denial of 'that which is the case,' then it is also assumed that there are limits to the plausibility of interpretations. Now, this treatment of those who deny climate change as *in denial* is most likely in part due to the assumption that many theoretic deniers are likely incoherent or disingenuous in their denial,[71]

[71] Ironically, theoretic deniers often name political influence on scientists as a primary reason they do not trust climate science; at the same time, those who believe the climate sciences to be reliable often name political influence on theoretic deniers as a primary reason that those deniers do not trust the climate science.

insofar as they accept scientific theories more generally, for instance.[72] Putting this possibility aside though, and assuming theoretic deniers to be concerted in their beliefs, treating such beliefs as symptoms of 'denial' means treating them as beyond the acceptable realm of interpretation of the world. This, in turn, means that to name theoretic denial as a reason for inaction is to claim that human creatures both interpret the world necessarily, and do so poorly at times. This may be due to self-interest, ignorance, or trust in unreliable authorities, to name a few possibilities. But as human agents, we are not merely blinkered—ignorant of that which is the case—but we are *partial* in our interpretations of the world: we can know only *parts* some of it, and we can be biased (or *partial*) in that knowledge.[73]

Next, let us consider external constraints on action. When one emphasizes external constraints on human action, humans are assumed to be bound, deeply finite, rather than untethered agents. We live in a world already made and our choices and acts are themselves necessarily made in response to that world. That said, these already in-place structures also give us a context within which to act. We are not simply constrained but *enabled* by the world around us. Moreover, the social structures within which we live and upon which we depend are *not* natural, but things we have inherited from other agents and that we can ourselves change. And yet, those same structures do hinder us from choices that we might well make, both as individuals and as groups, 'in the abstract' or 'theoretically.' They tether us to the places and the social structures that surround us

[72] For instance, see Sven Ove Hansson on climate deniers' tendency to 'cherry pick' information that seems to support their view. Such cherry picking would be an example of disingenuity, insofar as the individual seems unwilling to put a good-faith effort into understanding the theory and evidence. See "Science denial as a form of pseudoscience," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 63 (2017): 40-41.

[73] See William Schweiker and David Clairmont, *Religious Ethics: Meaning and Method* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming) for similar dual use of the term 'partial.'

and that make certain choices easier than others. We can act, and act on the world, but we are *context bound* in our actions.

Internal psychological features similarly show us to be the kind of creatures that are not made up of pure reason or abstract will, but instead our agency is embedded within idiosyncratic characteristics, developed over time through evolution. Like external constraints, we are enabled by our psychology, but that same psychology limits or makes difficult engaging certain issues or problems. Our agency, then, is not a pure phenomenon, nor is it simply associated with rationality or reason-giving, but instead has pre-rational roots in our evolutionary development. Moreover, these features can be exploited—to good or bad ends—through messaging and various communication strategies that highlight or target aspects of human makeup.[74] We are *evolutionarily ingrained* agents, open to manipulation, adapted for particular types of situations and relationships.

Lastly, when we identify moral failure as a reason for inaction, we also assume very specific things about human agency. Namely, that humans can be poorly habituated and/or, Christianly speaking, sinful. Humans do that which they do not want to do, and value the wrong things. Exacerbated by all of the particular characteristics of our agency enumerated above: our blinkeredness, our partiality, our context, and our evolutionary development—we are agents who do not merely fail by not bringing about the intention of our acts. We are also agents who fail by intending the wrong things. Our agency is limited by a will that either does not properly know the good or cannot properly will it.

[74] See work on message framing and climate action for discussion of how psychologically savvy messaging can impact climate action. For examples, see Robert Gifford and Louis Comeau, "Message framing influences perceived climate change competence, engagement, and behavior intentions," *Global Environmental Change* 21:4 (2011) and Morton *et al*, "The Future that May (or May Not) Come."

I agree with the scholars who focus on these aspects of human agency and inaction. We are blinkered, we are partial, we are context and evolutionarily bound, and we are immoral agents. These aspects of our agency make sense of much of our inaction in response to climate change. However, in this dissertation, I argue that even put together, this is not a complete portrait of our agency, especially in relation to climate change and inaction.

3. Hope, Inaction, and Climate Change

In this dissertation, I will argue that there is an additional element to our agency that goes unrecognized in the portraits given above, that also affects our capacity to properly respond to climate change in two ways. First, the capacity is itself negatively impacted by climate change predictions, thus undermining human agency; and second, this negative impact results in individuals *either* responding with paralysis to climate change as a problem *or* responding by turning away to what I call 'practical denial.'[75]

In particular, I will argue that we are agents who necessarily depend upon our capacity to organize an unknown and uncertain world in meaningful ways that relates our valued desires to that uncertain world and that supports our limited agency. This capacity to so organize this unknown and uncertain world is more particularly our ability to both hope and expect. We expect things when, despite them being unknown (e.g. because something is in the future), we can essentially treat them 'as certain,' given our sense of what is stable in the world around us. We need hope, however, when the uncertainties of our world confound us, making simple expectation (and consequently simple intention and action) unavailable. We are world integrators, who take

[75] I will discuss practical denial in Chapter 4. For now, by practical denial, I mean the ability people have to simultaneously affirm the reality of climate change and its consequences, while at the same time ignoring those dire consequences in their practical decisions and daily life. Rather than being about knowledge or theoretical denial, this is about practical ways of being in the world.

the vast uncertainties and regularities of the world and make sense of them through our hopes and expectations, through which we meaningfully orient our lives and sustain ourselves amidst the confusion, hostility, and opacity of the world.

Here, I will argue more particularly that our capacity to hope—to deal with uncertainties in our world well—is pressured by the predictions of climate change. As the world becomes increasingly uncertain and continues to change, our capacity to take the uncertainties of the world and find ways to relate ourselves to them, as limited agents, will be pressured. Consequently, as pressures to hoping present themselves, we may well have difficulty knowing how to live as human agents in our world. This difficulty, in turn, gives us reason to deny, be inattentive, and to not act in response to climate change, in an attempt to preserve our hopes and our capacity to hope by ignoring the pressures that climate change places upon it.

To make this argument, I will first clarify the character of hope in Chapter Two. There, I will disambiguate the term, which is too often ignored, assumed, or glossed over. In particular, I will argue that hope is 1) as a type of desire that is constrained by 2) rational and 3) evaluative considerations, 4) which depends upon the use of our will and 5) results in particular emotions and activities. As such, I claim that hope is an integral human activity in response to our finitude. That said, I will also argue that it is not an intrinsically moral activity and that the usual description of it as a moral motivator is an inaccurate portrayal of its moral, agential import.

Given this, in the third chapter, I will turn to analyze the relationship between hoping and moral agency, uncovering two crucial aspects of our agency often missed. Namely, that hoping sustains our capacity to be agents in a necessarily uncertain world, and that hoping for specific moral contents sustains our capacity to invest in morality while in an opaque and hostile world. In other words, hoping allows us to be the world integrators I described above and allows us to sustain

ourselves in a world only partially hospitable to our moral agency. Given these roles of hope in the moral life, I end this third chapter by suggesting that this makes us vulnerable agents, insofar as there are pressures to hope today.

Turning in the fourth chapter to the current moment, I will then examine the ways in which characteristics of the climate crisis pressure hoping as an activity. More particularly, I argue that our hoping capacity is pressured in its cognitive aspect (our ability to determine uncertain possibilities) by climate predictions' opacity, totality, and continual change. Additionally, I will argue that our hopes are pressured in their evaluative aspect, insofar as they are threatened with trivialization and moralization by the grave and systemic nature of climate change. I suggest, as I did on the previous page above, that both practical denial and paralysis in response to climate change follow in part from these pressures to hope. At the same time, I will argue that hoping is an important precondition for the possibility of responding well to climate change, such that we must find ways of living 'in hope' in order to face our climate future.

Therefore, in the fifth chapter, I will examine one community's resources for responding to this pressure and learning to live in hope. I will shift to examine Christian hoping and how Christians might learn to live in light of climate change well, in hope. There, I will suggest that for Christians coming to live in hope will require renewed practice of lament, in order to adequately overcome the tendency to practical denial. With this, I will also argue that Christians should develop forms of hope (virtues) that are both vocational and courageous, in order to overcome paralysis. Namely, against trivialization and moralization, one should 'reclaim' the content of one's hopes through vocational reframing of one's hopes and, against the wild uncertainties that problematize hoping, one can courageously learn to 'hope on less,' grounded in the recognition that God is present even amidst forsakenness and absence, in the person of Jesus.

Through these five chapters, I will defend these claims: first, that hoping is an integral part of human moral anthropology; second, that this capacity is pressured by climate change predictions; third, that this pressure helps to make sense of our inaction in response to the problem of climate change; four, that hope is also particularly important for our responding well to climate change; five, that we must therefore find ways of sustaining hope amidst threats to it; and six, that Christians can find particular resources for renewing and sustaining hope in the practice of lament, in renewed attention to vocation, and in reflection on God's presence amidst forsakenness, made manifest in Jesus as the Christ.

3.a A Note on Methodology

Before preceding to Chapter Two, however, a brief note on my method, in order to clarify how I will proceed. As I am a Christian theological ethicist, one might expect an account and method inspired by Jürgen Moltmann, given the centrality of his work on hope for much theology in the 20th and 21st century. Such a project, in line with Moltmann's method, might begin with biblical interpretation on the subject of hope and draw out a Christian account of hope for the eschaton from that interpretation. It would examine what the biblical witnesses had to say about the content of hope and consider how that might affect Christian theological claims. Alternatively, one might instead use Moltmann's own biblical interpretation, as well as his understanding of Christian hope, as a basis for an analysis of our current situation. Such an approach might take hope to be intrinsically future-oriented, necessarily motivating, and intimately tied to the possibility of a radically new future, in-breaking by God's power.[76] That would then ground a set of conclusions about climate change and human hoping.

[76] For examples of these positions, see Jürgen Moltmann, *The Ethics of Hope* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012): 3; and Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967): see, for instance, 16-17, 85.

However, I take a very different tack in approaching my topic. As I have presented it above, the problem of inaction in response to climate change, and hope in relation to this situation, is a human one, rather than a Christian one, and I argue that it should be examined as such. It is for this reason that I approach the problem as I do: namely, my dissertation examines human hoping broadly, rather than beginning with Christian commitments and Christian hoping, to uncover how hoping is related to moral agency, how climate change impacts it, and how we might respond.

Of course, one might say I need not take this approach, even with this presupposition about the problem being a human one rather than a Christian one. I might instead still examine human hoping broadly, but from an explicitly theological standpoint. If I were to do so, I might treat non-Christian hoping as the hoping of an unbeliever and, contrarily, treat proper human hoping simply *as* Christian hoping. If I were to do this, I would analyze the situation of hope and climate inaction in relation to normative Christian criteria: perhaps I might see sin and idolatry in human hope or spiritual despair as the roots of inaction. The solution, then, would be to overcome these faults in order to properly, Christianly hope.

With this, one might also hold Christian hoping to be strictly dissimilar to non-Christian hoping, such that while there is a problem with corrupt human hoping in relation to inaction in response to climate change, the problem would not translate for the proper Christian hoper, whose hoping is grounded in the true good, and as such is not subject to the same faults that other human hoping is. This is a popular theological position. This sort of stance is neatly summed up by John MacQuarrie, who also critiques it. He describes the position, writing, "Christian hope is in fact so peculiar, so distinct and unique, that it cannot be understood as a special case of some general phenomenon of hope…our only chance of properly understanding this Christian hope is to be prepared to confront it in all its particularity and concreteness…only after one has understood

something of the distinctively Christian hope, which is hope at its deepest and fullest, can one usefully begin to reflect on the universal phenomenon of hope."[77] If this were the theological position one took, the 'problem' facing us today would still be unbelief and the 'solution' would be proper Christian hoping.

Again, however, I do not take this approach. First, I do not present an account of human hoping from an explicitly theological position. Instead, as a theological ethicist, I examine the human phenomenon of hope. By this, I mean that I try to assess human hoping on its own terms, recognizing that I come to the phenomenon from a particular location and with a particular background. Basically, I attempt to operate in a liminal space. On the one hand, I seek to describe that which is common to many, if not most, people, as far as I can ferret it out. On the other hand, what I have to say here arises from my own experience and sense of the world, which I acknowledge is idiosyncratic. As I do phenomenologically inspired analysis, then, I recognize that it is always at the same time a hermeneutical enterprise, bound by what I take to be true. Second, I treat Christian hoping *neither* as the only proper human hope *nor* as utterly distinct from human hoping. Rather, in my examination, I treat Christian hoping as a specific type of religious human hoping. As such, I begin by examining the problems facing human hope generally and consider how Christian hopers are affected within this larger matrix.

Both methodological positions may receive pushback. For one, a person might think that I am smuggling Christian thought into my phenomenological analysis, in ways that compromise that depiction of human life. I prefer to think that even if my Christian commitments do color the way I interpret the phenomenon of human hoping and climate inaction, they do so in illuminating

[77] John MacQuarrie, *Christian Hope* (New York: Seabury, 1978), 2. He characterizes this position but does not support it. He, in fact, is one of the few theologians I have found who take a similar methodological approach to myself.

rather than obscuring ways. That said, I also make relatively minimal claims about humans in my chapters that investigate human hoping. I assume humans to be finite, that they are in many ways determined by the world and their developmental history, and that they are the sort of creatures that fall short of their own ideals: that humans are moral and are at times moral failures. I take these to be fairly common presuppositions, although I am sure that there will be individuals who disagree with me. Presumably, both a strict Kantian and a Christian realist, a Buddhist and a Stoic, could agree with me on these presuppositions, despite differing conceptions of the world.

This minimalism is combined with something like what David Lewis has called his "wait and see" stance. He writes, "How much am I claiming?—as much as I can get away with. If my stronger claims were proven false…I still mean to stand by the weaker ones."[78] In other words, in the next several chapters, I will make (minimal) claims about human persons and provide a quasi-phenomenological account of hoping, recognizing that in doing so I have to 'wait and see' if my account holds up to others' experiences. That said, should others find it insufficient, I still mean to stand by my analysis, with whatever caveats and constraints come to be needed given other's critiques.

A kind of 'wait and see' stance also frames my account of climate inaction and hope, in Chapter 4. Namely, I am primarily interested in American and other first-world responses to climate change. As such, I mean to be giving an account of a certain type of person's response to climate change and the way in which that response is related to her hoping. That said, here, I take

[78] David Lewis, "Dispositional Theories of Value II" in "Dispositional Theories of Value" by Michael Smith, David Lewis, and Mark Johnson, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 63 (1989): 129. I do not agree with Lewis' take on value and, moreover, the way he introduces this stance is, in my opinion, dismissive of human diversity. That said, I think the stance itself has merit: I will make claims about human persons that as best as I can see are true and I will wait and see if they stick or if people contest them. In other words, the criterion of acceptability for my claims in this project is the reader's acceptance of their intelligibility.

a reverse 'wait and see' stance: I stand by my weaker claims, but am ready to hear from others as to whether these claims may be more global than I am able to argue here. This attention to the parameters of my claims, combined with their minimalism, will hopefully go some way to assuaging those worried I am making unwarranted universalistic claims about human beings or am smuggling in Christian accounts of the human into this more general account. The proof, of course, is 'in the pudding'—in my analysis' ability to illuminate for the reader the situation at hand.

No doubt, my method will receive other critiques as well. From another perspective, one might see my approach as unfairly constraining theological claims, making them 'fit' with what, as a human being, one can come to know by reason or experience. In other words, one might say that I characterized Christian hope in a false and neutered manner, making it generally intelligible by seeing it as a type of religious human hoping, precisely when it is not universally or neutrally intelligible, but tied to revelation and the peculiarities of the Christian faith. Think back to MacQuarrie's depiction. To this, I have two responses.

First, by starting with general human experience and investigating hope, religious and non-religious, in relation to this, I am making sure that my theological claims do not usurp the 'there there.' I worry that if one starts solely from one's Christian commitments and doctrines, as *the* starting point for interpreting the world and human experience, real truths may get lost in the rhetoric of revelation and tradition. An example may elucidate. When Augustine claims that the Roman's virtue is 'splendid vice,' I can believe he is basing a theological commitment about the world on real experiences he has had. He has been a Roman, he has lived in this way, and he has seen it fall short. He has also experienced—in part, at least—the reorganization of his loves from his own self to the divine, and the different conception of the world that follows from that

transformation. This is all fine and Augustine is a rich resource for theological thinking, even today. However, when this stance on 'pagan virtue' *becomes* a dogma, *the* starting point from which ethicists today interpret the world, it can distort. It distorts because we are not dealing with the Romans, we are not dealing with a world in which there is seemingly a confrontation between one set of virtues—Roman—and another—Christian. For one thing, we are living in a radically plural world, where Ghandi seems to legitimately *teach* Martin King Jr. about what it is to be righteous, to be Christian. Experience, even Christian experience, does not seem to reveal a world where all non-Christians display only splendid vice, although there certainly does seem to be much splendid vice in the world.[79] And so, this world demands we attempt to see *it* for itself, as best we can, to analyze what is common among us with regards to hope, rather than beginning from what has become dogma from other theologian's experiences and evaluations.[80]

Second, I am not primarily interested in the ideal of Christian hope as it ought to be, but rather in the Christian hoper. The actual individual in the world making her way through it, as best she can, is the focus for this inquiry. She is the focus because this dissertation is about concrete moral agency in a world with a changing climate. And, if *she* is the focus, rather than the ideal of perfectly sanctified Christians, then my analysis must account for the reality that Christians muddle

[79] My worry here is not the doctrine of pagan virtue per se, although I personally do not think that there is but splendid vice outside the Christian community. My worry here is how ethicists and theologians can allow certain historical or canonical positions to become so dogmatic that it becomes the sole lens by which they interpret the world. See, for similar concerns, Wesley Wildman, *Fidelity with Plausibility: Modest Christologies in the Twentieth Century* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998), 3-5. Wildman is concerned with the tendency of theology to use appeals to authority and efficacy as a basis for theological claims, while not allowing certain evidence to push back against these positions.

[80] This is not to suggest that all theological commitments have to be either strictly compatible or in concert with experience, or that they have to arise from experience. I think counter-factual theological commitments are real, acceptable, and in fact necessary. What I mean to be saying is that we cannot start *solely* there and remain true to the world which we are trying to describe and help. Moreover, this claim is constrained by, as I wrote above, the inevitable hermeneutical aspect to my phenomenological enterprise. I am attempting to see the 'there there' understanding that it will always be somewhat colored by my religious commitments and beliefs.

their way through in ways that are quite similar to non-Christians: both have anxiety and doubt about the future, are unclear what is going to happen, are confused in their desires and malformed in their values. My account of Christian hope is constrained by what Christian hopers really are like; what human experience really is like. This, of course, comes out of a particular theological commitment of my own; namely, understanding the Christian always as *simul justus et peccator*. By this, I mean that Christians always still remain human — as we see that humanity represented variously around the world — even as they are justified. Christian experience will always be human experience —sinful human experience— and any analysis of Christian anthropology must keep this in mind when considering human beings in the world.

I should also note that in pursuing this project as I am doing, I aim to avoid certain shortfalls of alternative methodologies, namely those that focus exclusively on Christian eschatology as the grounds or sole lens for the examination of hope. For one, if one uses Christian eschatology as the sole starting point for investigating hope, one runs the risk of ignoring or minimizing the importance of hoping and hopes for this world, not just ultimately, but in the immediate future. This seems especially problematic when those historical hopes are under threat and are potentially being lost. For example, it is not self-evident that an eschatological focus makes adequate sense of the Kiribati hope (or hopelessness) for a place to call their own, amidst rising sea levels.[81] In a time

[81] Other theologians do ask about the relationship between our hopes and the ecological crisis. They tend to see eschatology as an answer to the crisis in some way, however. For instance, Paul Santmire asks, "will God now also permit humans to undermine the ecological support system of the biosphere, which makes life on this planet possible?...How are we to walk in hope?" (*Before Nature: A Christian Spirituality* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 42). Steven Booma-Prediger entertains the possibility of this-worldly human hopes, but quickly turns to claiming that we must instead look to the bible and its eschatological witness to discuss genuine hope (*For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), 175-177). John Polkinghorne and Michael Welker write, "in the face of the environmental crisis…and the threat by an age of increasing conflict, scarcity, and despair, many people around the world look to a future without hope…" (*The End of the World and the Ends of Gods* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2000), 7). See also Richard Floyd, *Down to Earth: Christian Hope and Climate Change* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015); Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation* (London: SCM Press, 1985); and Ted Peters, *Anticipating Omega* (Gottingen:

of environmental degradation, it seems relevant to attend to and consider this-worldly hopes and historical Christian hopes that might have a more intimate or vulnerable relation to the varying conditions of this *not (yet) new* creation.

Moreover, by beginning with the human phenomenon and not the normative Christian hope, I am able to withhold judgment on the benefit, goodness, or virtue of hope. Some may consider this problematic, given the centrality of hope to Paul's account of the Christian life. To consider one of many reasons to do this, however, take the fact that too little attention is currently given to one criticism of hope coming from liberation thought. Namely, that hope is a middle class or bourgeois virtue that functions in two ways: to keep those in poverty in their place by telling the poor to hope for the future, and as a self-palliating technique for the middleclass hoper, to soothe her into thinking she has *done* something or has a critical relation to the powers that be, without actual change. This criticism is particularly devastating to a focus on eschatological hope, where far too often and too easily hope is made into a *deus ex machina*—the last word, the conversation ender that allows the thinker to tell the sufferer, in the face of suffering and deep anxiety about her current situation, that all will be well, no matter what seems to be the case. Such claims can effectively deny the sufferer's reality and dismiss anxiety and despair too quickly as sin.[82]

Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2006). None ask the more particular question of the place or importance of this-worldly (or secular) hopes in the Christian life.

[82] See Miguel de la Torre, *Latina/o Social Ethics: Moving beyond Eurocentric Moral Thinking* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010), 89-123. See, for a somewhat similar observation, Ivone Gebara: "The poor continue to bend their knees before this deity (God), begging for mercy, clemency, and help in satisfying their most basic needs, harboring the spark of hope in the midst of their everyday lives. They act toward this God much the way they act toward the powerful of this world, hoping to be treated with consideration and to be left some prospect of earning their livelihoods with dignity" (*Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999, 167).

For these reasons, I investigate hope through the lens of everyday human experience, rather than using as my primary or first lens explicitly Christian hope, in order to better grasp various roles it plays in the human life, the possibility of abuse, its ethical significance, and why the climate crisis harms it.[83] With these few notes about my method in hand, I turn now to my second chapter, in which I give an account of the phenomenon of human hope, to disambiguate a commonly under-defined term.

[83] It is important to note by "lens of the eschaton" I mean here the tendency to *start* with the eschaton as the defining lens by which to understand all (or, at least, Christian) hope. Certainly, hopes for the eschaton and eschatological reflection more generally are important elements of Christian thought and practice and will be discussed in this dissertation as such.

CHAPTER 2: What is Hope?[1]

In her book *Beast and Man*, Mary Midgley makes the provocative, but insightful claim that only a creature that has "genuine, but weak inhibitions" would develop morality. Only an animal that has a notion of the right or good and yet often violates it develops conscience.[2] As such, the human is a moral creature, forever imagining the good and falling short of it. In the following two chapters, I will argue that something similar holds true of hope. Only a creature able to act into an imagined and envisioned future from intention, while aware of its own finitude and agential limitations would develop hoping.[3] Only an animal who can look into the unknown and can know both that it can *act* into that unknown and that it *cannot* determine that unknown, will be a hoper.[4] The human, then, is the hoping creature, imagining possibilities and knowing limits.

In things small and large—we are hopers. We hope to meet an old friend again; we hope that our government will disarm its nuclear missiles; we hope that our world, our universe, really *is* God's creation, made by God and in some way fundamentally good. Hopes, it seems, are not isolated or marked-out from general human life; rather, they pervade. They nest within one

[1] This chapter draws on my article, "Beyond Eschatology: Environmental pessimism and the future of human hoping," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 45.3 (2017).

[2] Mary Midgley, *Beast and Man* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1978): 39. If the creature believed in goodness and always was good, there would be no conflict, and hence no need for morality. Similarly, if the creature had no conception of what ought to be the case, there would be no conflict between what it did and what it ought to do and thus there would be no need for morality.

[3] Victoria McGeer makes a similar point in a somewhat different way. She writes, "If our own agencies were not so limited, we would not hope for what we desire, we would simply plan or act so as to achieve it. Hope signifies our recognition that what we desire is beyond our current (or sole) capacity to bring about." See "The Art of Good Hope," *American Academy of Political and Social Science* 592 (March 2004): 103. However, as we will see in the third chapter, where I treat her argument at length, she goes on to claim that this relationship *means* that all hope has an "aura of agency" about it (103), and that all hope therefore is most properly about end-setting. I find this to be a very problematic assertion, as will become clear in section 2.a of this chapter.

[4] Again, if a creature had the ability to act into an unknown and to determine it fully, there would be no need to hope; his intentions would always come to fruition. If a creature had no agency and no imagination, then there would be nothing but 'what is', and as such, the creature would not hope.

another—I hope to finish this chapter for the hope that I finish this dissertation for the hope that I finish the degree; they support one another—one hopes that one's marriage is successful and one hopes that one has children; and they pervade the everyday structure of our lives—in the morning, one hopes to get to work on time, one hopes that one will be productive and on-the-mark in the work one does, one hopes to make a deadline, and so on.

But what exactly is hoping? It is a slippery word, to say the least. We use it as a social nicety, saying, "I hope you slept well." We use it to convey something like our intentions for the future, claiming, "I hope to run for president one day." We speak of it as a force to overcome obstacles and hindrances—"her hope kept her going through the tragedy." It is content, it is activity, it is habit. We swim in a sea of hope and it is often hard to get a grasp on what pervades, what is presumed. To combat the possibility of equivocation, I turn to definitions.

It is obvious from what I've written above that the word hope can be used in several different grammatical senses. First, hope can be a verb—one can hope for something. I will throughout this chapter attempt to designate this the 'activity of hope' or 'hoping' to distinguish it properly from the other senses of hope. Second, hope can also be used as a noun, referring to that which one hopes for, which I will denominate 'the content of hope,' for clarity's sake.[5] Third, there is an attitude or habit that often attends and perhaps undergirds some hoping and hopes, and is often also termed 'hope'. Such an attitude or habit I will refer to as 'hopefulness.'[6]

[5] People disagree as to what the content of hope can be. Most philosophers take all content of hope to be states of affairs that one hopes will obtain—so, I don't hope for ice-cream, but rather I hope that a state of affairs will come about in which I am eating ice-cream. I am not particularly worried about this definition, but take this as a starting point in my discussion, although at times I do use the term "thing" to refer to the content of hope, for simplicity's sake.

[6] Many might call this a virtue. See, for instance, Patrick Shade, *Habits of Hope: A Pragmatic Theory* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000) and Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (New York: Bezinger Brothers, 1948). I take this habit as being necessarily related in some way to the activity of hope, such that one cannot have the virtue of hopefulness without also "hoping for". Note that, in distinction from my usage, some philosophers use the term hopeful and hopefulness to distinguish low hopes from high hopes, where hopeful implies

In this dissertation, my starting point is the activity of hope and I will discuss both the content and habit in relation to this activity.[7] My contention in this chapter is that hoping is pervasive in human living because it makes use of and integrates central human faculties, namely, our capacity to desire, our cognitive abilities, our evaluative capacities, and our volition. That said, contrary to much work in theology and environmental thought, hope is neither self-evidently crucial to moral action, nor self-evidently a good for human living. Only in Chapter Three will I turn to explore how, despite this ambiguity, hope may yet play an important role in our moral agency, in ways that usually go unexplored.

I turn now to develop a definition of hope, by examining it 1) as a type of desire that is constrained by 2) rational and 3) evaluative considerations, 4) and which depends upon the use of our will and results in particular emotions and activities. By the end of the chapter, I will have defended the following definition: one hopes when 1) one desires 2) that which one deems possible[8] but uncertain to obtain, 3) and when one deems the desired outcome good and valuable,

a high probability of attainment. See, for example, J.P. Day, *Hope: A Philosophical Inquiry* (Helsinki: Societas Philosophica Fennica, 1991): 56 and R.S. Downie, "Hope," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 24:2 (December 1963): 250.

[7] Obviously, the content and the activity are intimately related to one another, such that discussing one demands a discussion of the other. The habit of hope will arise from the repeated action of hoping, so it too depends upon the activity.

[8] This need not be fixed and clearly defined. One can desire both a possible state of affairs that is very determinate, such as 'I desire to eat cake this afternoon at home,' and one can desire possible states of affairs that are far broader and looser, such as 'I desire that my child flourish in her twenties.' What flourishing entails may vary and modulate over time. Note that this desired possible state of affairs is the 'content of hope'.

and not immoral, and 4) if the possibility of the state of affairs obtaining is deemed 'good enough to stand on'[9] for oneself, such that the hope has a resulting impact on one's living[10] over time.

[9] With this definition I am rejecting much of the philosophical discourse on hope, which distinguishes hope from not-hope by the probability of the hoped-for thing obtaining. See, for examples, Day, *Hope*, 62; Downie, "Hope," 248; Maria Miceli and Cristiano Castelfranchi, "Hope: The power of wish and possibility," *Theory Psychology* Vol. 20:2 (2010); J.M.O. Wheatley, "Wishing and Hoping," *Analysis* 18 (1958); and Michael Sean Quinn, "Hoping," *Southwest Journal of Philosophy* Winter 7:1 (1976). These thinkers agree to (slight) variations on a standard philosophical definition of hope that goes something like the following: hope will obtain in an individual when that person desires a good that is uncertain and there is a particular probability that the uncertain good will come about. These accounts do not adequately distinguish hope from despair, given that one can easily think of many situations where one desires an uncertain good and believes it to some degree probable, and yet does not hope. For instance, I may be ill with a disease that has a 60% survival rate, and I may desire my recovery and yet despair of it. Or, in contrast, I may be ill with a disease that has a 1% survival rate and I may desire my recovery and hope for it. The probability of the outcome occurring does not seem to be *the* deciding factor in one's attitude toward the uncertain good (see Adrienne Martin, *How We Hope* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014) and James Muyskens, *The Sufficiency of Hope* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979) for other discussion of this point).

[10] Several thinkers would be wary of my definition, believing I am too focused on determinate, contentful hopes. For instance, Gabriel Marcel sees 'hope proper' to be distinguished from 'hope that', where 'hope proper' is found in communion with the absolute Thou (as well as temporal thous), with a will for, and in patient expectation of, transcendence beyond one's captivity. He writes, "In face of the particular trial, whatever it may be, which confronts me and which must always be but a specimen of the trial of humanity in general, I shall always be exposed to the temptation of shutting the door which encloses me within myself and at the same time encloses me within time, as though the future, drained of its substance and its mystery, were no longer to be anything but a place of pure repetition…Against this combination of temptations there is only one remedy, and it has two aspects: it is the remedy of communion, the remedy of hope" (Gabriel Marcel, *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope*, trans. by E. Craufurd (Chicago, Henry Regnery Company, 1951): 60). This distinction, between hope and 'hope that,' where determinate contents are considered to be associated with only 'superficial' hopes, becomes an important distinction for many following Marcel (see, for instance, in differing ways, Joseph Godfrey, *A Philosophy of Human Hope* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987); Anthony J. Steinbock, "The Phenomenology of Despair," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* Vol. 15 (3)). Also note that Emmanuel Levinas may have a similar conception of hope to Marcel (see Catherine Chalier, "The Keenness of Hope," trans. Peter Hanly, *Levinas Studies* 5). According to Chalier, Marcel's understanding sees as universal a human experience of being captive and potentially stuck in the present, in 'what is the case,' and sees hope as an attitude toward an open future, that allows one to stand in a different relationship to one's current captivity and to believe that transcendence of this captivity is possible.

I believe that there is merit in discussing a general hope for release from captivity that results in patient anticipation of an open future. However, I believe that this kind of hope does not fundamentally challenge my definition as a whole. Consider the following reformulation: according to a conception of the world in which much of human life is entrapment and captivity, but which also allows for the possibility of human agency, change, and transcendence above current conditions, a person desires such transcendence, which one deems to be good and valuable and not immoral, and sees this transcendence as a possibility given their conception of the world, that is worthy and important to hope for, and this hope for transcendence impacts the way in which this individual lives in the current reality—it transforms his living into patient waiting and anticipation.

What is particularly helpful in thinkers such as Marcel and Levinas is their emphasis on the difficulty of maintaining certain conceptions of the world in face of threats and isolation. I find this to be a helpful nuance to my account and take it seriously. It may also be the case that their accounts of hope may better be related to a habit of hopefulness, as they seem primarily interested in the attitude and attention of the hoper, over the individual activity.

Similarly, as another challenge to my emphasis on 'hope for' formulations, Joseph Godfrey wants to emphasize the possibility of 'hope in' a person, which does not have a specific state of affairs that it hopes for, but rather is

1. Desire

First, let us briefly examine hope as a form of desire. It seems fairly uncontroversial that the need for hope lies in our identity as desiring beings. As desirous, we are incomplete and hope arises from desire for that which we do not have.[11] The Christian tradition rightly affirms this connection between incompleteness and hope. As Paul writes, "for now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face."[12] We desire Truth which we do not yet have and hope into that lack; as Aquinas describes, hope ends in the joy in the beatific vision.[13] Less emphasized within the Christian context, but just as crucial when thinking about hope as a human activity, we desire various states of affairs in this world as fulfillment of what we currently do not yet have: one might desire marriage, a fulfilling career, or a good night's rest. Lack and fulfillment drive our hopes, religious and non-religious.

Notice, however, that if desire is at the root of hoping, then hope is not *strictly* command-able.[14] In other words, while desires are malleable and educable, as well as shared (humans can learn to want things and humans tend to want similar things),[15] these desires are neither necessarily

"trusting love facing the future" (*A Philosophy of Human Hope*, 46). Again, the content of hope is not determinate, but is another person's future and being, that one trusts and loves and so hopes for. 'Hope in', I believe, can be reformulated successfully as hope that the other flourishes and love for the other, such that it is not a separate type of hope.

[11] Incompleteness, as evidenced by our desires for that which we do not have, is a sign of our finitude. That said, insofar as we can be fulfilled (whether in the eschaton, through a full life, or otherwise), fulfillment is not a loss of finitude, or a gaining of infinitude, necessarily. Additionally, this claim regarding finitude, incompleteness, and desire could also be taken to be controversial, insofar as one might say that "God desires," while not saying that God is finite. Here too, I would say that our desires are a sign of *our* incompleteness and, again, a sign of *our* finitude, without making any analogy to God.

[12] 1 Corinthians 13:12 (NRSV).

[13] Aquinas, ST II-II, Q.18, A.2.

[14] This is not to say that it is not command-able *at all*, but rather, that there is always a remainder that does not precisely conform to obligation.

[15] I mean this simply at the broadest level. The human creature, in general, needs shelter, food, community, and so on.

moral nor universal. There remains an initial facticity of desire, even though, as we will shortly see, desires for which one hopes are constrained by rational and evaluative considerations. There is truth to saying that which one desires is that which one desires: one does not solely hope for that which one deems to be moral (say, for world peace or racial justice in America). One hopes for those idiosyncratic desires that drive one's particular life. This helps explain the diversity of hopes, of course. Some hope to be actors, others lawyers; some hope to go on adventures, others to stay home comfortably and quietly; and so on. While clearly these various hopes have been formed and informed by various cultural factors, there remains still a sheer exuberance of human possibility in our varied hopes, rooted in our diverse desires.

Equally true, however, is that hope is not simply desire, but a type of formed desire. There are many things one desires for which one does not hope: for one thing, a beloved child does not hope for the love of her parents, precisely because that love is already secured. It is to this consideration we now turn.

2. Cognition

Hopes, then, are not brute desires, but are desires about which we make rational considerations. Desires become hopes if, when rationally considered, the hoper deems its object's fruition as possible, but uncertain.[16] In determining the possibility and uncertainty of a given desire obtaining, an individual makes use of her capacity to discern and weigh evidence in the world, to determine whether a given desire could obtain.

[16] Because possibility, certainty, and impossibility arise out of one's understanding of the world, these are always subjective (this does not entail that they cannot be right or wrong, or communicated to others). So, a child who trusts the authority of her parents, who claim that Santa Claus is real, may hope to see Santa Claus on Christmas eve. He hopes for this because he believes this to be a real possibility and yet recognizes it as uncertain.

By suggesting that rational considerations play a crucial role in hoping, I do not mean that in each and every instance of hoping, one has—in the forefront of one's mind—weighed the evidence and come to an exact understanding of possibility (or probability). Rather, these considerations of possibility and uncertainty, grounded in the evidence available to one, may well be submerged, imprecise, or vague. To this end, in distinction from many of the analytic philosophers interested in hope, I claim that humans are not usually particularly worried about precise 'probability of success estimates' to ground their hopes.[17] Outside of the medical field and gambling, in which one might be given a 'percent chance of survival' accompanying a diagnosis or an exact probability of winning, possibility and probability are unlikely to find such precision—given both our predictive abilities or our predilections to such prediction.[18] Our hopes do not *become* hopes due to an estimation of the percent chance of obtaining. I do not hope the kingdom come due to a calculation by which I determine that it seems, to me, 90% likely that it will come about.

That said, we often do distinguish between the 'highly likely' and the 'extremely uncertain' outcomes, and these differences in possibility will matter to hoping for many people. We talk of 'high hopes,' often meaning that one's hope *also* has a high probability of coming about, just as we talk about fervent or sincere hopes, meaning that one's desire is great and the hope is central to one's life.[19] However, it is important to note that not all hopes have this structure, and at times mere possibility (perhaps not even dwelled upon extensively) rather than probability will be the

[17] For examples, see Day, *Hope*, 62; Downie, "Hope," 248; Maria Miceli and Christiano Castelfranchi, "Hope: the power of wish and possibility," 255-257; J.M.O Wheatley, "Wishing and Hoping," 127-128.

[18] For thinkers who also push back at this criterion for hoping, see Adrienne Martin, "Hopes and Dreams," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 83:1 (July 2011): 150 and Nicholas Smith, "Analysing Hope," *Critical Horizons: A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory* 9:1 (May 2008): 14-15.

[19] Smith, "Analysing Hope," 10-11.

basis of hoping.[20] As such, I limit this criteria solely to "uncertain possibility" rather than any probability estimation. This estimation of "uncertain possibility" will at times be probabilistic or precise in its consideration of the evidence, and at other times less so, undergirded rather merely by a general sense that the desire could obtain.

Desires treated as possible but uncertain are to be distinguished from other types of formed desire. For instance, a desire treated as certain to be obtained should be counted as a type of expectation, rather than a hope.[21] So, the beloved child above doesn't hope for her parents love, but its expects it, as it is certain rather than merely possible. More mundanely, I expect to eat lunch, if I desire it and have all the means in my possession to fulfill the desire at the appropriate time.[22] Or, similarly, I expect the sun to 'rise' tomorrow morning, because according to what we know of the physical laws of the universe and my repeated past experiences, this is what seems bound to happen.[23] Now, one might be worried about my definition of expectation as a desire treated as certain, given that nothing of the future (or more generally the unknown) is absolutely certain.

[20] There are, for instance, times when one hopes without any sense of what would count as fulfillment, and so no sense of the probability of becoming fulfilled. See Smith, "Analysing Hope," 15-16 for helpful examples: think of hoping that you have made the right decision with regards to your marriage, at the time of your wedding. You will have no sense of what it will even mean, 20 years hence, to have made the right decision, nor do you entertain probabilities on this. To do so seems a bit amiss at the time of marriage. Moreover, the chance of success in this case would not alter the fact or intensity of one's hope for having made the right decision.

[21] Some thinkers try to demarcate expectation and hope differently. Miceli and Castelfranchi, for instance, suggest that expectation is a prediction that the desired event is probable, meaning more than 50% likely, while hope is exactly *like* expectation, but with a predication that the desired event is possible, but not probable (meaning less than 50% likely) ("Hope: The power of wish and possibility," 255). Making hope the domain of desires that one thinks are 50% or less probable seems not to account for the experience of hoping for something that is, on all accounts, extremely likely. And so, a person who greatly desires to have a child and has no reason to believe it beyond her to have a child, may still hope, rather than expect to have a child. This is not to suggest that one may *not* expect to have a child under these circumstances. One might. However, alone, her own sense of the probability of her having a child does not properly distinguish between the two activities.

[22] Shade makes this point when he quips, "Typically, we plan rather than hope to have breakfast each morning" (*Habits of Hope*, 54), his point being that one plans what one expects to happen, while one hopes for that which one is uncertain of.

[23] Note that expectation does not *require* desire in the way in which hope does. I clearly can expect the sun to set with no feeling one way or the other with regards to that expectation.

However, one can expect and so plan for the sun to rise tomorrow, or to have lunch today, because this uncertainty has been 'put to one side' to admit certain important forms of human agency. Expectation is necessary for much intention, planning, and action. So, that one expects the sun to rise tomorrow grounds one's ability to intend to do things and to plan for them. Without this expectation, most of our activities would become quickly meaningless.[24] One treats as certain that the sun will rise tomorrow, and acts into that "certainty."[25]

Oppositely, if a desire does not at all take into account the possibility or certainty of that desired thing coming about, then one would most likely call that desire a wish, rather than a hope. This distinction between hoping and wishing is not on account of a certain probability of something coming to pass, but rather on the individual's attitude toward that probability or possibility. In other words, one may desire something that is possible, but in no way attend to that possibility, and as such wish, rather than hope, for that thing to come to pass. As an example, one may desire to have one million dollars, without any attention or consideration given to the possibility of that desire coming to fruition. It may well be possible for that individual to obtain a million dollars and yet, in such a situation, it makes sense to say, I wish I could have a million dollars. Without attention to possibility and uncertainty of obtaining a million dollars, however, it seems quite

[24] See both Jonathan Lear, *Radical Hope* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008) and Samuel Scheffler, *Death and the Afterlife* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) for the difficulty of living today without expectation. Both have reflections and extended arguments on the necessity of 'being able to expect that things will go on relevantly similarly to how they have been going' for action and meaning. Here, I am claiming that action relies on expectation. I act always into a future that is technically unknown. Without expectation, where would the gumption to act come from? How could one even know that one's act would be understood as an act, if one could not expect the future to be certain ways similar to how one expects it to be. See Chapter 3 for further discussion of expectation and hope.

[25] Anthony Steinbock has a similar distinction between expectation and hope. Steinbock claims that the distinction between expectation and hope is based upon whether I see the future occurrence as actual or possible. He writes, "In expectation, we 'count on' the futural event as it is foreshadowed or anticipated." See "Time, Otherness, and Possibility in the Experience of Hope" in *Issues in Interpretation,* ed. Pol Vandevelde (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2006): 275.

inappropriate to say, I *hope* to have a million dollars. By this I do not mean that wishers cannot ever *think* about possibility or probability. Rather, such considerations do not impact in any way the wishing activity. Wishing can happen with or without them. One could say, after thinking of the (low) possibility of obtaining a million dollars, well, I might not hope for a million dollars, but I wish I had it![26] In contradistinction, in order to engage in the activity of hope, considerations of possibility are required.[27]

That said, while this distinction between wish and hope is in the agent, rather than in that which is desired, it does give rise to one difference in *kinds* of desired things that are admitted in the two activities. For, while hoping requires possibility in order to get off the ground, wishing can admit (and often does) of *impossible* desires, since it in no way considers the possibility of the desire as a factor in determining the activity. Consider, I have no talent whatsoever for operatic singing, although I greatly appreciate those who do and may have some desire to be good at operatic singing. In such a situation, hoping to be an opera singer seems impossible to me, since I know myself to have no talent for it, such that I know that it is impossible that this could come to

[26] Both Lear and Martin emphasize, instead, the magical nature of wishing, to distinguish it from hope. One might wish for a million dollars, and imagine a magical genie granting you that wish, or one might wish for a million dollars, and wish on a star that one is bestowed it. See Martin, "Hopes and Dreams," 155 and Lear, *Radical Hope*, 150. Margaret Urban Walker suggests that wishing is not realistic, but offers a complete alternative to reality (see *Moral Repair* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 54). Similarly, Steinbock claims that wish "operates in the sphere of a *hyper-factual, open possibility*" ("Time, Otherness, and Possibility in the Experience of Hope," 277), meaning, I presume, that it is beyond the realm of what could possibly be the case. I grant that these things are often features of wishing and may in fact be constitutive. With regards to my distinction, given their considerations, what I mean by a lack of consideration of possibility is *real* possibility, according to the individual's own understanding of causality and agency in the world. Of course, if a person believed in genies, and considered a genie bestowing upon them a million dollars a real possibility, that person may well hope to obtain a million dollars, rather than wish it.

[27] James Muyskens recognizes this necessity, writing, "Hoping has a possibility condition that wishing does not have" (*The Sufficiency of Hope*, 17). However, my account differs from his, as it differs from others, due to his insistence that hope has a deep relation with action, in a way that wishing does not. He writes, "The person who hopes that *p* acts as if *p* were true" (17). This does not seem to me either to be true of hoping, or to helpfully distinguish it from wishing. On this latter point, he seems to agree with Walker, who claims that, in distinction to the magical, non-real nature of wishing, hoping is 'alert to ways and means', because it wants to contribute to the outcome, in a way in which wish does not (Walker, *Moral Repair*, 50).

pass. But I could certainly wish it were the case that I could be an opera singer. Hoping requires attention to possibility in situations of uncertainty, in a way in which wishing does not. As such, one can entertain desires one has in wishing that one cannot in hoping.[28]

To return to the activity of hope: hoping depends upon having a desire for some state of affairs that one believes to be possible, but not certain.[29] I hope to have fun this weekend, because I recognize that such an outcome depends upon various eventualities of which I cannot be certain at this moment.[30] Now, by uncertain possibility, I mean to include only ontological and

[28] While in this section I am focusing on the distinction between wish and hope rooted in attention to possibility, there are several other distinctions between wish and hope that are relevant for the definitional analysis. First, that for which one wishes does not need to be good or valued (see below, Section 3.). I can wish for a million dollars, while not affirming that desire as a good or as something of value to me. Steinbock makes a similar point, saying that we can wish for truly frivolous or silly things, in a way not possible for hope ("Time, Otherness, and Possibility in the Experience of Hope," 277). Even further, I can wish for things that, on the whole, I deem to be 'bad' or of disvalue to me. So, I may consider the obtaining of unnecessary wealth an evil, but still wish for such wealth, but I could not hope for such wealth. Moreover, wishing does not make one emotionally vulnerable to that which is wished for, as one does not become invested in and committed to one's wishes. Rather, they are fancies, desires entertained without real reflection on the desired outcomes impact on one's own life.

[29] Steinbock would be wary of my definition here. He worries that hope is not, in the experience of it, about probability estimates or even about considerations of possibility, both of which are rational, but rather claims that hoping arises spontaneously, evoked in specific situations. Only after the fact could we, he thinks, consider and analyze a situation in terms of possibility (see "Time, Otherness, and Possibility in the Experience of Hope," 276). I am not particularly concerned with this distinction. For one thing, I do think that people in situations where they hope know their hopes to be possible—the possibility or probability of the hope colors the very hoping activity, as one is in the midst of hoping. For instance, while hoping, I can have 'high hopes' or 'faint hopes' and so on. It is not merely after the fact that one 'discovers' through analysis the nature of the possibility of that which is hoped for. Moreover, I am interested in analyzing hope, in seeing the conditions under which one *does* hope, and as such, am concerned with considerations of possibility and probability, insofar as they limit the activity of hoping. Whether these considerations are 'at the front' of a person's consciousness in the hoping activity, or 'at the back' is of less concern to me. Either way, it seems to me to be the case that in order to hope, one has to somehow consider that which is hoped for possible, but uncertain.

[30] While some thinkers, such as Shade (*Habits of Hope*) and Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*), require that the possibility and incertitude be accompanied by arduousness in order for hope to obtain, I find this to be far too limiting. Think, for example, of someone who hopes that it will rain tomorrow. Such a person hopes this because the content of the hope is uncertain, but possible—not because the content of the hope is hard to obtain. Smith has a more charitable reading of this criteria of arduousness. He claims the word arduous in Aquinas's definition refers to the commitment we have to the hope and the hoped for state of affairs, that we have to continue hoping through a history that at times requires 'pressing on' in the hope in face of problems. His claim is that the term arduous is attempting to get at the fact that we do not simply hope for everything we desire and is uncertain; rather we hope for those things that matter to us, that have significance to us, and in that significance lies our willingness to work to maintain the hope. See "Analysing Hope," 20. I am not convinced by this explanation, and I place the importance of 'significant to me' in a different way; see Section 3. below.

metaphysical possibility, understood subjectively.[31] For, while it seems one can hope for things that are improbable, logical possibility alone does not seem to allow one to properly hope for something—as R.S. Downie writes, "it is logically possible that a person born today will live to the year 3000", but one cannot hope for such a thing; it is "not sufficiently probable to merit the adjective improbable."[32] Sheer logical possibility, i.e. merely being consonant with the rules of logic, is not, in the vast majority of cases, sufficient for hope.[33]

That being said, however, what counts as sheer logical possibility for most may be ontological or metaphysical possibility for others. So, while for most people the possibility that a person born today will live to the year 3000 *is* solely logically possible, and so not a ground for hope, it could be the case that some community has ardent hopes for such a thing, based on a belief that it is possible that someone born today *could* live to the year 3000.[34] For this community, this would not be a mere logical possibility, but a real, uncertain possibility, rooted in their understanding of the world. The structures of meaning that they have created and which they claim rule the world, or the understanding they have of the possibilities inherent in the human body, admit of the possibility that a human born today will live to the year 3000. As such, it could be robustly ontologically or metaphysically possible according to this community, and as such, a ground for hope.

[31] By subjectively, I simply mean that one hopes for things when they are metaphysically and ontologically possible *according to the individual in question*. I am not a neutral arbiter of possibility. By metaphysical possibility, I mean that which is conceived as possible given the structure of reality as such, according to the individual hoper. By ontological possibility, I mean that which is conceived of possible given the structures of meaning that organize the world as a whole, according to the hoper.

[32] Downie, "Hope," 249.

[33] So, many people might *wish* that a person born today would live to the year 3000, but not hope for it.

[34] This does not entail that such a community is right, or has a coherent worldview, or cannot be criticized. It is simply noting that possibility does look relevantly different depending on the community you belong to.

2.a Forms of Uncertainty

Naming 'uncertain possibility' alone does not describe for us in enough detail what cognitive considerations give rise to hope. For, excluding bare logical possibility as grounds for hope, there is still a wide range of uncertain possibility that can give rise to hope—from the highly improbable to the highly likely—and that possibility can take many forms, depending on where the uncertainty lies. In this section, I provide a brief overview of different grounds for considering something possible but uncertain, to clarify the character of human hoping.

First, one might hope for something, rather than expect or wish it, given one's estimation of *one's own current limitations*. One may be uncertain that one will have what it takes to accomplish a desired good. So, one may hope someday to become a renowned ecologist, knowing that currently one does not have the requisite skills. This hoping is in one's own developing capacities, recognizing that one's power to accomplish the desire is limited, even as it relies on one's own activity to bring about the hope. Most likely, only if one does in fact study and set the hoped-for end as a *goal* for oneself can one license oneself to hope for that end. We hope, in this scenario, as finite agents, where our agency and its constraints provoke the need for hope.

Many hopes are of this sort, and they do display an essential feature of hoping—it is a self-oriented activity. This does not mean that all one's hopes are selfish, but rather that in hoping, we hope for something that *matters to us*.[35] There are theological hopes like this: one may be certain of God's promises, but uncertain as to whether one will partake in them, and wary that one may be, in the end, unable to do God's will. Some thinkers in fact claim that this is true Christian hope,

[35] See below, Section 3.

at the nexus between assurance of God and our own possible ineptitude.[36] Hoping for something that we ourselves will accomplish is a very common activity, religious and non-religious. In much of the literature, it is these sorts of hopes that are exclusively considered.[37] And one can see why: it is easy to discuss hopes of this nature in relationship to individual agency, planning, and goal achievement.

However, this is only one reason for uncertainty that might attend hoping, and as such hoping cannot be strictly tied to one's hopes for oneself and one's own agency. For one may hope for something, and not expect or wish it, because of *other's* current limitations. I may hope that my nieces will go to college, knowing that at the current moment it is uncertain, although a definite possibility, that they will do so. It still depends on their developing their capacities in various ways through their years of schooling, as well as their own desires to attain such a goal.

Now, my agency still *could* be implicated in this hope, insofar as I might have the capacity to promote the goal of college attendance to my nieces, although such influence would most likely be fairly indirect.[38] However, even if I had *no such capacity* to interfere or influence my nieces' behavior, it seems perfectly reasonable that I could still properly hope in this for them. People do

---

[36] See in particular A. Philip Griffiths, "Certain Hope" *Religious Studies,* 26:4 (1990), 461. See also Day, "Hope," 26 and Godfrey, *A Philosophy of Human Hope*, 29–30.

[37] This is particularly prevalent in psychological and social sciences research. See, for a particularly influential example of this, C.R. Snyder's work on hope and his "Hope Scale." He understands hope to be a motivational state that comes out of one's self-perceived ability to attain goals, and a sense that the pathways to that goal are attainable. Those individuals with strong goal-setting minds, and high senses of agency will be more hopeful, and will, consequently, achieve more. C.R. Snyder et al., "The Will and The Ways: Development and Validation of an Individual-Differences Measure of Hope," *Journal of Personal and Social Psychology* 60:4 (1991). See as well, Shade, *Habits of Hope*; Stephen Fishman and Lucille McCarthy, *John Dewey and the Philosophy and Practice of Hope* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Walker, *Moral Repair*; Victoria McGeer, "The Art of Good Hope." All of these thinkers focus almost exclusively on hopes of this nature, and as such, I believe, have definitions and evaluations of the activity of hope that are one sided.

[38] I believe that situations like these show the flaw in the analyses of the thinkers in the above footnote. If I set as an end for myself my niece's college attendance, I am just as likely to feel, as an agent, paralyzed, and I am just as likely to be thwarted in my attempts, such that hoping in that way in fact decreases my sense of agency, rather than increasing it. As such, having a high sense of agency in relationship to my hopes for others may in fact lead to more frustration and a diminishment, over time, of my sense of agency and my predilection to hope.

hope for things they cannot affect. I could still see their attending college as a good, uncertain possibility that I affirm for them.

Presumably many theological hopes rooted in God's actions are like this: for instance, a person might hope that God miraculously cures his daughter and pray to God accordingly. Both hopes—secular or theological—are in another's agency, not fully controllable by the hoper. The human is limited in her power to control those things accomplished by others, and insofar as she is limited, she hopes. As such, it seems incorrect to suggest that hoping is necessarily related to end-setting for oneself. Too many of our daily hopes—both significant and small—are simply unrelated to any ends we set for ourselves to accomplish by action and that inaction does not make the hope less ardent. In the example regarding my nieces, the uncertainty and possibility lies in others' agencies and potentials, and it depends *on them* developing their lives in certain ways that I hope for. My hope is in *their* agency and the possibilities and uncertainties that accompany it.

But, the possibility and uncertainty may be rooted entirely elsewhere than in anyone's agency, such that not only can I not set the hoped-for thing as an end for myself, but it does not pertain to anyone else's end-setting either. One may hope for something in the future that may or may not come about, independently of *any* person's action. A person could hope for it to be sunny on his wedding day, and he may be perfectly able to hope this—it is a definite possibility that it will be sunny in late August, for instance, but it is certainly not a certainty, nor is it related directly to any person's agency. The day will come about in whatever way it will, whether he engages in the activity of hoping or not. The groom clearly in no way set as an end for himself the goal of it being sunny on his wedding day, nor does he believe that another's agency (whether or not he can

affect that agency) is implicated in the outcome.[39] Doing so may in fact betray an irrationality on his part.

Throughout these last three paragraphs, in conjunction with discussing the various ways something could be possible, but uncertain, I have also emphasized the possibilities and limits of talking about hope as it relates to end-setting and action, for oneself or another. While it seems that in some cases, one does set that for which one hopes as an end for oneself, it also seems that hope need not be directly tied to end-setting, many of our hopes being independent of such activities. Hope cannot easily be equated to setting for oneself personal goals or things we seek for or from others. With regards to the nature of hope, this is an important point in two ways. It means that, in contradistinction from Aquinas,[40] and a long strain of thought following him, hope is *not*

[39] There is, of course, the possibility that someone hoping this might in fact think that another's agency is implicated—say God's agency, for instance. One could further believe that one can influence that person, God, through prayer. That possibility, however, does not impact my basic point which is simply that it seems entirely reasonable, and part of the concept of hope, that one could hope for something that one believes to be outside any agent's control.

[40] Aquinas's account of hope merits more attention than I give it here. That said, here is my analysis. Aquinas's understanding of human hope (*not* the theological virtue) is that it is a passion of the irascible appetite, or in other words, resists attacks that hinder the good or inflict harm (*Summa Theologica*, I-II.20). Hope, specifically, is that irascible passion that seeks goods which are difficult or arduous to obtain, as they are considered good and possible, such that it produces in us a tendency toward that good (I-II.23.2). Hope is necessarily about the future (I-II.40.1) and is always about things that are difficult to obtain, since things easy to obtain would not be hopes, but expectations or the object of our intentions (I-II.40.1). For Aquinas, there are two ways in which the object of hope can be difficult to obtain: it can be difficult according to one's own power, or because one relies on another's power to help one obtain it (I-II.40.2). Hope always helps or increases action because the object's difficulty arouses one's attention, and the fact that it is possible to attain increases effort (I-II.40.8). Lastly, hope is necessarily directed to one's own good; one cannot simply hope for another. That said, if one is united to another in love, one can hope for something for another, as if for oneself, given one's union with the other in love (II-II.17). Hope, as a human activity, *is entirely distinct from* hope as a theological virtue. Hope as a theological virtue is *not* an irascible appetite, but a habit of the will. This is because it has God as its object, and God is not a sensible, but divine object, and so therefore cannot be an object of the *sensible* appetite. Therefore, it is not a passion, but a habit that is a virtue, as it is oriented toward attaining the true good, God (II-II.18.1).

It is clear from this quick explanation that for Aquinas common hope is for objects that are difficult to obtain, otherwise it would not be an irascible appetite. Therefore, Aquinas's account cannot accommodate hopes like the following: I hope that it is sunny tomorrow. He cannot account for this because 1) it is not arduous to attain and 2) it is not a matter of one's own power or another's help, but rather is simply an uncertain future desire. As such, he would most likely claim that such a locution is a misuse of the word hope, and that rather one should simply say, I desire that it is sunny tomorrow. That, however, does not adequately account for the similarities that the statement "I hope that it is sunny tomorrow" has to a statement such as "I hope to become a virtuosic pianist," nor does it account for the relevant distinctions between statements like "I desire that it is sunny tomorrow" and "I hope that it is sunny

a movement of appetite aroused by the perception of what is agreeable, future, arduous, and possible of attainment by me.[41] Hope's uncertainty and possibility isn't tied to agency or action in that way— it is not connected to my arduous struggles, my actions, or even another's, for the hoped-for thing. It does not incline me, necessarily, to work for the good I hope for, and in some cases doing so would demonstrate a lack of adequate rational consideration. Following from this, separating hope from end- or goal-setting means that it does not undergird morality in a way many think. It is not, in itself, a goad to act for the good, nor is hope necessarily linked to certain virtues thought to develop as one struggles to attain the hoped for good.[42] The sorts of uncertainty that give rise to hope are much broader than the uncertainty of one's own agency.

As such, I will continue then with my schema of the types of uncertainty that may give rise to hope. While hope is customarily associated with the future, as it is often considered *the* realm of the unknown, it is not bound to it.[43] For, the uncertainty can also be due, for instance, to

---

tomorrow." Similarities between the statements I hope it is sunny tomorrow and I hope to become a virtuosic pianist are the following: 1. Both statements are about uncertain possibilities that are considered goods and that matter to the individual saying them. 2. Both statements, as Aquinas himself admits, are *not* in the person's power presently to obtain, such that one can simply expect or intend these things to happen. Distinctions between the hope that it is sunny tomorrow and the desire that it is sunny tomorrow: 1. If one desires it to be sunny tomorrow, this does not say anything about one's estimation of that desire or its value to oneself. I also desire to eat 20 donuts. Or quit work early on a Friday. That does not mean that I hope to do either of those things. I could *meaningfully* say to an individual who says, "I desire it to be sunny tomorrow," "Yes, but do you hope for it?"

These distinctions and similarities lead me to believe that Aquinas's account does not fully account for all hoping activities. Others take up various elements of Aquinas's definition in their own analyses. For instance, Walker believes that all hope has an "aura of agency about it" and that those hopes that are about things that cannot be affected by human agency are parasitic upon agentially affect-able hopes. One hopes saying something like, "if I could do something, I would." See *Moral Repair*, 103.

[41] *Summa Theologica*, I-II.25.1. Two thinkers who agree with my criticism of Aquinas are Muyskens, *The Sufficiency of Hope*, 16 and Martin, *How We Hope*, 75-81.

[42] I will return to this point in Ch. 3, on the connections between hope and morality.

[43] Many people do disagree with me on this: J.P. Day, "More about Hope and Fear" *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 1 (1998): 122; Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, Paul Knight (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986); Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, see 85; Anthony Steinbock, "Time, Otherness, and Possibility in the Experience of Hope," 272. For instance, Steinbock claims that all hopes are oriented toward a "futural open significance, most often (but not exhaustively) expressed in terms of some futural occurrence" (272). As such, he has room to say that there might be hopes that are about the past (as there might be some hopes that are not expressed in terms of some futural occurrence), but that such hopes still have a future orientation, given their temporal character—the hoper 'awaits,' 'endures', and has 'openness' (286). I personally think it is probably easier

information or knowledge one does not currently have, of a fact that is already decided. And so, I may hope that my friend has passed a test, but I may not have access to that information, although the matter is already set. Now, someone might argue that the hope that my friend has passed the test is still relevantly future oriented and could be meaningfully and correctly reformulated as: I hope to find that my friend passed his test. Such an objector might emphasize that I will find out whether or not he has passed the test *in the future*.[44] However, this reformulation seems overly limiting in two respects. First, such a reformulation collapses hopes I have for another into hopes for myself. It seems entirely possible that I hope that my friend passed his test, with no thought of whether I would ever know one way or another. In this scenario, I don't hope to find out about his passing of the test, I hope for his having passed itself. Secondly, this objection, which wants to keep hope solely about the future, really does cut out a species of hope that seems legitimate: hopes about the past that cannot come to be known. As examples, consider the following hopes: the hope I might have that a person died at peace with himself, or the hope that life was tolerable for Roman women, despite the strictures put on their lives.[45] These sorts of hopes simply cannot be collapsed into 'hopes to find out' because they are hopes about the past that one cannot ever come to know.[46] And so, it seems that epistemological uncertainty[47] can be the root of the uncertainty of hope. As

to simply talk about these characteristic postures, if they in fact do accompany hoping, on their own without the designation 'futural' as that seems to confuse the matter, rather than clarify it. I also am as yet unsure that awaiting, enduring, and openness are requisite postures of hoping.

[44] Walker, for instance, claims this, writing "When we speak of hoping with respect to something already over and done, it seems "I hope that…" makes sense not because the event hoped about is not past, but because one remains uncertain about how it has come out. These ways of speaking borrow on the *futurity* of hope—hope goes to what hovers before us with a sense that all is not decided *for us*; what is not yet known is 'as if' open to chance and action, for all one knows. Saying "I hope that…," where the apparent object of hope is actually a fact already determined might be understood as short for "I hope I will discover that…"" (*Moral Repair*, 45).

[45] Martin points this out, using the hope that Hitler was miserable when he died (*How We Hope*, 68).

[46] This further separates hope from end setting. Some hopes, while uncertain and possible, are not obtainable for me. Hope simply isn't related to personal ends in this way.

[47] While Quinn does not move away from a standard definition of hope (desire plus probability), despite his attempt to do so by adding the condition that the desire must be "to some degree important" (61), he does have an

such, hope does not necessarily reside in the future tense. The relevant aspect is the uncertainty of the possibility of the relevant desire obtaining.[48]

Further, the uncertainty that attends hope is often due to various factors, rather than merely one form of uncertainty. Most hopes have several uncertainties: one's own abilities, the vicissitudes of life, others' agency, and so on. And so, I hope to get a tenure track job, but I do not simply expect to get one, given the uncertainty of the future: of the fact that my agency and a myriad of others' agencies must coordinate in particular ways in order to bring about this possibility, combined with all the uncertainties that attend human life—the possibility of death, sickness, other pursuits that could all prevent the content of my hope from being realized. But it is a possibility—I am in graduate school, I am so far successfully completing the research tasks required of me, I am pursuing teaching experience, and so on and so forth, such that, given my understanding of reality, I can hope to someday have a job. Hopes, even hopes in which one's end-setting and goals are relevant, are almost always outside the realm of one's control alone.

As I have introduced, uncertainty also attends Christian hopes, in at least two additional ways, that may be helpful to add to our schema of types of possibility. First, there is the uncertainty and consequent hope (rather than expectation) that is rooted in religious *doubt*. And so, the father of the demoniac in Mark 9 calls out to Jesus, with all believers since, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). A Christian might say the life of faith is marked by human sin, marring

interesting discussion about various possibilities of epistemological uncertainty that may attend hoping. One may hope for something, rather than expect it, despite one's certainty of that something, if one knows that one is the kind of person "who becomes certain about the truths of propositions very easily, such that his certainty is not epistemically warranted" ("Hoping," 56), and so is uncertain of one's own certainty. And so, in addition to being epistemically uncertain about something, one can also be epistemically uncertain about one's certainty about something.

[48] Note that there are clearly also 'transcendent hopes' that are not strictly tied to the past, present, or future. The hope that the world is God's creation is not a hope tied to a particular time. It is a hope for the whole, and a hope that transcends history or time in terms of its object. It is, as I say just before, epistemologically uncertain.

human ability to trust God and to see God's action and presence in the world. One consequently hopes, uncertain in the face of one's own doubt and one's own sin that one's theological hopes will come about. Second, even if humanity had not sinned, as finite creatures we do not know the mind of God. And so, even if there are texts and sources to go to and experiences that one has that seem revelatory of God's intentions toward one and toward the creation, there is a fundamental epistemological divide between what God intends and what we can know. And so, even if the bible is revelatory, it is human words, interpreted by humans, and with that comes uncertainty, risk, and possible misinterpretation.[49] As such, even theological hoping is grounded on uncertainty.

Uncertain possibility, whether it is due to agential limits, epistemic uncertainty, or the obscurity of time, can give rise to hope. In conclusion, one's capacity to consider and evaluate evidence for the possibility of a desire obtaining is a crucial aspect of hoping, even if it is over-emphasized in some philosophical circles. However, whether one hopes or not is not itself necessarily determined by the probability *or* possibility of its outcome, and so a definition of hope that relies solely on possibility in addition to desire does not alone adequately distinguish hope from other activities. To illustrate: if I strongly desired to smoke a cigarette, and thought it uncertain, but possible that I could obtain one, there is no reason to think that I would necessarily *hope* to smoke a cigarette. There are several reasons this may be the case: I may understand my desire for smoking to be *bad*, or, alternatively, I may *despair* of obtaining a cigarette to smoke,

[49] Griffiths thinks that this form of uncertainty is simply silly—he writes, "the hope in Christian hope, that God will give us eternal life and all the means to obtain it, if we do what He requires of us, is straightforwardly that" ("Certain Hope," 456). There is, according to him, no lack of clarity as to *what* we ought to hope for or the way in which we ought to hope. It is clear and needs little to no interpretation that it is our uncertain ability to gain eternal life, given our sinfulness, that makes us hope, rather than expect. I find this, itself, to be a silly dismissal of a form of uncertainty that faces all human beings. Eternity is itself a *figurative* and necessarily interpreted word. Moreover, given that there is an entire branch of Christianity that finds this form of religious doubt to be itself the work of evil (namely Lutheran Christianity finds the claim that we must do everything that God requires of us in order to obtain eternal life to be a form of human pride), I do not find Griffith's claim to clarity at all convincing.

rather than hope to obtain. I may desire it, and think it a possibility, but not *myself* recognize that possibility as sufficient for hoping. These counterexamples elucidate the insufficiencies of a definition of hope based solely in desire and possibility. As such, I turn to the next element in hoping: one's evaluation of one's desires.

3. Evaluation

In addition to being deemed possible, I will argue that the object of the desire must be deemed by the individual as good, as valuable, and as not-immoral, in order to hope. In other words, in hoping, we make use of our evaluative faculties to judge our desires according to what we deem good, valuable, and permissible.

Now, claiming that one's desires must be deemed good and valuable to one in order to hope might seem doubly redundant. First, some may say that one cannot desire that which one perceives as a 'not-good'.[50] However, at a phenomenal level, at least, it seems that one can desire to *not* desire something,[51] or conversely, one can desire to desire something, the classic example being God. Further, one can engage in activity intended to modify one's desires,[52] and one's desires can be slowly modified in conscious and unconscious ways. Given this malleability of desire, to identify desire, *simpliciter*, with 'perceived as good' does not take into account the complexity of human psychology. And so, we can all think of desires not hoped for. I often desire to return to bed for more sleep at the beginning of the workday, for instance, but I do not hope to do so. I do

[50] In other words, my desire for eating cake would necessarily mean that I see eating cake as a good.

[51] For instance, it is perfectly understandable to most people that a person might desire cigarettes and desire not to desire them.

[52] In some cases, this does seem foolhardy or potentially harmful to the individual undergoing such an activity, as when one attempts to alter sexual attraction through aversion therapy and similar avenues. However, given the caveat that some basic desires that humans have may not be able to be overcome or modified, there are many that are and can be. For instance, when an addict seeks treatment to overcome a reliance on a drug.

not hope to do so because hoping is concerned with *evaluated* desires,[53] or—more particularly—desires the hoper deems good.

Second, some may say that definitionally "valuable to me" simply means that which one desires and which one deems good. However, this too does not adequately distinguish valuing from deeming good, the latter being a far broader category than the former. For instance, a monk can deem marriage a good without valuing it for himself, and certainly not hoping for it. In this section, I will first discuss the desire as good, and then follow it with a discussion of the good's relationship to valuing, before turning to discuss morality and immorality as it relates to hope.

3.a The Good

By perceived as good, I mean two things: the state of affairs or object of desire that is considered an excellence (or good of a kind) and/or a natural good.[54] By good of a kind, I simply mean an excellent example of a type. So, for example, a human individual might be a good mathematician, insofar as she is excellent at math. Similarly, a cheetah could be a good runner, insofar as the cheetah runs excellently according to cheetah standards.[55] Or, a meal might be good if it is satisfying, flavorful, and nutritious for the people who eat it. This conception of the good is fundamentally teleological or purposeful. One is good insofar as one fits well or accomplishes well an end specified. The contrary of this meaning of the good need not be evil or bad, but poor. And so, a human might be a poor mathematician, a cheetah a poor runner, or a meal poor in flavor.

[53] Martin recognizes the need to distinguish all desires from evaluated desires in hope, but does not go further into discussing this need. See "Hopes and Dreams," 150.

[54] As I will show below, the moral good is relevantly different, and so is discussed in section 3.c.

[55] I specify this only because any cheetah would be a good runner according to human standards, since human standards for running are much lower than cheetah standards for running. So, judging a cheetah a good runner according to human standards does not express much about the excellence of the cheetah.

Insofar as the thing does not meet the criteria of excellence for the end set, it falls short, or fulfills the standard only in part.

And so, one can hope for goods of a kind, for oneself or another to achieve excellence of this type, or for oneself or another to partake in something that is itself an excellent example of a type. So, I may hope for myself to be a good mathematician, or I may hope for another to be so. Similarly, I may hope to partake in an excellent meal, or I may hope for another to partake so. But, as may be obvious, one cannot hope for that which is not a good in this conception. I, usually, cannot hope to be a poor mathematician.

That being said, there are several situations in which one might seem to hope for something poor rather than excellent. First, one might hope to be that poor mathematician if doing so is somehow an excellency according to one's conception of the world. For instance, one may have a worldview in which excellent mathematical skill is considered to be evidence of a prideful nature, such that one can hope *not* to have such a skill. While it might be recognized by such a person or her community that such skill is an excellence, it is an excellence considered inappropriate for human humility. In this situation, one may hope to be a poor mathematician because of one's conception of proper human being in the world, and as such, see being a poor mathematician as itself part of what it means to be truly excellent. Second, one might have such difficulty with mathematics that *any* skill at all, even poor skill, would be '*excellent for me*.' In such a situation, one may hope to be a 'poor mathematician,' while understanding it as more properly (although idiosyncratically) an excellence. Third, there are situations in which other goods at issue may be accomplished in so hoping. And so, again, one may hope to be a poor mathematician, for instance, for another's self-esteem. One may not want to outshine one's partner, and so one may hope to be a poor mathematician for the sake of the resulting harmony in one's relationship with one's spouse.

This complexity of resulting states of affairs is common, and accounts for many hopes that seem not to fit with my definition.[56]

While one can hope for excellencies, this aspect of the good cannot stand alone. For, excellencies depend upon understandings of the natural good. Or, in other words, one's understanding of the natural good precedes what one deems excellent. By natural good, I simply mean those things understood as part of flourishing,[57] either for humans or for nonhumans. And so, I will not hope to be a truly excellent dictator if my understanding of the flourishing of the human being does not include being a dictator or dictatorship.

Now, natural goods can only be specified through examining the character and needs of the given creature or plant under discussion. For, what is required for a flourishing life of a muskrat is relevantly different from what is required for a redwood tree. Natural goods, therefore, are not singular or universal, but specific to type. And so, for instance, food and oxygen are natural goods to most animals. Social engagement is a natural good to social animals. And so on. One may note at this juncture, however, that some excellencies (goods of a kind) may be in fact natural goods for a specific creature. And so, to return to the example of the cheetah, in order to have a flourishing life, a cheetah may in fact have to be an excellent runner. To be a poor runner, according to cheetah standards, may impede the very life of the cheetah. While the ability to run as a natural good certainly precedes the goodness of excellency, there is at times little space between the two.

[56] For another example, a mother may hope that her child does poorly in college, so that he comes back home, where she can protect him.

[57] By part of flourishing I do not mean to suggest that all people will have to engage, partake, or embody all natural goods. One might consider the ability to make music a good that humans have, and yet not make music oneself.

As one might see, natural goods are in some cases up for contestation. What, for instance, is required for a flourishing human life? People may differ as to what makes up basic natural goods, but at this point I am not interested in the details of differing positions on this.

The contrary to natural goods would be natural disvalues.[58] That which would impede the flourishing of an individual or group would be of disvalue for that individual or group. So, starvation is of disvalue for animals, hurricanes that come to shore in populous areas are of disvalue for human individuals and their cities. Again, clearly, one can hope for natural goods of various sorts.[59] One can hope that one will have enough food to feed one's family. Or one can hope that arctic ecosystems stay intact enough to undergird the flourishing of polar bears. Or one can hope that Jesus come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.[60] And, similarly as above, one would not hope for something one deems a disvalue.[61]

3.b Valuable

However, that the desired object be deemed good by the individual does not accomplish all that is needed to have an accurate account of hoping. That which is desired and deemed good, must also be of value to me. Why this distinction? Valuing connects the desire and the goodness of the object or state of affairs. Consider the following: one may desire to have children. And one may consider, generally the having of children to be a natural good. There is, so far, nothing to

[58] These are usually called natural evils, but I find the use of the term evil confusing, given its moral connotation, and so avoid it here.

[59] Of course, what counts as a natural good may differ depending on the individual's opinion and understanding of human flourishing.

[60] This too would be, according to this schema, considered a natural good—Jesus's rule is that which humans are made for, and so one hopes for that to come to be.

[61] The complexity 'exception' works here as well. One may hope for something one considers a 'disvalue' if it is part of a larger state of affairs one considers a good, or at least comparatively a good. And so, one may hope that one's mother has stage 1 breast cancer (while considering breast cancer a bad for humans), if the alternative is a later stage that would make her chance of survival much lower. Or, one may hope that one's son has poor coordination, so that he does not engage in the sport of football.

connect these two statements. One desires it. It is a good. One may still not hope for children for a variety of reasons—as I mentioned above, one may be a monk or a nun, or one may see other desires as far outweighing any desire to have children, or, alternatively, one may consider the desire 'merely biological,' and so on. Something stronger must link the good and the desire for that good— having one's own children must be valuable to that particular person, in his own life.[62]

By 'valuable to oneself,' then, I mean the following: in addition to desiring[63] the state of affairs, as well as seeing that state of affairs as good, one must oneself be committed[64] to this specific good, desired state of affairs, and emotionally vulnerable to the state of affair's existence.[65] For example, to return to an earlier example, if I value one of my nieces going to college, I do not simply desire that it be so, and think of college attendance as a good generally. I further am committed to this particular state of affairs coming to be for her, and I am emotionally vulnerable

[62] I think Muyskens is trying to get at something like this when he claims that one only hopes for those things one desires "on balance," with the recognition that we have many desires that we do not treat as normative, and do not hope for. What his account does not adequately parse out is the way in which we can both have desires that we deem good and yet do not value. I take it that my account better differentiates different possibilities. See Muyskens, *The Sufficiency of Hope*, 17-18. Frasier Watts similarly recognizes that hopes are for things that are deemed good by the hoper, and further understands that in addition, one hopes for things that are "important to you" ("Subjective and Objective Hope: Propositional and Attitudinal Aspects of Eschatology" in *The End of the World and the Ends of God*, eds. John Polkinghorne and Michael Welker (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press Int., 2000), 58). While not explaining this criterion, it could be similar to my claim about value.

[63] I grant that not all valuing includes desiring. Consider an illuminating example from Sam Scheffler, "Valuing," in *Reasons and Recognition: Essays on the Philosophy of T.M. Scanlon*, ed. R. Jay Wallace, Rahul Kumar, and Samuel Freeman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 2. As Scheffler explains, I may value Vaclav Havel (or any person for that matter), without desiring Vaclav Havel. That said, it seems right to say that valuing uncertain but possible states of affairs *does* always include desiring those states of affairs to obtain. If someone can think of a counter-example, I would be grateful to hear it.

[64] Steinbock similarly claims that hope is distinguished from wish in part because we are invested in the outcome of which we hope. He writes about this as a subjective disposition of "engaged possibility" that is what defines the character of hope ("Time, Otherness, and Possibility in the Experience of Hope," 277). This, however, does not get at the aspect of hoping as interested in that which is good, as well as that which I am committed to. As such, I think "valuing" gets better at this than "engaging."

[65] Scheffler suggests that in addition to seeing that which you value as valuable (such that others should also see it as good), one must be emotionally vulnerable to the welfare of the thing valued ("Valuing," 36-37). I find this a helpful insight into what it means to value something. It marks out that which is valuable to oneself from that which is good in the world. We can see that lots of things are good in the world; as finite creatures, we can only value a small subset of those things that we see as good.

to the outcome. If, in the end, she does not go to college, I will feel sadness. And with regard to the person from the previous paragraph, who desires children, and thinks of having children as a natural good, if he further is committed to that possible state of affairs as *mattering* for him, and if he is emotionally vulnerable to it obtaining for him, then he not only deems having children a good, but sees it as valuable in his life.

We desire as incomplete, finite beings. As incomplete *and* evaluative beings, we are not solely able to perceive the brute fact of want, but also to see and respond to goodness in the world. And yet, we do not simply hope for those things we deem to be good. Evaluation must go deeper than that, precisely because of our limits. The goods of the world seem at times just short of infinite, teeming with possibilities and worth. As a finite creature, I must mark out and commit myself to some goods over others and value them as part of my existence. As such, in hoping I deem that which I hope for both good and valuable.

3.c Not Immoral

However, as creatures concerned with morality, we do not simply evaluate desires as good and valuable, but we also use various strategies of practical reasoning to determine what is right in specific circumstances.[66] As such moral practical reasoners, most people will not hope for something—even that which they deem valuable and good—if they consider it immoral in the current (or future) conditions of the world, such that if the state of affairs came about due to one's acts, one would be culpable. In other words, hopes are usually deemed by the hoper morally *permissible* or *obligatory*.

[66] There are various strategies of practical reasoning, including, for instance, applying principles to a given situation, discerning relationally one's responsibilities, or considering consequences of an act.

This is not meant to be a normative criterion for hope. I mean this still to be a descriptive account of what hopes consist in, and I mean to be saying that it is not possible in most cases to sustain a hope for something that one deems to be immoral. This is because it is possible for the object of one's desire (despite that something being good and valuable) to still contribute to a bad state of affairs, on the whole. To illustrate this, imagine (again) an individual who desires to have children. Let us further specify that he desires to have lots of children. Now, according to his worldview it is a good to have children, and it is of value to him that he have children, and he thinks it a definite possibility that he could have a lot of children. This individual may still *not* hope for this if he believed that currently having a lot of children is morally blameworthy insofar as it contributes to a global population crisis. One can desire and value something that, given current conditions, one cannot endorse morally. And hope contains an implicit moral endorsement.

Consider an alternative example: imagine a set of parents whose child was murdered. These parents might genuinely hope that their child's killer either be brought to justice[67] or, even, that he commit suicide himself. They may hope for this despite a moral worldview that they share that both sees suicide as an evil and sees forgiveness as a good. That being said, in order to sustain the hope, these parents would have to, despite these general beliefs, hold that in this case it is permissible to hope for these things because it would be, on the whole, a better world, a more just world, if such a man was morally condemned—either by the society in which he lives or by himself.[68] If they could not believe this, then they would not hope. Because, in hoping for this,

[67] By which I do not mean killed via capital punishment, but rather that he be held responsible and as morally guilty by society. This is not to say that some parents in this situation may not hope for capital punishment, but again, this would have to be because such a desire for the killer's death is morally permissible, and a world in which the killer is dead is better than a world in which he continues to live.

[68] Presuming that in hoping for him to commit suicide, they are hoping for him to condemn himself for his actions, to be unable to live with himself after the killing of a child. This is also not to say that they might not still desire it, even if they are not able to hope for it.

they are endorsing a moral vision of the world in which at times justice and moral culpability ought to override other considerations. They are endorsing a vision of the world in which it is better that humans feel the full weight of responsibility for their actions over a world in which someone can personally ignore or socially get away with morally horrendous things.

In response to my claim, someone might argue that the vicious hoper exists, one who hopes for evil, knowingly. To be a truly vicious hoper, the following conditions would need to be met: 1. One would have to desire something deemed (at least in part)[69] a good and valuable to oneself. 2. This good would have to be deemed possible, and good enough to stand on. 3. The desire for this good would have to be considered by the agent himself immoral *simpliciter*, and yet—at the same time—he would have to fully endorse it and commit to the hope. Imagine someone who hopes that another individual is murdered. She desires this to come about, it is of value to her that it comes about, and it would bring about a good for her if the other individual was murdered.[70] Now, could she deem such a desire *immoral* and still hope for it? Certainly, individuals are weak, and all humans' morals outstrip their actions. But we are not talking of actions, we are talking about our hopes, which have an aspirational quality—hopes are not for what is, but what could be.[71]

[69] By this, I am simply eluding to the potential complexity of resulting states of affairs, such that one can hope for something that seems bad for the sake of a further good.

[70] This good may be, for instance, that the hoper himself is not murdered, or that the one to be murdered does not rat out the hoper.

[71] I do think it is possible to hold this about hope, while still acknowledging that people have drastically weak wills. That humans do murder in cold blood, while knowing it to be wrong, is a fact about the world. In so doing, presumably, non-normative desires, reasoning, and passions give rise to actions deemed abhorrent by the person doing them. Similarly, one continues to smoke cigarettes, while believing that such smoking betrays some fundamental flaw about oneself. But does one *hope* to continue to smoke cigarettes, while believing it is a bad act? One perhaps desires it and gives into that desire on a regular basis, but one does not hope.

There are three ways I could see this individual hoping for the murder of another, while believing that the murder is immoral. He could make an exception—yes, murdering is generally wrong, but in this case would serve a good. But in this case, like the parents of the murdered child above, he has deemed this particular murder on the whole not immoral, despite a general rule against murder. Second, an individual could truncate his considerations. He might in his private, home life believe murder is wrong, but not consider it so in his role as, for instance, a mobster. But, again, this man would have deemed this hope for the murder of an individual (delimited to his professional life) on the whole, not immoral. In this case, the seemingly vicious hoper turns out to be not so much vicious, but rather just a confused and incoherent hoper, unable to cohere various aspects of his life. Third, he could hope unreflectively, such that on reflection, he would not be able to sustain the hope. While this does not work for something as stark as murder, consider another example. Perhaps a person does hope that she will be able to find a silk dress shirt for under fifty dollars. Perhaps this person also holds, as a moral maxim, that compensation for work done ought to allow the worker to live well. Now, without reflection, she may hope that she can find a cheap shirt, perhaps because of other constraints in her life—her own budget, for instance. She may not recognize her hope as unethical, because she may not 'connect the dots,' as it were, between the cheapness of the shirt and the manufacturing process and compensation structure that allows for such a price. Upon reflection or education, she may come to understand these connections, in which case if she did not give up the hope, but continued to hope to find a cheap shirt, she would require one of the above two strategies—truncation of consideration or exceptions to the rule.[72]

[72] By calling these exceptions to the rule of morality I do not mean that they are rare occurrences. I believe that most people do practice truncation and exception in many of their hopes. Some of this may be a necessary strategy

In each case, the moral faculty of the individual is active, even while manipulated in various ways. These are therefore exceptions that prove the rule, that insofar as an individual hopes, she does so with a will for and a valuing of that for which she hopes. It is in light of this that the implicit moral endorsement of that for which one hopes shines through.

So far, now, I have explicated how hoping is a type of formed desire that includes cognitive attention to possibility and uncertainty, as well as our evaluation of the object of hope. However, that one desires something that one deems possible, valuable, and not-immoral does not necessitate that one hopes, precisely because hoping is not a necessary response to certain conditions, but instead is a free response of an individual. In hoping, humans will to hope; our volition is involved. It is to this that I now turn.

4. Volition

As I wrote immediately above, there is the possibility that one desires something that one understands to be possible, good and valuable to oneself, and one may still not hope for that thing. This happens most apparently in situations of perceived little possibility, although not only there. For an example, I continue with the example of desiring children. There may be a person who desires to have children, who sees having children as a good, and values for himself having children, but is told that he has a 1% chance of having biologic children of his own. This, so far, simply does not tell us whether he will hope to have biological children of his own or not. In this situation, despite valuing becoming a father himself, he could despair, withhold judgment, wish, or expect,[73] all in distinction from hoping. This gap between the presumed relevant conditions

for coping with the vastness of the world and the intensity of the moral demand; much of it could be properly criticized.

[73] Although expecting may be irrational in this case.

pertaining and the actuality of hoping is what Adrienne Martin calls the necessity of incorporation.[74] I call it more simply (or at least more existentially), the 'even so' clause of hope, or the necessity of 'standing on' the possibility and value of the hope. One hopes in the face of uncertainty and limits to one's agency, and only if one says (not necessarily consciously or explicitly) 'even so, I hope' will one *be* hoping.

I am claiming that in order to hope, one must determine for oneself that the possibility or probability of the uncertain value obtaining is good enough (for oneself) for hoping, for the activity of hope involves an *attitude or posture* toward the unknown,[75] which is something akin or related to courage.[76] Hoping involves known risk and exposure to disappointment or despair, and as such,

---

[74] Martin's account goes something like this: we (sub-rationally) desire something, we assign it a plausibility between 0.1-.9999, we represent to ourselves that plausibility as either a license to hope or not. This representing to ourselves the possibility as a license for hoping or not is the moment of incorporation. We either incorporate into our agency the plausibility as license and our desire for it as reason for hoping, or we do not hope. According to her account, my hope to be an excellent flute player would come about in the following manner: I desire to be an excellent flutist, I assign it a plausibility of .4 (for instance) according to my view of the truth of the matter, and then I represent to myself that plausibility as license to hope (or not) and, consequently, represent to myself the desire I have for it as *reason* to hope (or not) (See Martin, *How We Hope*, 55-57). Interestingly, Steinbock hints at a similar account. He emphasizes that it is through experiencing the hope 'as' possible that one hopes. I take it that he means that it is a subjective 'seeing-as' rather than an objective probability that determines the hoping activity ("Time, Otherness, and Possibility in the Experience of Hope," 284).

[75] Smith seems to have a similar point, although it is underdeveloped in the article. He emphasizes the hoping requires a stance that has significance independent of the desire and probability/possibility that may also undergird hope ("Analysing Hope," 15). He does not further explain this 'stance', but I take it that perhaps he means something akin to what I am describing here, especially given his attention to courage in relationship to hope later in his paper (22). Of course, he could be referring to something like Philip Pettit's claim about a stance of the substantial hoper, in which one acts *as if* the hoped-for object has a good chance of obtaining, in order to mitigate against despair and loss of heart ("Hope and its Place in the Mind," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 592 (March, 2004): 157), which I find to be a worrying claim. If this is a stance—a stance toward action and reality in which one 'pretends' that one's hopes are more highly likely than one truly believes—this is the stance of one who forcibly ignores her own reason. Such 'cognitive resolve,' as Pettit terms it, seem unnecessary for one to 'stand on' a hope, as I have suggested.

[76] This is in distinction from Aristotle's conception of hope, in which hope is distinguished from courage. For Aristotle, hopefulness that is rooted in skill can lead to confident action, but not courage, since courage requires one to face one's fears, of which one will not have if one is hopeful about one's skill. Or it could be due to inexperience or good fortune or due to ignorance of the dangers at hand, all of which would mean that one could not be courageous with regards to the situation. (G. Scott Gravlee, "Aristotle on Hope," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 38:4 (Oct. 2000): 465).

Smith, as I say in the above footnote, does talk about courage in relationship to hope, although I am uncertain as to his meaning in relation to mine, given the incomplete account of what the 'stance of hope' entails precisely. He

is something that must be ventured in light of the possibility of that disappointment or despair. This is the case whether the hoped-for thing is something that one will have to accomplish by one's own work or whether it is entirely outside the realm of human agency, and whether it is a future, present, or past unknown.[77]

A further example might illuminate: If I desire for my husband's train to arrive on time, and if I believe that it is a good that trains arrive on time, and it is valuable to me that this, his, particular train arrives on time, and if I believe that there is a 50% chance that the train will arrive on time, given Amtrak's reputation, in order to hope, I must (whether consciously or not) see that 50% chance as good enough to hope for the train's timely arrival. If I do not see the 50% chance as good enough to hope for *this* value, I will not venture hoping. I might, for instance, despair of its timely arrival, or I might choose to entirely ignore my desire and the uncertainty of its coming to be and focus solely on the present and my tasks at hand. Alternatively, I may entirely ignore the probability estimate and treat it as certain that he will arrive on time, and expect him to do so, although doing so may be foolhardy or irrational. Further, I could potentially see that 50% chance as *not* good enough to hope, but still *wish* it that the train arrives on time. All hopes, both petty and fundamental, require such commitment.[78]

---

writes, "the education of hope…might involve acquisition of a competence in the practice of 'taking up the stance' of hope, and a strengthening of the virtue of courage…" ("Analysing Hope," 22).

[77] This, I want to say, is even the case with hopes for that which cannot come to be known. In hoping that my father died at peace with himself, I stand on this possibility as good enough for hoping, given the value's importance in my life. As such, I am emotionally vulnerable to the possibility of it not being the case (in my thoughts and imagination, for instance), and I risk my conception of the good by standing on this possibility as a good that could be criticized by others, and is subject to the pressures of the world, despite the hoped-for state being in the past and unknowable.

[78] Although this example, and the examples above in this section, discuss exact probability estimates, 'standing on' the possibility does not require it. As I said in section ii, humans are, generally, not exact hopers and are not overly concerned with exact probability estimates. Possibility alone may be the ground for hoping.

This stance, this 'standing on' the possibility and the value of that for which I hope, saying 'even so' in the face of uncertainty and unknowns, makes sense of many instances of hope otherwise not accounted for in my definition. Particularly, it makes intelligible the question, "though the situation *looks* impossible, do you still have hope?"[79] Such a question is impossible and irrational if hope results solely from probability estimate and desire, as much of the philosophical and psychological literature wants to claim. It would essentially be asking, "do you hope, despite the fact that the relevant criteria for hoping are not met?" which is, of course, a ridiculous question. However, if probability is not the arbiter of hope, but one's 'standing on' the possibility and valuableness of the hope, this question regains its intelligibility. It might be properly reformulated as, "though the situation is *nearly* impossible, though it is—from an 'outsider's' perspective— hopeless, do you still stand on the possibility that it could be so, given the valuableness of the desire? Do you still say, even so, I hope?" This is not to say that all such hopes are particularly *good* hopes, or that they cannot be criticized by others. Rather, it simply makes sense of a class of hopes that do exist in the world, that otherwise are unaccounted for. In such situations, when all seems lost, someone may still claim that despite the slimness of the hope, they stand on it, all the same.

But what rules the determination that the possibility is 'good enough to stand on'? It is not, as I have repeatedly emphasized in this chapter, governed by the probability estimate. Persons may hope or not hope in situations of both extreme uncertainty and good probability. For some individuals, it may be the case that they are unwilling to hope for things that have a low probability of coming about; as such they might express the ground for their hope *as* a certain likelihood of

[79] Smith, "Analysing Hope," 14. Italics added.

the outcome. This, however, is not universally the case, nor does it account for the fact that most people hope for things that have a low probability at some time in their lives. It cannot be the case that simply it *being* of a certain probability *results* in hoping.

Nor is it, as Martin claims, our practical ends. She claims that one will see the probability estimate as licensing hope if it furthers our practical ends to do so. So, she explains, in the situation of two persons faced with the same diagnosis of cancer with only a small chance of survival, one will hope if it accomplishes her practical ends (living well and cheerfully, for instance) to do so, and another will not hope if it does not accomplish her practical ends (preparing her children for living without her, for instance).[80] This, however, also does not seem to adequately account for why one might hope and another not. First, it simply does not account for the human emotional life, and the risks involved in hoping. One may have as a practical end (and perhaps it is *the* practical end that rules one's life) to live well and cheerfully, and still be unable to hope in the face of the diagnosis, due to a variety of emotional impediments—fear, cowardice, worry, anxiety, etc. This is not a defective or exceptional example, but a fact about hoping and human life. As I say above, hoping takes something like courage and that courage cannot come automatically or solely from whether or not the hope would further one's practical ends or not. Secondly, Martin's account reduces hoping to a functional response to pragmatic considerations—the ends of my life are set and hoping happens insofar as it accomplishes or furthers those ends. Such an account turns an activity that, as I have described it, can be a risky activity—and can be something that one courageously takes up to stand for something that one deems good and valuable, even in the face of uncertainties, fears, anxieties, and doubts—and turns it into a self-serving activity. One hopes,

[80] Martin, *How We Hope*, 51.

on her account, for peace and justice in Ferguson, not because that for which I hope is a valuable good[81] that I stand behind and risk myself on, but because it furthers my practical ends to do so.[82]

But if the licensing attitude is not governed by probability estimates or practical ends, what is it governed by? I am going to claim that I do not know, nor should I. What makes one person able to stand on a possibility that another cannot? There is an interiority to the human person that phenomenological analysis cannot pierce. Differing communities have differing explanations or descriptions of what this ground might be. For instance, Christian communities (especially with regards to religious hoping) talk about the grace of God giving one the confidence to hope. Other communities may reduce the confidence to stand or not to emotional or psychological differences—one is either pessimistic or optimistic about their own desires obtaining, one is depressed or not depressed, and so on. Yet others, like Martin, may reduce it to the practical rational consideration of whether or not it furthers my practical ends to hope.[83] Existentialist philosophers may talk solely of the will willing out of no ground to hope for that which is deemed by the self to be excellent. But many of these are most likely reductions, not explanations or sufficient analyses. I simply say, in this phenomenological analysis, that this is as far as the analysis can go. Hoping happens when one deems one's desired object (state of affairs) good, valuable, and

[81] This difference in our accounts is in part due to the fact that she does not see hoping as related necessarily to valuing and the good.

[82] This is granting her caveat that one's practical ends may have to be ruled by moral considerations (Martin, *How We Hope*, 38). Even so, my concern stands. It turns the focus of the activity of hope from the object of hope as a valuable, uncertain good, and to the concerns of my own life.

[83] Yet another example, although one I find unconvincing, is Ariel Meirav's claim that when a person hopes, rather than despairs, of something, it is because one sees an external factor relevant to the desire pertaining as positive, rather than negative. See Ariel Meirav, "The Nature of Hope," *Ratio* 22:2 (June 2009): 228. Note that Meirav has an entirely standard definition of hope (probability + desire) with this addition and so does not have a sufficient definition of hope, in distinction from despair, despite this claim. Although they do not interact with one another, I believe that Steinbock holds a similar position to Meirav. He claims that the 'ground of hope' is something other than oneself, that is seen as that which sustains hope ("Time, Otherness, and Possibility in the Experience of Hope," 280-282). Presumably this is something like seeing an external factor as positive, rather than negative.

possible, and sees that possibility and the valuableness of the object as 'good enough' for hoping. What rules the decision to 'stand on' the possibility and valuableness of a hope, cannot be strictly codified, just as the human person cannot be fully explained.[84] Interiority remains, ineffability remains. This is not to say that people do not give reasons or explanations for *why* they hope for things; they do. Rather, it seems that there cannot be a *rule* that governs such determinations, so that if certain conditions pertain, each and every individual will hope as a result. Rather, the *will* of the individual person is always involved; hoping is never a necessary response to certain conditions pertaining.[85]

This is not to suggest a purely voluntaristic account of hoping. Our emotional life, our past experiences, and our context, among other things, will always play a role in the ability to hope. Our choices are limited, driven by emotion, context, past experiences, and more. And yet there is an inescapable mineness to any given hope: I take the risk, within the limits of my life, and in so doing, I assent to hoping.

4.a Actions and Emotions

As an agential creature, humans do not merely want things to happen, but effect change in the world. We act. Given this, it makes sense that one's hopes affect activities of various sorts in the present and that there is a cluster of hope-related activities.[86] Most commonly emphasized is end-setting and goal-obtaining action in relation to hope, where one acts for that which one hopes. However, as I argued in section 2.a on forms of uncertainty, not all hopes are of the sort that people

[84] Muyskens seems to recognize this, although he does not flesh out its ramifications. He writes, "In actuality, the point at which one gives up hope differs from case to case and person to person" (*The Sufficiency of Hope*, 14).

[85] This is not to say that we cannot criticize or worry about other people's hopes. Since people can and usually do give reasons why they hope when asked, one can question those reasons and have a conversation about them.

[86] I do not presume here to give an exhaustive account, nor do I presume that all hopes manifest in these activities equally. We have fervent and less significant hopes, and the intensity with which we engage in these behaviors is often (although not always) an indication of the intensity of the hope.

set ends for themselves. To think that all hopes are of this sort or should be betrays a confusion about the place of hope in the human life and human agency.

There are many other activities that may come out of hoping at times, in addition to the end-setting activities that can arise from hoping.[87] For instance, one could also engage in hopeful fantasies or imaginings. My hope for my nieces to go to college impacts my living now in so far as I spend time thinking of that possibility, imagining, or fantasizing about it.[88] Alternatively, hoping that it will be sunny tomorrow may lead me to tentatively plan[89] to take a walk to the lake tomorrow, while knowing that this may not come about, and perhaps even developing alternate plans as well.[90]

In distinction from the more active stances of both end-setting activities and tentative planning, one's hoping may also result in patient awaiting.[91] This could also be an activity of the individual hoping it will be sunny tomorrow—she awaits the morrow for her hope to be realized or dashed. And it may be important to note that one can patiently await something one hopes,

[87] It is interesting to note that most of these hope-related activities have analogues in relation to expectation. And so, for instance, if one expects to eat lunch, one may imagine that lunch and fantasize about eating that lunch. Expectation, insofar as it is tied to regularity and certainty, is most likely more constrained and set in its imaginings, while hoping can admit of varied and looser fantasies. Both, however, involve imagination about that unknown, and use creative capacities that result in creative activities.

[88] I disagree with Luc Bovens that what he calls 'mental imaging' (which I term fantasizing) is a requisite component of hope. Rather, it seems to me that it is one of many hope-related activities that can happen as a result of hope's commitment to an unknown state of affairs. See Luc Bovens, "The Value of Hope," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 59:3 (1999): 674.

[89] Martin suggests this (*How We Hope*, 22). So does Gravlee, writing, "If we have mere hope in what we believe is possible but completely out of our control, this kind of hope will not set me to deliberating about how to attain the thing hoped for, but it may set me to deliberating about how I will act if my hopes are fulfilled" ("Aristotle on Hope," 473).

[90] Expectation clearly often also results in planning for that reality, either directly, by planning how to bring that which one desires about, or indirectly by preparing one's life to 'receive' the expected reality. And so, I may expect to graduate *and* plan my life in ways to bring it about. And an expectant mother may make plans to *receive* the child, and as such plans her life around the expected reality. Clearly expectant planning is far less tentative and more entitled than hopeful planning.

[91] Recall Marcel's (see, for instance, *Homo Viator*, 37-40) emphasis on patient awaiting for transcendence from one's current imprisonment (see the introduction to this chapter).

whether or not it is 1) something one can and does affect, 2) something one could but does not affect, *or* 3) something one cannot and does not affect.[92] And so, I can await in hoping that my niece goes to college, even if I have encouraged her to do so, and so affected her decision. For, the awaiting remains, given that the hope is possible, but not actual. Similarly, I can hopefully await her going to college even if I choose *not* to encourage her or otherwise affect her decision consciously. I await the outcome hesitantly and hopefully. Hesitant awaiting seems to accompany nearly all hoping, insofar as hoping entails a passive element, a not-knowing the outcome and a current inability to bring it about.

Some hoping may also lead to what Margaret Urban Walker calls "expressive action," or "embodied imagination," in which a person rehearses behavior that mimics that which is hoped for. The example she gives is of the people watching a horse race, who lean forward and push at the fence when the race is drawing to a close, hoping for their horse to win and imitating the horses' motion in the expressive acts of hoping.[93] Or, similarly, the woman who hopes for children may knit a baby blanket, proleptically engaging in and imitating the activities of the expectant mother.[94] In addition to imagining, expressive action, and tentatively planning, one is, as I have said,

[92] Again, expectation can lead to a similar activity. Notice, however, that in distinction from expectation, hoping can result in awaiting in situations in which one can either affect an outcome or not affect an outcome. If I await something I expect, it must be something that does not depend upon my activity and end-setting. For, if I must affect the situation in order for that which I expect to come about, I cannot simply await that which I expect, but I must bring it about through my action. Another distinction in form would be that expectation leads to assured awaiting, rather than the hesitant and uncertain awaiting of hoping. If one expects something, one feels entitled to it and awaits it in assurance.

[93] Walker, *Moral Repair*, 58.

[94] An expecter may also do similar, although distinct, actions. An expectant mother may also knit a blanket for their coming child, anticipating and acting in accordance and responding to that which she expects, and so acting anticipatorily. While similar, these actions differ in the mode in which they are done. Expressive actions rehearse behavior that mimics that which is hoped for, while anticipatory actions directly prepare one for the coming state of affairs. Perhaps a helpful way of distinguishing the modes of these actions is in the following way: expressive actions pull the uncertain, desired outcome into the present moment, participating imaginatively in that which is hoped for. Anticipatory action pulls current life into the future expected outcome, preparing for it and excitedly, imaginatively participating in it now.

emotionally vulnerable to the hoped for thing, and so in hoping, one may long for that which is hoped for, or feel anxiety over whether it will happen or not,[95] and so on. While not an exhaustive summary, I hope to have shown the diversity and prevalence of hope-related activities in one's current life, as a hoper for things as yet uncertain.[96]

These seemingly aware activities, however, raise the question of the possibility of latent hopes. Can one hope for something without knowing it? The possibility of a latent hope presumably is rooted in the idea that someone could *come to know* that they hope for something, and experience this 'coming to know' as a revelation of already held commitments, already held hopes. One might say, "I didn't realize that I hoped for that!" So, for instance, a person who thought that he didn't care much at all about winning a game, might upon losing feel deep disappointment, and perhaps say to himself, "I did in fact hope that I would win that game, I just didn't know it." Now I do not want to claim that no one ever *uses* the word hope in this way; that would be patently untrue. However, let us think about this statement. I believe it could mean one of two things: 1. It could mean that the individual simply did not admit 'out loud' to himself or others that he did in fact hope to win the game, while still harboring that hope within his heart. In this case, it isn't *in*

[95] Miceli and Castelfranchi helpfully emphasize the anxiety that is often a result of hoping, in distinction from anxiety's usual pairing with despair or depression. Anxiety arises from uncertainty, just as hope does ("Hope: The power of wish and possibility," 264).

[96] This account is in distinction from ones like Pettit's and Muyskens's, both of whom, in different ways, seem to suggest that when one hopes one acts as if that for which one hopes for *is* or *will be*. For Pettit, he describes this as the 'cognitive resolve' to treat that which one hopes for as having a good chance of obtaining, despite possible evidence to the contrary ("Hope and its Place in the Mind," 157). Muyskens seems to think that hope necessitates that the individual hoper is disposed to act as if that which is hoped for *is* or *will be* (*The Sufficiency of Hope*, 18). Both of these accounts demand a certain cognitive or active dissonance on the part of the hoper, which seems unnecessary and potentially problematic to me. That I hope for a specific job does not necessitate that I act as if it will be the case that I will get the job. I may act in a host of ways—I may bite my nails in anxiety, I may imagine what it would be like to get the job, I may even tentatively plan to do things upon getting the job—without ever acting or being disposed to act as if the job were mine.

fact a latent hope, but perhaps better termed a buried hope, or perhaps a conflicted hope.[97] One had in fact been somewhat conscious of it, and yet refused to fully acknowledge it. This seems very possible, hopes do not seem to require constant or sustained intense reflection, as many of our hopes 'rise to the surface' of our immediate consciousness at moments of self-reflection or conflict.[98] 2. If the individual *truly* had no prior thought or reflection, it seems that the game player's exclamation could be replaced by, "I did in fact desire to win that game, I just did not know it". As far as I can tell, nothing is *gained* by the use of the word hope here, and in occasions like this one, it is simply a placeholder for desire.

In this section, I have suggested that hoping always includes a volitional element, in which one wills that for which one hopes, and that this results in various activities, although not solely or universally end-setting and pursuit of that for which one hopes.

5. Conceptions of the World

So far, I have discussed hope as a type of evaluated desire for possible, but uncertain goods that one wills, saying 'even so, I hope,' such that the hope results in various hope-related activities over time. However, what has been presumed throughout, and is worth briefly unpacking before ending, is the fact that all hope arises from within people's differing conceptions of the world. In other words, underneath any (content of) hope that one might have—from one's hope to get a job to a hope in the resurrection—one must have a conception of the world that allows one to have

[97] Perhaps in this case he doesn't *want* to be someone who so ardently hopes for his own winning, but rather *wants* to be a better sport, and to take trivial games for what they are—mere pastimes.

[98] For instance, I may hope to get a tenure track job. My reflection upon this hope only happens in conversations with others on it, in my own reflection and imaginings of it, and at moments when I feel it is either imminently in my grasp or slipping away from me. I would always acknowledge the hope to be there, and much of my everyday activity in fact is in service of this ardent hope. I do not, however, constantly reflect upon this hope, and at times it can be quite submerged in my consciousness. That does not mean it is latent or hidden from me.

such a hope.[99] One's conception of the possible and of the valuable depend on how one conceives of the world around them, and consequently their hopes will be shaped by these understandings.

These conceptions of the world are constructed on at least two pillars: authorities and experiences. One has to have both authorities and experiences that one trusts, which one draws on that make up the truth of one's world.[100] So, a scientific materialist has authorities: scientists, the scientific method, etc., that she trusts, and she has experiences of the world that she draws on that enforce that trust and that gave rise to that trust. Similarly with a Christian believer: she has authorities that she trusts—let's say the bible, church, tradition—and she has experiences that both give rise to that trust and re-enforce that trust. The realm of the possible is governed and molded by these trusts in one's experiences and one's authorities.

Authorities, for finite, social, rational creatures such as ourselves, are fundamental and inescapable. This is true in the sense that from birth, we are vulnerable creatures born into networks of authorities (family, church, state, etc.) that we must trust for our survival and in order to become persons—social, engaged, intelligent beings. But, it is also true in the sense that we remain finite as we age, such that even as we gain some freedom from our native authorities, we continue to necessarily rely on others to tell us of things in and of the world of which we do not have knowledge. Given the kind of creature we are, in order to be functional humans with a conception

[99] For an example of a thinker disagreeing with my position that secular and religious hoping are fundamentally similar in structure, see Griffiths, "Certain Hope," 453. According to him, you cannot give an account of Christian hope by starting with a generalized account of hoping, as the character of the uncertainty (of the object pertaining) does not hold for Christian hope, for it is grounded in God's trustworthiness. If we doubt God's trustworthiness, we do not have Christian hope.

[100] I am not suggesting that one's conception of the world is completely thought out, worked out, or explicit. Rather, I am attempting to discuss what is often submerged and hidden from view with regards to what we hope for and why.

of the world into which we can act and live, we must trust others to provide much of the framework we participate in.

Our hoping is not simply formed externally, by those people, ideas, and institutions we trust to give an accurate representation of the world, but, as we have seen, are also formed by our own experiences of the world. I am not interested here in going into debates about the possibility of knowing things-in-themselves or the limitations of experience (insofar as some want to say one cannot experience God, etc.). My focus on the category of experience is simply to convey that it is through first person encounter with the world that one develops a conception of the world that is one's own. This first-person encounter covers all manner of things: knowledge from mathematics to botany, how one understands human beings in relation to each other and the world, love and friendship, religious experience, factual knowledge in various fields, and so on. From experience of our own, we structure our world in ways that fit.

Of course, it is impossible to talk about experience in an isolated way from authority. For any experience one has is also rooted in authorities that one trusts that at least in part frame one's experiences. If I experience my government as relatively trustworthy, it is at least in part due to the fact that authorities of mine, from a young age, such as my parents, conceptualized the world in this way for me. However, similarly, it is impossible to talk about authority in a totally isolated way from experience, for at the base of authority is trust, which is rooted in an experiential relationship. I perhaps trusted my government at first because someone I trusted told me to, but my continued recognition of it as an authority for me would have to be rooted in my continued

experience of it as trustworthy.[101] Experience and authority, while distinguishable, are mutually intertwined and transforming.

Moreover, many things can happen to threaten our hopes, rooted in changes, disruptions, or worries we have about our conceptions of the world. We can have an experience that makes us become *distrustful* of the authorities which we had trusted, and which grounded, in part, our conception of the world. Similarly, one could also have experiences that transform one's understanding of the world. For instance, an experience of intense personal suffering may cause a Christian to question the trust she had placed in God's love and mercy as interpreted through the gospels.

These possibilities of disruption, change, and transformation suggest that one's conception of the world is not simply neutral or totally internal; one can be disrupted by the evidence of others, experiences one confronts, or compelling new authorities. For, if one's conception can change or be undermined, then one is not completely insulated in one's beliefs, but rather one can be impacted by the world around one and the reality of others.

One's conception could turn out to be untrue, liable from criticism from others, or internally incoherent. One may believe something that it turns out isn't the case. For instance, people prior to Copernicus thought that the earth was the center of the universe, but it turned out that this conception of the world was not true. This potential falsehood is simply a concomitant of human finitude and, while one can ward against it by proper education and investigation, it cannot be fully mitigated. However, someone today who remained a believer in an earth-centric universe would not only have a false conception of the world, but would also be *liable to criticism from others*.[102]

[101] Unless, of course, the trust was forced, which, with regards to governments, in many cases is. Trustworthy perhaps in these cases is not the right word.

[102] There are several other ways in which one could be liable to criticism from others: one could trust

Lastly, one could have a seriously internally incoherent conception of the world. This is rooted in the fact that, generally, our conceptions of the world themselves are not singular, or entirely unified. While it seems that the goal is, within one's own life, to have a conception of the world that is unified, most often we have various authorities and various experiences that govern different aspects of our lives, and often do not all complement each other.[103] When one does not know the way in which differing authorities and experiences relate to one another, one's supposed hopes rooted in one authority or experience may be undermined by other aspects of one's conception of the world.

These three possibilities—that one could be wrong, liable to criticism from others, and incoherent in one's worldview—mitigate against the danger of claiming isolated conceptions of the world. As I have described conceptions of the world, people do live in somewhat *differing* worlds, with different authorities and different experiences framing what they take to be true. That being said, I do not suggest that people are isolated from one another, but rather they can speak meaningfully outside of their immediate community. This is rooted in a claim that human nature and experience is relatively common; we can speak to one another in meaningful ways because we see our experiences and ways of being in the world *in the other*. This is all to say, one's conception of reality, while providing the frame for one's hopes, is itself malleable, interactive, and multivalent, rather than singular and set.

---

untrustworthy-authorities (think of a self-made religious figure whose real motive is getting money from people), or one could ignore the experience or realities of others (The Nazi conception of the world in which Jewish people were inhuman or a lesser race was not only based on faulty, forced science, but was based on a lack of recognition of other humans' experiences and realities).

[103] Downie notes this with regards to probability estimates. He claims that when our beliefs about probability are uncertain, our hopes will be unstable ("Hope," 249). However, he believes that all hopes are to a certain extent unstable in this way, given that probability estimates are estimates alone, and therefore uncertain themselves. I believe that there are more and less pernicious forms of instability, as I explain here.

6. Conclusion

This concludes my analysis of hoping as a human activity. As promised at the beginning of this chapter, from this investigation, the following definition of hoping emerges: out of one's conception of the world, one hopes when 1) one desires 2) that which one deems possible but uncertain to obtain, 3) and when one deems the desired outcome good and valuable, and not immoral, and 4) if the possibility of the state of affairs obtaining is deemed 'good enough to stand on' for oneself, such that the hope has a resulting impact on one's living over time.

What has this definition of hoping illuminated for this project? One way of summarizing much of what we have discussed is to emphasize that hoping is a human response to finitude. As uncertain, incomplete, and finite creatures, humans seem bound to desire that which is beyond their ken or ability to obtain. But if it is lack and limits that gives rise to hope, this means that hope—religious or not, Christian or otherwise—is tied *necessarily* to uncertainty and doubt.[104] We, as vulnerable, disappointable beings, hope for that which we care about, but are uncertain of—whether because we do not know or cannot determine the outcome. Our finitude both determines that we are hopers and determines the character of our hoping.

Moreover, we hope as subjective valuers, able to discern and affirm goodness in the world, and yet bound by our own limited perception. The intuition that hope is tied to the moral life in imagining possible goods seems correct—hopes are not simply for that which we desire, or even for that which we deem good, but for that we value in our own lives. And yet, without recognition

[104] There is a tradition of tying hope to anxiety that shares elements with this account. Although we disagree on other points, Wolfhart Pannenberg correctly notes, "Because the future has not yet been decided upon, we attach to it the basic anxiety of existence. Human beings will never overcome this anxiety completely. Nor should we wish to be rid of this anxiety, for it is related intimately to something else which we attach to the future—hope for a more exuberant fulfillment of our existence" (*Theology and the Kingdom of God* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1969), 59).

of the subjectivity of that imagining— and the inevitability of incompleteness, if not of error—such a connection between hope and the moral life becomes platitudinous.

We have seen that hope leads to various activities in the hoper—it does not simply or necessarily motivate the hoper to end-setting activity. Hope's uncertainty and possibility, then, cannot be necessarily connected to my arduous end-setting action and does not necessarily motivate moral acts in service of the good hoped for, and is not necessarily linked to certain virtues thought to develop as one struggles to attain the hoped for good.[105] Along with others, then, Moltmann's claim about hope's *necessary* motivating power to act—"Hope is *always* a tense expectation and rouses the attentiveness of all our senses, so that we can grasp the chances for the things we hope for, wherever and whenever they present themselves. . . . In concrete action we *always* relate the potentiality to what exists, the present to the future"—is wrong.[106]

Similarly, the variety of responses to hoping—from fantasy to planning to passive awaiting and so on—means that the acts that come out of hope are not uniformly good or bad.[107] Hope's manifestations can be useful or abusive. Hope is experienced in uncertainty, doubt, and ignorance. Hoping—as a human phenomenon—is done by imperfect human beings, and as such is no automatic good. This potential for abuse seems especially prevalent when hope is confused with or transformed into assurance or expectation.[108] Contrary to some formulations of eschatological

[105] Note that it is the relation of necessity that I am critiquing, rather than the possibility that any given hope might lead to such virtuous striving.

[106] Moltmann, *The Ethics of Hope*, 3, emphasis mine.

[107] Not because any given action—awaiting or planning, for instance—is bad in itself, but that in relation to the given hope and the given situation, it may be inappropriate or wrong.

[108] Note that I say *potential*. Many liberation thinkers see Christian hope as assured, and as such is a source of comfort for people in situations of distress. See, for instance, Leonardo Boff, who writes, "Hope assures us that despite the threats of destruction that the human species' destructive machine has mounted and uses against Gaia, a good and kind future is assured because this cosmos and this Earth belong to the Spirit and the Word." That said, I think an exclusive focus on assurance may miss this potential for abuse. See *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997) 201.

hope, hope cannot be *assured*, that final word that can give purpose and meaning to our current lives, no matter the situation. Uncertainty attends hoping, even if God is faithful, and attempts to make it otherwise seem to grasp for something that is simply not hope, but certainty or presumption.

Yet on all these counts, it also seems that hope *is* tied up with being human, bound to our capacities to interpret evidence, to evaluate desires, and to will and act in the world. Having circumscribed the moral significance of hope, I turn in the next chapter to reexamine its role in our moral agency, suggesting that, despite it not being a straightforward moral motivator, it play two crucial roles in human moral agency, that will prove particularly significant and particularly vulnerable in light of climate change and the predictions for our future.

CHAPTER 3: Hope and Moral Agency

As was obvious from the last chapter, hoping is itself a normative activity—concerned with the good, the valuable, and the permissible. While this says something basic about human beings (we seem invariably concerned with evaluation and morality, however we live), it remains the case that hope *could be* construed in non-moral ways. Our hopes are constrained morally because we are moral creatures; if we were not so, we would hope amorally. If there were an agential creature that had no moral concerns, either because it had no regard for others beyond its own self or because it always fulfilled its duty, that creature could presumably still hope.[1] It could still desire that which it *wanted* (and so deemed good for itself), and it could consider the possibility of that desire coming about as good enough for it to hope. As such, hoping does not depend upon morality in such a way that moral concern *needs to be present* in an agent in order for that agent to be a hoper.

Contrarily, I argue in this chapter that to be a human moral agent requires being a hoper. More particularly, I will argue that there are two ways in which hoping, as defined in the previous chapter, is basically integral to our moral agency, such that the threatening of our hoping threatens our capacity to live as moral agents over time. This argument will complete the defense of the first step of my thesis, namely, that hoping is crucial to our moral agency. In the next chapter, I will turn to the second step, that a crucial but ignored reason for our inaction and denial of climate change is due to a need to preserve human hopes.

[1] By this, I mean that a creature that always fulfilled its duty would have no defeating condition and no reflection on the morality or immorality of a specific hope, as it always already necessarily did and hoped for that which it ought to.

The structure of this chapter will be as follows. I will first briefly introduce what I mean by 'moral agency,' before turning to discuss three common ways hope is considered to be related to morality. I will show that these three ways, while of interest, are all actually the connections between variable and inconsistent hope-related activities and moral agency, rather than hoping itself and moral agency. I will then develop my more basic argument for the necessity of hope in moral agency: 1) that hoping sustains our capacity to be agents in a necessarily uncertain world and 2) that hoping for specific moral contents sustains our capacity to invest in morality in an opaque and hostile world.

1. Moral Agency

First, however, a brief discussion of moral agency. By moral agency, I mean two things: 1) that people are able to reflect and engage in moral reasoning, and 2) that people are able to act in the world from that moral reasoning. Here, I mean to distinguish morality from a-morality, or the inability to respond to and engage in moral reasoning or action of any sort. This is, of course, in contradistinction from someone interested in distinguishing morality from *im*morality, or in other words, someone interested in making normative judgments regarding what one ought to do or, in this case, how one ought to hope. When investigating hope's relation to moral agency, then, I am investigating the relationship between hope and our capacity to so much as engage in moral reasoning and action, not hope's relation to proper moral reasoning and action. I will unpack these both a bit more:

First, moral reasoning. One might divide moral reasoning into five areas of reflection: 1) Normative reflection: what makes an act right or wrong, and on what grounds? (Is it a. the character or virtue of the individual engaged in the act? b. the rightness or wrongness of the act in itself? c. the motive of the individual engaged in the act? and/or d. the consequences that result from the

act?) 2) Axiological reflection: what is of value or good? 3) Foundational reflection: what are the preconditions for being a moral agent? What is freedom, and in what ways is the human free? 4) Meta-ethical reflection, on the meaning, ground, and truth of moral ideas and terms themselves, and 5) Practical reasoning or applied ethics, concerned with what one ought to do in a specific situation.

People, of course, differ greatly in the ways they engage in these reflections and the conclusions they draw regarding the moral life. Regarding the first branch, one may live within a community that holds (or one might hold on one's own), a strictly deontological conception of morality, in which case the emphasis is almost entirely on the rightness or wrongness of specific acts and/or motives for acts. Another community or person may hold an uncompromisingly virtuous or habitual understanding of morality, in which what is of preeminent importance is character formation and understandings of the good life. Many people, probably most, hold an amalgam, believing character, motive, act, and consequence all play a role in moral evaluation. Similarly, people will obviously disagree on the goods to be instantiated, and the actions that are right as they relate to the goods of the world. This is the case for each of the five areas of reflection: regarding the capacities and limits of the human person's freedom, the truth of moral terms themselves, and what one ought to do in any specific circumstance. As such, that which is demarcated *as* moral, and what is included as pertinent to moral reasoning will differ among persons.

Second, let's briefly consider moral agency in relation to this moral reflection. How one understands the makeup and form of moral agency will also differ depending on one's way of reasoning about moral concerns. Some will see moral agency as a matter of acting to form and sustain virtuous habits, others as acting on moral laws, and still others will focus on acting for the

best consequences. All of these share, of course, the assumption that humans are the sort of creature that so much as can act in the world according to his or her own reasons, of which some can be moral. Despite this variety and complexity, I hope that the loose definition of moral agency gives a boundary marker and a lens through which to read the argument to come. My discussion of the relationship between hope and moral agency ought to be recognizable and agreeable to individuals who differ on what moral agency amounts to within these parameters.

2. Hope Related Activities and Moral Agency

With this broad understanding of moral agency in hand, I will now examine three ways in which hoping is often thought to help us as moral agents, in producing moral motivation, in enabling moral reflection and moral development, and as a virtue. In each case, I will argue that, while of interest, these connections are actually between variable hope-related activities and moral agency, rather than between the activity of hope itself and morality. In other words, these relationships between hope and morality are a) "hit and miss," insofar as hoping does not necessarily result in any given activity, b) the hope-related activities of interest can take place with or without hope, such that c) these relationships are not as crucial as people often perceive them to be. After going through these three possible relations, I will turn to my argument, that defends an account in which hoping is itself a constitutive element of moral agency.

2.a Moral Motivation

The most common and popular account of hope's importance to morality is that hope aids the agent's moral motivation. This is the widespread impetus and assumption in environmental literature that discusses hope.[2] The argument, which I discussed in the previous chapter, is that

[2] See, for example, Richard Bauckham, "Ecological Hope in Crisis" *Anvil* 29:1 (Sept. 2013); Andrew Fiala, "Nero's Fiddle: On Hope, Despair, and the Ecological Crisis" *Ethics and the Environment* 15:1 (2010); Lisa Kretz,

hope motivates the moral life, because hoping results in end-setting activity, for the good for which one hopes. Hope for X will provide impetus for working toward X. If this action is for a moral end, then hope can be said to motivate moral acts. For example, an individual may hope to become virtuous, and consequently work to become virtuous.

As I argued in the previous chapter, end-setting activities that arise from hope are not integral to hope itself, but rather are one of many possible activities that might arise from hoping, of which others include fantasizing, tentative planning, patient awaiting, expressive acting, and so on. Often enough, hope does not provide motivation to actions for moral ends, even if one's hope is itself for such a moral end. For example, one may ardently hope for the end to gun violence in America, and yet not act to set it as an end for oneself, out of which one acts. The fact of an individual's hope itself does not entail such end-setting and consequent motivation to act.

Moreover, there are many different sources of moral motivation, and for many communities, hope is an inappropriate source of moral motivation. For instance, a deontologist may think that moral acts must be motivated by the moral law alone, not by the hope for some realized good. Dwelling upon hopes for unrealized states as grounds for motivation may be considered by the deontologist to be beside the point to the moral life, and potentially damaging to it.

Of course, the reality that hoping at times results in motivation to pursue the hoped-for end is undoubtedly true, but on its own is neither particularly reliable nor does it say much about the importance of hope specifically to moral agency. Various things produce end-setting activity in

---

"Hope in Environmental Philosophy," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 26 (2013); Michelle Lueck, "Hope for a Cause as Cause for Hope: The Need for Hope in Environmental Sociology," *American Sociologist* 38 (2007); Andrew McKinley, "Hope in a Hopeless Age: Environmentalism's Crisis," *Environmentalist* 28 (2008); Kathryn Stevenson and Nils Peterson, "Motivating Action through Fostering Climate Change Hope and Concern and Avoiding Despair among Adolescents," *Sustainability* 8:6 (2016).

the human: confidence that one can accomplish that which one desires, fear of punishment or a negative outcome, and sense of obligation, to name a few. Hope is among these possibilities, even if not steadfastly. But to see hope as a uniquely important among these is most likely unwarranted, given the diversity of assessments with regards to the good of hope in this arena, as well as the inconsistency of it *as* such a moral motivator.

2.b Moral Reflection and Development

In addition to moral motivation, hope is often thought to be a helpful tool in moral reflection and development. Hoping may help an individual or group come to reflect on the goods and values they hold and, through that reflection, grow in moral awareness.

For instance, hoping could help a person or a group reflect constructively on their conceptions of what the good would look like if instantiated in the world, through imagination and fantasy about the goods they hope for. These fantasies resulting from hoping, about the hoped-for good, may lead to an increased understanding of that good, or they might help expand the sense of the good[3] the individual or community has.[4] As an example, consider a person who hopes ardently for peace among her family members, who are currently in various feuds. As she fantasizes and imagines the realized peace, she might come to understand more fully what peace truly is for her,

[3] Adrienne Martin considers this a possibility of some significance. See *How We Hope*, 85-91. She does not, however, see this as a necessary outcome of hoping as such.

[4] Stewart Sutherland suggests this in his account of hope as 'moral vision'. He writes, "…hope focused by vision is hope that is discussable. Rather than simply either feeling 'cheerful' or not, as the case may be, one can examine, defend, moderate, develop the moral vision of such on society. One can question or underline such values. One can find new ways of expressing them. That is to say, the moral vision underlying such hopes…requires a full vocabulary and logic of critical and constructive reflection. It would even be possible to talk of an education into, or indeed out of hope" ("Hope," *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 25 (1989): 201). By moral vision he means that vision of what ought to be the case, our conception of what the good world ought to be. Luc Bovens also sees this as a possible good of hope, writing, "I may start off hoping to win the prize in question in order to gain more recognition in the field, but through mental imaging I may come to realize how unattainable or how futile my pursuits really are" ("The Value of Hope," 676). Bovens, as we saw in Chapter 1, sees this 'mental imaging' (fantasizing) as constitutive of hoping as such.

and what it entails for different members of her family. She may realize that peace is not simply 'getting along,' but requires open recognition of failures and renewed trust through altered behaviors. Through her fantasizing about a good hoped-for, she may come to understand more fully her commitment to peace, and this in turn may have ramifications beyond the immediate situation. One can imagine this sort of process happening at a communal level as well. Such reflection on the good through hopeful fantasizing seems to be able to enliven moral development, reflection, and understanding in many cases.

Alternatively, in the act of hoping, people may also come to see more clearly what they value most deeply. Such self-reflection could lead the community or individual toward a more critical, self-aware stance toward one's commitments, leading one into a more reflective and responsible moral life. A person who deeply hopes to move closer to her hometown might, in the process of hoping, realize how important to her are family and close familial relationships. One may come to recognize *that* one has this commitment, and given that recognition, one might then be able to evaluate it more clearly. Because hope is a reflective activity—as I argued in the first chapter, you can't do it without *any* thought—that reflection can aid the moral life. Such reflection could lead to nuance, development, and changes in moral commitments and in goods hoped for.

From these examples, I take it to be clear that hoping in the life of the individual or community can lead to moral reflection and development and could be deemed important in any given community *to* that moral reflection or development. It may aid reflection upon and criticism of goods, values, and moral commitments; it may help one imagine and develop one's sense of what the good world ought to look like; and it may help in the formation of a self-aware moral agent who *knows* their own values. Insofar as hope imagines the world other than it is, it allows

for the space of the 'ought' to emerge in conversation and thought,[5] and as such, can develop moral reflectiveness in the hoper. All of these possibilities show hope to be potentially related to the moral life as providing grounds for reflection, and as such, for the creation and development of robust moral agents.

Of course, it seems quite conceivable that one could consider one's conception of the good apart from the hoping activity—I could reflect on what I consider as good without *first* desiring that good as possible, valuable, not immoral, and so fantasizing about it. My hopes could, instead, come solely *out* of reflection on the good, rather than being discovered in the process of hoping and the resulting hope-related activities. As such, hoping does not necessarily aid in my reflection upon the good, or enhance my vision of the good. Insofar as this is the case, hoping is not a necessarily integral part of the formation of one's vision of the good.

In fact, to claim such connections as crucial to the moral life would in fact result in an oddly circumscribed moral being. If, in order to robustly understand the good, one had to consider the good *possible* and *valuable to oneself*, this would seem to entail one could only see *fully* goods that one values for oneself, and that one deems to be possible. But, of course, the distinction between deeming something good and deeming it of value to oneself is precisely taken to mean that there *are* goods that one can reflect upon and *see* in the world that one does not yet hope for or see as important to one's own life. I can understand, in a reflective way, that dancing is a good without valuing that good for myself. Moreover, there are goods that are *actual* rather than possible, as well as *impossible* rather than possible. I can see that my embodiment is a good without hoping anything with regards to my body: it is a good actualized. Similarly, I can see that perfect

[5] See Walker, *Moral Repair*, 51 and Quinn, "Hoping," 63. Both make this point and believe it to be morally important.

justice is a good, without deeming it in any way possible in this world. If hope were required for adequate reflection on and vision of goods, these goods described here would be inadequately recognized as they are independent of hoping. Moreover, if I needed hope to come to recognize or realize my values or my moral commitments, this would suggest that valuing and moral commitments *needed* hope. However, as I write in the first chapter, not all things valued are desired or hoped for—again, as Sam Scheffler quips, that one values Vaclav Havel does not entail that one ever desired (or hoped for) Havel. My ability to value must instead 'precede' my capacity to hope. The human's ability to see the good, value it, and evaluate things morally cannot be dependent upon our ability to hope in this way.

That one might participate in reflection on one's hopes, and this reflection may aid in the development of oneself as a person (or as a community), is again undoubtedly true, but on its own is again neither particularly reliable nor does it say much about the importance of hope *specifically* to moral agency. As with moral motivation, hope is not, nor should it be, the only or primary source of moral reflection and development. Moreover, hoping often enough does not result in this sort of measured moral reflection or development. To conclude, then, this is again not to say that it is not important, but that it is not a particularly robust or intrinsic connection between hope and moral agency.

2.c Virtue

The last connection between hope and morality I will discuss here is that of a virtue of hope. Understanding hope as a virtue is most prominent within the Christian traditions, in which it is usually considered a theological virtue, not formed habitually by the individual, but rather given by God in grace, properly orienting the Christian hoper to God as the true good and motivating her to seek God. This conception of theological hope is often paired with the estimation

that hope is not a virtue in its natural state.[6] That said, there is recent philosophical and psychological work that does see a specific type of formed hope as virtuous.[7] There are at least two ways in which this may be conceptualized.

First, one might conceive of hope itself as a virtue—meaning that hoping for certain contents in a certain way helps one live well as a human. This could develop in an individual who engages in reflection, motivation, and action for moral goods in her hoping, through which she comes to be a responsible, thoughtful, dedicated hoper for a truly moral vision of the world. The habit of hoping in this way may give her the capacity to continue working for goods despite obstacles, to continue to develop her sense of the good and the right as she reflects and imagines, and so on. As such, the particular way in which hoping is developed within her is deemed by her own community a virtue.[8]

The second way in which hoping may be deemed virtuous is when a community or individual conceives the tendency to hope as *producing* virtues in a person, separate from but related to the activity of hope itself.[9] As an example, when hoping results in awaiting that which one hopes for, one may develop a positive habit of patience. Or, again similarly, hope for some may contribute to the moral life as a practice of risk taking, which may be considered as separable from hope and considered to contribute to the development of the virtue of courage in the

---

[6] See, for instance, Joseph Pieper, *On Hope* (San Francisco: *Ignatius Press*, 1977) and Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*.

[7] See, for instance, Shade, *Habits of Hope*, Lear, *Radical Hope*, and Allen Thompson, "Radical Hope for Living Well in a Warmer World," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 23 (2010).

[8] Ellen Ott Marshall's book is a good example of this sort of reflection and encouragement. See *Though the Fig Tree Does Not Blossom: Toward a Responsible Theology of Christian Hope* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006).

[9] Gravlee suggests that Aristotle believed that a certain hopefulness could help develop other virtues in persons. He claims that Aristotle sees youth as having a natural hopefulness, due to lack of experience, but that this hopefulness can be the foundation for the natural virtue of high-mindedness, which can develop into the full virtue of high-mindedness through experience and the formation of practical wisdom. The hopefulness of youth provides a potential basis for the development of the full virtue of high-mindedness through establishing a basis for its precursor (see "Aristotle on Hope," 475).

individual.[10] This of course could be in conjunction to *or* as alternative to the first way of understanding the virtuousness of hope. It could be construed in various compatible and differing ways, depending on the community in question, and their conception of the value of the activity of hoping.

In both understandings, hope is important to moral agency because the way it has been particularly formed helps sustain certain postures and activities in the world. These particular formed ways of hoping may have important moral significance, but once again do not say much about the importance of hope *qua* hope to moral agency, precisely because the virtue is a *formed* type of hope. Moreover, as with moral motivation, there are individuals and groups that see hope as distinctly not-virtuous and encourage limiting one's hopes for the sake of realism, for instance.[11]

2.d Conclusion

I have not discussed every possible suggested relation between hope and moral life. All I have meant to do in this section is discuss several common connections that the reader might see as primary, but which I argue are not foundational. In distinction from these several connections, I turn to two dependencies that show hope to be an intrinsic part of moral agency itself, necessary to its sustenance over time in an uncertain and hostile world. Namely, 1) that hope allows us to live as limited agents, by allowing us to relate our desired values to an uncertain world and to cope

[10] For a fairly exhaustive treatment of both of these options, see Shade, *Habits of Hope*. Note, in distinction, that Gravlee suggests that Aristotle considers courage to be *antithetical* to some hope, given that hope/hopefulness arises from confidence in a positive outcome, whereas courage requires facing one's fears ("Aristotle on Hope," 463). That said, Gravlee also suggests that good hope *can* create courage for an Aristotelian, insofar as hope can also create confidence in the intrinsic worth of one's actions or the worth of an external goal for which one is acting (466). In other words, one hopes to die a worthy death for the sake of one's country, being confident that doing so would be good, and so one is courageous in action. As such, he believes that the virtue of courage can be indirectly formed through hope's creation of confidence. There is also some literature coming out currently about Lear's understanding of radical hope as an environmental virtue, which primarily focuses on hope and courage. See Thompson, "Radical Hope for a Warmer World" and Byron Williston, "Climate Change and Radical Hope," *Ethics and the Environment* 17:2 (2012).

[11] For instance, consider a Nietzschean or a Stoic evaluation of hope.

with those uncertainties and 2) that hope for specific moral contents can sustain us in light of skepticism, fallibility, failure, and evil.

3. Integral Dependencies

3.a Hope and Agency

To begin this section, let us quickly recall my definition of hope. One hopes when, according to one's conception of the world, one desires a state of affairs that one deems possible, good, valuable to oneself, and not immoral, and where the possibility of the good obtaining is good enough *for oneself* to stand on, such that the resulting hoping manifests in hope-related activities. In this section, I will argue that this activity, in particular in its cognitive and volitional elements, plays a crucial role in sustaining of human agency over time.

To argue this, I will develop my account of agency and hope in conversation with a postulated Stoic, who challenges my claim.[12] The Stoic challenges my claim about the necessity of hope because, for one, it seems that according to my definition, hoping simply *would never* come about in the Stoic. This is on several grounds: 1) The Stoic most likely does not admit as good any desires that are merely possible, not certain to be obtained; such desires are to be reformed by apathy toward that which one cannot control; 2) No possibility *is* good enough for the Stoic to stand on; certainty alone will do; otherwise, one will not be living in accord with the logos of nature; 3) All possible, but uncertain states of affairs are immoral to desire, and consequently to hope for; and 4) No desired states of affairs that are possible *ought* to be valuable to the Stoic.

[12] This postulated Stoic is one who holds the following statements to be true: a) There is a logos (a law) that orders the natural world, of which we are a part, b) wisdom is living according to that logos, rather than at odds with it, c) living in accord with the logos means accepting that which is in your control and accepting that which is out of your control and only investing emotionally in that which is in your control, d) desiring or having other emotional investment about that which is outside of one's control only harms one; instead, one should develop the virtue of apatheia (apathy/resignation) with respect to those things outside your control (which include the actions of others, natural occurrences, death, sickness, etc.).

It would seem, then, that hoping, according to the Stoic, would simply never 'get off the ground.' Instead, the Stoic claims we ought to live resigned, in *apatheia*, content with whatever happens and only acting and investing ourselves in that which we can completely control. Recalling Epictetus, in his *Enchiridion*, one is called on to live only with what one has been given, wanting and fearing nothing and so hoping for nothing. In living this way, one can live morally, according to one's true human nature and the nature of the world, which—as a human—is fragile, mortal, and prone to the world's whim and body's disease. Despair and hope only attend those individuals tied to opinion and an attempt to live beyond their means, trying to fix that which is beyond human control, and so holding on to things beyond our true grasp. Such a life leads only to discontent, pain, and suffering, and it is only through giving it up that one can be truly happy.[13]

The Stoic claims, then, that we can live as humans without committing to uncertain desires, and consequently hoping, and that we should do so in order to be happy. Hoping, then, would not be constitutive of human living, but solely optional, and moreover, for the weak willed. This is, let us say, the gauntlet thrown down for my argument regarding the importance of hope to our moral agency, the sort of extreme counter-proposal regarding hope's place in the human life and it is against this position that my own will be most clear and to which my position must have a response. I will proceed, then, with my argument for the importance of hope to agency, responding to these Stoic objections throughout.

So, to return to the constructive argument. In what follows, I will argue for the necessity of hope as a support for limited human agency in an uncertain world, and consequently a necessary precondition for the moral life. To do so, I will proceed by drawing out some of the minimal requirements for agency to flourish, in any given world (not just our own). From there, I will show

[13] See Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, trans. George Long (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991): 14-16.

how hoping supports agency in these 'agency-friendly worlds,' given inevitable limitations and uncertainties that follow from the very fact that they are 'agency-friendly.' After this, I will examine how our own 'agency-friendly world,' Earth, exacerbates, rather than lessens, the needs for hope., before turning to respond to several objections.

Let us turn to the examination of some of the minimal requirements for being an agent. First of all, being a moral creature depends upon *believing* oneself to be an agent of some sort.[14] In other words, agency depends upon a certain self-recognition or self-perception, in which one is responsible for one's own acts, in some fashion.[15] In order to consider oneself so responsible, one needs to believe oneself to have the capacity to intend and (potentially) act efficaciously in the world.[16] Both of these basic requirements seem relatively intuitive—if there were a creature that saw itself as solely suffering, completely passive and unable to act on the world around it, such a creature would not be an agent, and so not responsible for its own life or the lives of those around it. Similarly, if there were a creature who understood itself as a cause in the world, but only from reasons external to it (or without reasons at all),[17] such a creature would be either a puppet or a blind force, not accountable for what it does. It would not properly intend things. Our ability to consider ourselves responsible for our lives and actions relies upon this combination: that we see

[14] In the previous chapter, I emphasized that hope is not an end-setting activity, per se; it is not necessarily tied to my personal agency as that which motivates or sets ends for me to accomplish. In so emphasizing, I distinguished myself in particular from a strain of thought coming out of Aquinas that emphasizes hope as a motive force to attaining arduous goods. All of this criticism holds and should be held in mind for this argument. That said, the argument I present here *is* an argument about the necessity of hoping for human agency, although it does not entail the vision of hope that Aquinas, et al, claim.

[15] This is not to suggest that an individual who doesn't see herself in this light is *not* to be held responsible for her acts. We think it unreasonable for an individual to *not* see herself as an agent if it seems to those around her that she has the ability to intend to act and to act on those intentions.

[16] Of course, we all fail much of the time in bringing our intentions to fruitful action; but we do not fail all of the time.

[17] In other words, if we could at every moment be fully explained sociologically and biologically. One might consider many non-human animals as these sorts of creatures.

ourselves as intenders—we have reasons for our actions that are our own—and that we understand ourselves as efficacious actors—we are causes in the world.[18]

Understanding oneself so—as intender and as potentially efficacious cause—does not demand any notion of radical freedom. I want to head off any criticism that I am overly optimistic or blithe regarding the way in which we, as both natural finite beings and oppressed persons, are deeply passive, shaped by that which—for good or ill—has framed our realities and constrained our identities. We are necessarily born determined by that genetic makeup, family, society, and time which we are given; this can be more or less to our flourishing. Throughout our lives, we will always be more responders to that which is and bears down upon us than actors upon it. And for those living in extremely constrained positions—in slavery, in extremely patriarchal or racist societies—the scope of action open to one is harshly reduced. Despite this, insofar as individuals see themselves as having *reasons* for acting—even if that action is solely 'internal,' regarding that attitude or stance one will take in response to the realities that surround one—one retains one's agency, as I am defining the term here. The scope of one's efficaciousness may be constrained in oppressive ways, and yet, insofar as one remains able to *be* an active responder, one remains an agent.[19]

This ability to act agentially—whether one's scope for action is narrow or wide—depends upon having a world-concept of a certain sort, an 'agency-friendly world.'[20] This is a conception

[18] I say this understanding that the question of agency and responsibility is a live one. I take it, however, that all parties (compatibilists, incompatibilists, determinists, and indeterminists alike) agree that one is *not* responsible for those things one does if they were as if done by an alien or outside force. So far, this is all I mean to be claiming. One is responsible for acts one does oneself—whether or not one could have done otherwise is not the issue in this paragraph.

[19] This does not discount the possibility that one's agency can either be wrested away from one by other's or that one could be born into a situation in which one is never given the means by which to become an agent.

[20] These conceptions of the world that are 'agency friendly' should be, of course, rooted in reliable evidence about how the world really is.

of the world[21] in which the world is understood to be both regular *and* indeterminate, both of which the agent can recognize.[22] First, it depends on a conception in which there is recognizable regularity basic to reality, because without such known reliability, an agent's acts would have no meaning. An agent has to know the context into which it acts *in order* for the act to *be* an act, to make sense. And this can only be the case if the concept of the world out of which one acts is one in which the world is regular enough such that the agent can depend upon the world being similar to how it has been in the past, so that the agent can predict the future. This is true of the 'world of nature' and of human life: one needs to experience oneself as regular and reliable, as well as much of human interaction and life, in conjunction with the wider natural world of which one is a part. Further, this concept of the world needs to be *successful enough* such that an individual not only conceives of the world around them as reliable in certain ways, but can act and live well in response to that conception. And so, while I am primarily interested in people's *perception* of the world, and the way in which those perceptions are necessary for agency, it is worth noting that having a conception of the world as regular *won't work* unless that conception is relatively successful as one leads one's own life. As such, I am inclined to say that such a conception of the world as regular depends upon the world *being* regular.[23]

And so, to reiterate, only from a sense of regularity with the past and the ability, from that regularity, to predict the future, can a person intend and act in any way. Consider, when a person snatches a child from the middle of the road, preventing her from being hit, this act *is* an act

[21] Recall the section on conceptions of the world in Chapter 1.

[22] I am not suggesting these are sufficient conditions for agency, only that they are necessary.

[23] This is primarily an intuition of mine, as metaphysics is not my primary concern here. All I am committed to saying is that one's conception of the world as regular does need to help one succeed in the world. If I considered the world regular based on the past singular experience that when a taxi went by, my mother called, I would most likely be bitterly disappointed on a regular basis. The regularity of the world in my conception of the world *must allow me* to function well in the world. Whether this is due to actual regularity or not is of less concern to me, although it seems unlikely that it could not be based in some person-independent reality.

because it has meaning, which is only because the person can *predict* that cars and human bodies will continue having the same physical properties, that roads will continue to exist as things that cars drive on, that children themselves will continue to be meaningful and important in the world, and so on. And this is a 'high-level' example; that I can decide to get up from my desk similarly depends upon the world continuing on in ways that are recognizable to me. The desk at which I am sitting continues to be there, my own body will continue to have the same structure and capacities, time will continue on, the rules of physics and motion remain in place. Without this understanding of regularity, all would be chaos and confusion, and no one could intend to act or act successfully because reliable prediction would be impossible.

However, agency equally depends on a world considered indeterminate, because without perceived indeterminacy, a creature would not understand its own intentions as potentially efficacious in the world. By perceived indeterminacy, I mean a representation of the world in which regularity alone does not rule the totality of occurrences. To put it more bluntly, in order to be an agent, one cannot (from the perspective of one's own practical being in the world) understand the world to be entirely determined, such that everything that happens and that one seemingly does can be explained fully by natural laws—by necessary, externally explainable cause and effect. For agency, we must see *ourselves* as efficacious causes in the world, which requires that we can determine some of what happens, from what was previously *in*determinate.[24]

Again, similarly to the above claim regarding regularity, this conception of the world as indeterminate can only result in a person who is an agent if it is relatively successful. If an individual happened to perceive as indeterminate gravity, such that she could determine by her

[24] Just as a reminder, I am still discussing *practical* life. On this account, one could be a theoretical determinist, but one would not be able to instantiate that theory in his daily life, while remaining an agent.

actions its effect on her, her life would not be very successful. Similarly, if an individual considered as indeterminate *only* certain observer dependent quantum realities, and nothing else, such that she took it that nothing she did in her life was her own, but solely a result of forces upon her, she would again not be very successful, not owning her own actions or her own inaction, but treating her own life as something to undergo. And so, while I am primarily interested in people's first-person conceptions of the world as they relate to their agency, such conceptions seemingly might be tied to some reality beyond the individual.

This means that there is a weak realist claim in this argument, despite my emphasis on perception. Insofar as a conception of the world with regularity and indeterminacy can be more or less in line with reasonable evidence, it can be closer to reality or further from it. While people have vastly different and yet successful ways of conceptualizing the world around them, to be successful in their daily life, it must extend uncertainty/indeterminacy and regularity to most arenas of life. One cannot successfully be an agent and think of the natural world as entirely determined (we act *as* agents *in* that world!). Similarly, one cannot successfully be an agent and think *only* specific natural processes are indeterminate (then we would be determined by something other than ourselves entirely!). Indeterminacy and regularity have to be within the self, such that *I* determine myself, and in the world, such that *I* can determine it.[25]

That said, the indeterminacy for which I am arguing is *practical* in nature, rather than theoretical. There could always be the possibility that all those things in the world we consider indeterminacies are in fact solely uncertainties, given limits to our knowledge. What we perceive

[25] As such, there is both latitude and limits to diversity of conceptions of the world regarding determinacy and indeterminacy, such that one can be an agent. There is certainly latitude: both Christians and Hindus—with wildly differing metaphysical beliefs about what is and could be the case—can be agents, as well as Marxists and Platonists. But, there are limits: as I write above, believing gravity's effects indeterminate on you is not going to be successful; believing that you can be immune to the uncertainties of the world will not be successful (except in cases of extremely good luck or individual blindness).

as not yet determined could simply be due to imperfect knowledge on our part. We could, in fact, be determined *all the way down* and simply not know it and so falsely perceive ourselves as determining the world around us in 'free' ways, while in fact actually acting in entirely predictable ways, if only we had access to the 'whole picture.' I am not particularly interested in the theory, but rather in the practical effects. Insofar as one is an everyday actor, one practically acts as if there are things that she can determine from that which was previously indeterminate. One could, of course, be a theoretical compatibilist (certainly there are people who hold determinism theoretically) and still act assuming practical indeterminacies.[26]

Accordingly, in order for a human to act, she needs to consider her own world as being both indeterminate and regular; she needs to be able to see into the unknown and find both

[26] Given all of this, I am still taking a "soft" stand against some compatibilists, despite the fact that I am primarily staying in the realm of perceptions. The compatibilist to which I am taking such a stand contends that an individual can themselves, in their daily, practical lives, conceive of themselves in the world as both responsible and determined and can live successfully as agents based upon this conception. This sort of compatibilism is usually argued with regards to debates about whether one can be responsible for an act if one is unable to have done otherwise. Those who believe that one can be so responsible usually argue that as long as one's reasons are "one's own" (in other words, do not include coercion (i.e. do not include reasons such as, "because John told me to" or "because I will be hurt by Fred if I do not")), it is beside the point as to whether the individual could have done otherwise or not.

I take it that this argument pays insufficient attention to the way in which people's reasons are themselves formed. If one is determined fully, and if one conceives of oneself in that way in one's practical life, one would presumably consider 'one's own reasons' to be themselves determined 'as if from an outside,' and as such one most likely would have an alienated relationship to one's own reasons. Consider an individual raised by an abusive mother who may have 'her own reasons' to, for instance, beat her child. Now, if this individual believes that at some level she determines herself, i.e. that she has control over her action such that she could do otherwise (or at least had some hand in the development of her own character that leads her to act in the way she does), she will 'own' this action as her own. It is she who beats her child, and she could have done or been otherwise. But, if this individual believes she is entirely determined to *believe* what she believes and to *behave* the way she behaves, given the abuse of her own mother, her own relationships to her actions and reasons are different. And, while *we* may hold her responsible, she may well not hold herself responsible, whether or not she has 'reasons' she can identify as 'hers' for acting in the way she does. If she holds her reasons as themselves 'externally' determined, she can simultaneously say: I have reasons for doing X, I cannot have done otherwise, and I am not responsible for holding the reasons I hold or doing that which I do.

See, for examples of compatibilist arguments, Henry Frankfurt, "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility," *The Journal of Philosophy* 66:23 (1969) and Henry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," *The Journal of Philosophy* 68:1 (1971). For an argument about character and determinism, in relation to the Frankfurt compatibilist argument, see Robert Kane, "The Dual Regress of Free Will and the Role of Alternate Possibilities," *Noûs* Vol. 34:14 (2000).

commonality with the present (i.e. regularity) *and* room within which to act (i.e. practically indeterminate). But if this is the case, then agency also necessarily depends on the two active stances of expectation and hope.[27]

First, and more obviously, having agency is dependent upon having expectations because in order to intend and act successfully and directly, an agent must be able to have a successful conception of the unknown in which regularity predominates. An agent must be able to count on certain things being the case, and certain actions of her own being easily efficacious. She can expect these things, and acts in relation to that expectation. As I briefly discuss in Chapter 2, expectation is necessary for meaningful intention and action.[28] These expectations provide both a frame of reference for any action one takes, and they provide confidence regarding self-motivated actions one deems easily accomplished due to that frame: I can both expect that the sun will rise tomorrow and frame my life according to that expectation; I can expect that I will be able to get out of bed tomorrow, when that sun rises.[29] For these expectations, I need to consider the regularity of the world as *good enough* for me to predict as certain, and so expect, both that I have the ability to get out of bed and that the world's regularity will continue. The regularity of the world around me, and of my living in that world, allows me to expect that act to be successful, and act freely on that expectation. My agency is successful over time because of the way in which I regulate the

[27] I am not suggesting that these are the sole active stances required. There may, for instance, be an important role for aversion or fear. Given the subject of my dissertation, I am not prepared to make any definitive claims about the role of aversion or fear in an agent's ability to act in an 'agent friendly' world. What I can say is that fear often is a resulting 'activity of hope,' given the uncertainty of the good desired. Many people will have times of fear or anxiety if they hope for something and are uncertain as to whether it will obtain. This may suggest that fear is somehow secondary to stances rooted in desire, such as hope.

[28] See Chapter 2, section 2 on cognition.

[29] That I consider it practically indeterminate that I will so rise is, of course, also necessary for me to see myself as an agent.

unknown by expectation. As such, my agency depends upon my ability to expect things, which comes out of my understanding of the world as recognizably regular.

However, agency also depends upon hope. It depends on hope because, as I argued above, in an 'agency friendly world,' there are necessary practical indeterminacies that so much as allow agents to see themselves *as* agent. Therefore, in a world of multiple agents, such minimal practical indeterminacies necessarily result in situations in which regularity and consequent expectation cannot rule the agent's understanding of the future. Instead, uncertainty or indeterminacy govern her unknown. The indeterminacy that is necessary for any agency at all makes the world within which she lives unpredictable. Consider one such minimal imaginary 'agency friendly world,' where there are merely two agents. In such a world, at *minimum* there will be hopes due to uncertainties resulting from the agency of multiple individuals. For instance, upon waking in the morning, one agent might not know what the other agent did while the first slept. As such, that first agent may well hope that other has done one thing, over another. This uncertainty is due to the simple fact that there is agency—and some indeterminacy—in the world. This in turn will make these individual's own projects sometimes beyond the purview of simple expectation and action. For instance, if the first agent hopes that the second agent put the bread dough out to rise while she was asleep, she may also consequently hope that she be able to bake the bread she needs to bake in order to feed herself. This need for hope in response to the uncertainties that inevitably attend an agency-friendly world extend outward from there.

Even more, we do not live in such a minimal world, but one in which our hopes must extend to far more areas of life and are far more often required for us to maintain our agency. For one, there are seven billion people, who are all acting in individual and collective ways that impact each individual's life and actions. For another, we happen to be particularly *limited* agents: we do not

have strong predictive capacities regarding the future, nor do we have extensive knowledge regarding the world around us or the past. Our hopes do not solely arise due to indeterminacy but also due to limits of our knowledge creating more general uncertainties.[30] Moreover, our own capacities are often unknown to us: we do not know if we will have the power to accomplish certain goals.

In these situations, the agent comes up against her own intention which cannot be immediately or simply successful; she recognizes that the uncertainties of life abound, that other actors and factors may impact her in unexpected ways. This gives rise to hope. An agent faces the unknown with hope if she desires that which is deemed possible but uncertain (and so on), given the indeterminacy and uncertainty of the world. She hopes that she wins a tournament, or that the Lakers win the game. She hopes for these things because she lives in a world compatible with agency; she hopes for them because she can predict them as possible, but uncertain.

Rather than providing certainty from which to act successfully, our hopes instead provide the frame of that which is good (valuable and not-immoral) and that which could be, and this frame grounds much of our living and action. Just as my expectations both frame the world into which I act, and provide things for which I act, my hopes too frame that which I do, as well as provide things for which I act. The hopes that make up my life then orient my action in various ways: I act for the end I hope for, or I plan tentatively, or I express anxiety, and so on and so forth, recalling the various hope-related activities discussed in Chapter 1. Any given specific hope organizes my

[30] Hence, why an individual would hope that her father died at peace with herself, or that their friend passed her test, or that it won't rain tomorrow. Indeterminacy and uncertainty mix in complex ways in these examples, due to our agency and due to our stark limits regarding knowledge and power.

unknown and relates to how I act into the future insofar as that which I do is organized and made coherent by that hope.[31]

Hope then, is important for the agential life, insofar as it helps us to orient and sustain ourselves as limited. First, it is that capacity that allows one to relate one's desired values to the world, even at the world's most uncertain or hostile. So, it organizes the uncertain world[32] in relation to one's values, and it involves one in one's own desired values, far beyond what one's agency can accomplish or what one can know to be the case. We are hopers because hoping orients us and our desires to a world far beyond our power and our ken.

Insofar as hope organizes the world's uncertainties in relation to one's valued desires in meaningful ways, it also helps us to sustain ourselves as limited, but real agents in a world beyond our power to control. If we as agents were constrained to value and commit ourselves only to desires that we or others could easily attain, or that we were certain would come about, our lives would be that much the poorer and that much narrower. If we had no coping mechanism by which to make sense of ourselves in relation to valued desires we cannot control as agents, we would be constantly frustrated by our limited capacity to effect our desires in the world. We are hopers because hoping helps us to cope with and sustain ourselves and our values, to not be undone by the uncertainties of this world.

Imagine hoping, then, as a mapping capacity humans have, that allows us to orient ourselves and our values within a confusing world, and to sustain ourselves and our desires amidst ambiguity and confusion. Imagine such a map: there are landmarks, routes, terrain, boundaries and

[31] This is true of very goal-ish hopes and hopes that are outside of my control, in part or in whole. The hope that I become a marathoner clearly organizes the unknown into which I act and grounds my intentions and actions. The hope that one's child flourishes in her twenties also organizes how I view the future unknown and how I live in the present.

[32] In conjunction with expectations' capacity to organize the 'certain' world.

territories, and so on. These, in different ways, are all hopes; it isn't that all of the features of our map are things we are working toward—they aren't all goals, just as maps in our everyday lives include goals and paths toward them, but also contain landmarks that orient and organize our journeys, boundaries that make sense of and cohere the landscape around us, and so on. So, the hope to get a PhD may be a landmarked goal one is working toward, that organizes the world's uncertainties in relation to that goal; the hope for the kingdom of God may be the very terrain that undergirds one's daily understandings of more mundane goods and values, the land one walks upon; the hope that one's father died at peace with himself may create a boundary to make sense of and give some coherence to an entire realm of one's life, an entire territory– one's memories of and relation to that father-- that one does not have agential control over anymore. Hope, then, organizes our uncertain world and sustains us in it, and that is essential as we make our way through life as limited agents.

And so, I conclude, insofar as indeterminacy is a necessary component of an agency-friendly world, hope and expectation arise concomitantly as active stances toward the unknown. This is the crucial claim of this section: in order for the human to understand herself as agent, her world must be structured such that engaging in hoping and expecting is necessary. Any agent, then, will necessarily be a hoper and an expecter.

There are two apparent counter-examples to my argument that an agent-friendly world requires hoping and expecting, due to indeterminacy and regularity. The first is that there could be a successful possible world-conception in which the agent *only* expects, despite seeing the world as manifesting both indeterminacy and regularity, due to the fact that the creature in question seems able to bend its world at all times to its own will. In such a world, the agent can always expect, and never hope, because her will is always fully efficacious. The person-independent world never

'pushes back' against the agent's conception and will for it. Hope, in this world, never comes about, because—despite the reality of indeterminacy—*uncertainty* never rules the agent's relation to the unknown. She can always instantiate her will on the world around her.[33]

The second possible world is one in which an agent is able to expect everything (and hope nothing) because it is able to predict everything that happens, insofar as the agent is successfully omniscient. And yet, it is able to always act because its omniscience *does not entail* that it sees the world as determined, but only as known. This creature would be able to act always in accordance with, and yet separately from, its expectations. In this conceived world, there could be multiple such creatures, I suppose. However, such a creature would have to have radically non-finite knowledge, and as such, might no longer be properly categorized as a *creature*.[34]

Now, there are two things about these possible worlds I want my reader to notice, in relationship to my claim that an agent-friendly world necessitates both expectation and hope in the agents themselves. First, both of these possible counter-example worlds and the creatures that inhabit them are, interestingly, depictions of God and God's relationship with creation, within the history of Christian thought. God is, first, understood to be that agent that wills creation into existence and sustains it; God's will brings into being that which God wills, God is always efficacious and reality creating. Or, second, God is depicted as one who knows all things and yet in such a way that neither God's freedom (nor our's) is nullified.

This leads me to the second point. Both of the counter-examples are not about *humans*. Humans are *not* the kinds of creatures described in the two counterexamples. This does mean that

[33] It is interesting to note that it seems in this world there could only be one such agent, for if there were multiple, there would be extreme confusion and reality would be shifting to different wills at all times (assuming that each creature had a separate will; if they did not they would not meaningfully be separate agents).

[34] I am unsure about this claim. But, it seems to me at least questionable whether there could be a creature with non-finite knowledge. Perhaps there could be.

I am operating with at least minimal claims about human nature and the limits of human capacities. I am claiming that *humans* cannot fully bend reality to their will; reality always pushes back. I take this to be a fairly uncontroversial claim, although I suppose some strict anti-realists might give me a hard time on this. And secondly, humans are radically finite knowers and always will be. Omniscience is not in our hand. Given that one of these two criteria (a fully malleable reality or omniscience) is what is required *in order for* an agent to exist in which expectation alone rules its relationships to the unknown, my claim stands, at least for us. Humans require both expectation and hope as stances toward the unknown.

And so, to summarize the argument. Agency depends on the ability to act on one's own, which depends on the ability to intend to act. Intending to act into an unknown, and successfully acting into that unknown, relies upon the human's capacity to predict what that unknown is going to be like. This predictive capacity is what allows humans to have expectations in their lives. When the human expects something to come about or to be, it is because their world within which they operate is regular and successful enough for them to intend to act and act *with confidence* and *successfully.* But intended action can only arise if, in addition to being able to predict and so expect things, the human *also* recognizes the world within which she acts as full of possibility and uncertainty. Only if there is possibility and uncertainty can action be efficacious, or in other words, alter that which comes about. As such, for agency to arise, we need to live within a world of perceived regularity and indeterminacy.[35] However, a world successfully considered both regular and indeterminate also gives rise to another set of attitudes and activities. In addition to expectation, the human must see some unknowns as *possible but uncertain* (rather than certain).

[35] Note that I am attempting to give a constitutive account, not a developmental account. I suggest that these are two necessary, but not necessarily sufficient, conditions for the possibility of agency over time.

If one can 'see' into the future and the unknown, and expect things, while also recognizing that not all things are set and certain, then one must also 'see' into the unknown and *hope*.[36] Without recognizing and taking seriously that uncertainty, such a creature would be very frustrated much of the time, expecting things that do not come about, and failing in many of their intentions and actions.[37]

3.a.i. Other Positions

While many contemporary thinkers interested in hope emphasize the way in which hope relates to the moral life and to agency, few of them spell out with any clarity the relationship,[38]

[36] This means that hope and expectation are required for making sense of one's life over time—to frame one's projects, values, and desires in productive ways. Hope, then, is not the ground for each and every act in a person's life—a person can be an agent in one moment without explicit recourse to hoping. And so, the individual can die in a moral act, without us parsing out the hoping present in that individual in that moment. That said, what got that individual to that moment, and what would have continued to organize his life over time successfully had he continued to live, would have been hope and expectation.

[37] Much psychology of hope suggests that people with higher hope have a greater sense of agency, but they attribute this to the fact that hope *itself* is an agentially motivating activity necessarily. I disagree with the connections they make but believe that their correlation between high-hope and high-agency may have a root in the argument I give here. See, for instance, C.R. Snyder, *The Psychology of Hope* (New York: The Free Press/Simon & Schuster, 1994) and all work following him, as well as Kathryn Stevenson and Nils Peterson, "Motivating Action through Fostering Climate Change Hope" and Ezra Stotland, *The Psychology of Hope* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969).

[38] The most cited psychologist on the nature of hope and agency is C.R. Snyder. Snyder and those following him clearly think that hope essentially *is* a motivational state that is based upon one's ability to see oneself as an agent (toward goals) and to see pathways to achieving one's goals (see, for instance, C.R. Snyder et al, "Hope Theory: History and Elaborated Model" in *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hope* ed. Jaklin Elliot (Hauppage, NY: Nova Science, 2005): 105.) Why I do *not* spend much time on this work is because Snyder seems to define hope insufficiently, with little to no research into *how* people understand hope.

For Snyder, 'high-hope' individuals are those who score highly on his participant-reported survey the "Hope Scale". This hope scale does not ask of the participant *anything regarding their hopes*. It asks the participant to rank him or herself on the following 12 statements: 1. I can think of many ways to get out of a jam. 2. I energetically pursue my goals. 3. I feel tired most of the time. 4. There are lots of ways around any problem. 5. I am easily downed in an argument. 6. I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are important to me. 7. I worry about my health. 8. Even when others get discouraged, I know I can find a way to achieve my oaks. 9. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future. 10. I've been pretty successful in life. 11. I usually find myself worrying about something. 12. I meet the goals that I set for myself ("The Will and the Ways," 585). The "hope scale score" of an individual is derived by interpreting their responses to these questions. Snyder is interested in finding, for instance, correlations between what he deems 'high hope' and the ability to set more goals in more arenas of one's life, the ability to set more difficult goals, and the ability to reach those goals. However, he never considers the possibility that hope is anything beyond goal-oriented thinking. This seems to be in keeping with a long tradition of empirical psychology on hope: see, for examples, Richard Erickson, Robin Post, and Albert Paige, "Hope as a Psychiatric Variable," *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 31:2 (1975); Beate Schrank, Giovanni Stanghellini, and Mike Slade, "Hope in Psychiatry: A review of the literature," *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*

and most assume that hope takes on a necessarily motivational or agency-expanding role, both of which I question as necessary.[39] The exception to this contemporary dearth is Victoria McGeer's argument on the relationship between agency and hope, which I will present at some length here.[40]

McGeer's line of thought is as follows: humans, as infants, come into this world with little to no ability to act independently. They are not agents yet, and in order to become so, they have to overcome a vast number of seeming limits. They have to *learn* how to act on their own, and to become in-dependent. Now, theoretically, infants and toddlers could just crumble defeated by their limits and the unknowns facing them, rather than becoming agents. And it is certainly the case that infants and toddlers often do crumble—temper tantrums out of frustration are frequent enough. But, in reality, children *do* transcend their limits and become full agents. But, how is this the case, and how does this relate to hope and agency? McGeer has a claim about how this happens psychologically, drawing on studies done by Jerome Bruner about "parental scaffolding." The crux of the argument is that parents can and do guide the baby, and then toddler and young child, into more and more complex agential activities, through making use of the human being's innate imitative tendency. Parents take up the child's (semi-) nonsensical acts and verbalizations, and extend them to make meaning with them, drawing the child into meaning through the child's imitation of them. This happens at more and more complex levels as the child develops, but an

---

118:6 (2008), especially their distillation of the 'elements of hope' on page 426; and Stotland, *The Psychology of Hope*.

[39] See, in addition to the above, Shade, *Habits of Hope*; Victoria McGeer, "The Art of Good Hope," (see below for extended discussion of McGeer); and Peter Drahos, "Trading in Public Hope," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 592:1 (2004): 19.

[40] My reader may ask at this point why I do not extensively engage Immanuel Kant on the importance of hope to the moral life. I do not do so because of my emphasis on minimalist, phenomenological claims about human life. This is, of course, in contrast with Kant's system of thought, which provides a coherent and complex thick understanding of the world. As such, to 'cherry pick' what Kant has to say about hope as practically necessary to the moral life is neither responsible to Kant's thought, nor particularly illuminating apart from that thought. As such, while I find Kant's argument interesting, it does not bear upon the sort of investigation I am engaged in here. I will discuss Kant briefly below, in the section on contentful hopes and moral agency.

early example that McGeer uses is, "the baby says 'mamama' and the mother says, 'ma-ma, did you say ma-ma? That's right—here I am, I'm ma-ma'…."[41] As the child develops, the child is supported—emotionally and mentally—by the parents, through this scaffolding, in overcoming its seeming limits. Through this process, then, the agency of the child is developed and bolstered in a nurturing environment, and the child *becomes* more fully an agent. She is guided to overcome her limits and to see her limits and the unknowns that attend reality as things to be transcended and as promise-filled, rather than as absolute and defeating.

As such, by the time any child reaches full (or even partial) agency, McGeer claims that she has come to be a hoper. Children have come to see unknowns that they desire to themselves *as* truly possible, and so see limits as spaces for hoping, rather than despairing. And so, humans see hope *as a good thing*, or perhaps more exactly, we see it as what allows us to both recognize our limits and the uncertainties of the world, and yet desire them *as possible* and as worthy of striving toward.

Now, in one way McGeer and I agree deeply—we both see how necessary hope is to being a successful agent, who is not overwhelmingly frustrated and overcome by reality. However, our arguments differ on several points, and ultimately do not fully align. First, while McGeer's argument is more developmental than mine, and insofar as McGeer *uses* her account *as* an explanation of the hoping activity *as such*, her account conflicts and pressures mine. For, McGeer takes her developmental account to mean that, *as a result*, "hoping [in adult agents] always has an aura of agency around it because hoping is essentially a way of positively and expansively inhabiting our agency, whether in thought or in deed,"[42] it is being "ready to act when actions can

[41] McGeer, "The Art of Good Hope," 107.
[42] McGeer, "The Art of Good Hope," 104.

do some good."[43] Hope, for her, most basically arises in the human person as a way of inhabiting and creating their own agency, and as such, is always *about* our agency, even when the hope is for something we cannot effect, or even affect. These latter forms of hope are seemingly 'parasitic' upon the more basic hopes for our overcoming of limits by our own acts. This seems to come out of the developmental claim that the originating experience of hope is an experience of one overcoming one's own limitations, through self-development.

This is, of course, in contrast with my account, in which the dependence of agency upon hoping *does not* mean that hoping is necessarily agentially-imbued. Rather, while some hoping may be agency-expanding, just as often, hoping arises from a sense of limited agency, a sense that one's agency is in fact *contracting* rather than expanding to hope. Because hoping is about recognizing the unknown that is desired as indeterminate or uncertain, rather than fully predictable, it cannot always expand one's agency, and inhabiting one's agency actively with regards to hoping may in some cases be irrational.[44] As such, her account of hoping pressures mine and asks for a response.

I have an answer on McGeer's grounds, i.e. on developmental grounds, because ultimately I believe that McGeer gives an incomplete picture of the way in which hoping develops in the child. Consequently, the way in which she uses her developmental account to paint a portrait of hoping itself is incomplete. The problem with her account is this: hoping does not only come about in the small child from the experience of overcoming her limits successfully, but *also* comes about through an almost diametrically opposed process. Hope seems also to develop in children through a process of recognizing their limits and curtailing expectation. It is the case, at least experientially,

[43] McGeer, "The Art of Good Hope," 103.

[44] Recall my examples in Chapter 1, Section 2.a Forms of Uncertainty.

that very small children and toddlers often have unreasonable senses of expectation. This could be due to the fact that from birth, at least in stable situations, their needs and desires have been met. A small infant has few desires—food, warmth, comfort—and when those desires manifest, the caregiver meets them (at least as best she can), as they align entirely with the basic *needs* of the infant. And so, because desires are met quite consistently, as the infant turns into a toddler and becomes more aware, the assumption that their desires will continue to be met seems 'reasonable.'[45] When they desire X, their caregiver will provide X. But of course, as their desires expand exponentially, these desires are no longer simply or easily met by the caregiver, nor does the caregiver *want* to give to the child all that she desires. And so, this leads to another experience of frustration, aside from the one McGeer chronicles. This experience of frustration is not the experience of coming up *against* one's own agential limits, and having to *overcome* them, but rather of having one's unreasonable expectation dashed, and so limiting one's understanding of one's own agency appropriately.[46] And this expectation dashed *also* contributes to the development of a sense of hope, as well as an understanding of one's agency. A child *learns* to see its own limits to expectation, and in so doing, learns that he cannot expect all his desires to come to fruition, and comes to hope instead.[47] Uncertain possibility is a nuanced idea, and the *uncertainty*

[45] I grant it is far messier than this, and that certainly infants' desires are not always met.

[46] My brother, I believe tellingly, always says that before he had children, people always said to him, "children are demanding." And, he says, he always thought they meant it metaphorically—children are a lot of work, they take a lot of time, and so on. But, upon having children—upon having toddlers more specifically, he says he realized, no, they meant, children *are* demanding—they vocally demand things of you, constantly; they constantly expect that which they want and tell you so.

[47] Psychological theory following Heinz Kohut suggests the importance of frustration of expectation in the development of the child's self. Kohut claims that such frustration must be 'optimally' given, in distinction from 'traumatic frustration' in which an individual child is too often frustrated in their basic physical and psychological needs, and as such develops an unhealthy sense of self (Elsie Jones-Smith, *Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy: An Integrative Approach* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2016): 54-56). While not interested in the importance of hope, this psychological theory supports my claim here that part of what it takes to become a person is the experience of frustration of one's desires and learning from that experience of frustration.

of it must be learned, just as *possibility* must be. In curtailing expectation, a child comes to understand her own agency more fully and begins to learn to live in the world as a finite, limited agent. This, it seems, does not give rise to hoping that has a necessary aura of agency, but rather is about giving up a claim to control, to make room for needed hope.[48]

This added developmental account is not meant to give a complete explanation of the ways in which hope develops in the human person—there are most likely many more facets to the development, and I am obviously in no place to write with any definite authority on the subject of psychological formation of children. Rather, I present it to demonstrate that McGeer's account, resulting in a narrower definition of hoping, is incomplete. And so, in fact, I have no particular problem with McGeer's developmental account as a *partial* developmental account, that discusses *particular* experiences of hoping, but it does not give the full picture. A more complete picture of the development of hope in the child in fact aligns with both my definition of hope and my argument about the dependence of agency upon hoping. Hoping is needed for agency because of the indeterminacy of the world that necessarily attends agency. This hoping will at some times develop in the person through the experience of overcoming their limits and setting goals for themselves. However, in other ways and at other times, this will develop in the person through the recognition of the limits to their control over the world around them.

That said, there is a far more basic problem in McGeer's argument and it resides in the fact that she presents a *developmental* account of hope, as a basis for her *constitutive* claims. She takes

[48] Psychologists Maria Miceli and Cristiano Castelfranchi agree that an exclusive focus on 'active hope' does not adequately account for human experience. They write, "Hope may even restrain motivation and this risk is intrinsic to its very nature. In fact, hope might favor a passive waiting for the desired outcome to 'spontaneously' obtain" ("Hope: The Power of Wish and Possibility," 268). However, as one can see from their naming this a 'risk,' they see this as a 'drawback' of hope, and something to be overcome by changing one's hopes to more 'active hopes.' I think that they do not recognize that passive waiting does not necessarily mean that hopes that the desired outcome will 'spontaneously' obtain—one can hope for things beyond one's power (which they recognize, but insufficiently so), and this is a basic feature of hoping.

it to be the case that if she can give an account of the way in which hope develops in the human person, she can give an account of the nature of hoping as such. Now, I have no problem with developmental investigations as such, as we have just seen. However, there is no necessary reason to think that the fact that hoping *does* so develop in the human person *means* that hoping must continue to exist in the human adult. Just *because* we become full agents through a process of overcoming our limits does not mean that *as* full agents we must continue to be invested in and committed to unknown possibilities that seem to be at our limits. While a young child can still develop and expand their agency, an adult has far less possibility to do so; perhaps hoping is merely a lack of recognition on the part of the adult that he is no longer growing-up.

Moreover, a developmental account does not answer the question of whether hoping is *required* or *good* for all human moral life; it simply shows that we develop in a way that hoping *does* come about. This, I claim, is in distinction from my argument, which is about the necessary preconditions for agency as such. I take my original argument in this section to be a constitutive argument, not showing that as developing persons, we *do* hope, but that to be agents *at all*, we must hope. Now, a developmental account is problematic for two reasons: 1) It confuses what happens *in* development of agency, with what *must* happen for achieved agency to be successful as such, and 2) because of this, it does not adequately answer the Stoic's challenge.

The Stoic, as I have presented him, would have no necessary problem *admitting* that in development, hoping does develop. His problem would be the transposition from this claim to the assertion that hoping *ought* to take place in the full, adult agent. He could simply claim that once we have reached full agency, such that life is no longer *about* the overcoming of limits to become human, but—as I suggested above—rather is about living within them, and so hoping has no value,

and only leads to hurt and harm. As such, McGeer's argument does not address the Stoic's challenge.

3.a.ii. The Stoic Rebuttal

However, the Stoic may still believe that he has a response to my argument as well, which might go something like the following:

> Let us say that I grant you the necessity of practical indeterminacy and regularity in one's conception of the world, if one is to consider oneself responsible for one's acts. There still seems to be a way in which your account allows me my claims about the inessential nature of hope and the good of resignation. Namely, could I not still retreat from the vagaries and indeterminacies of the world and other human beings?
>
> And so, imagine that I, as a Stoic sage, remove myself from society, remove myself from the wider world, and confine myself to a small house, stocked with the needed provisions to maintain my life for many years. In this world that I have made for myself, there are no indeterminacies in the world that I must contend with—I have limited it to such a great extent that in effect I have full control over my surroundings—the indeterminacy shot through the world has been corralled.
>
> And if, to make this less elitist, you would prefer a different example, consider the following: does a fully formed person, confined and condemned to die, have to hope in order to retain her agency? As you, Willa, wrote in the section on contingent relationships between hope and morality, the individual in the concentration camp need not have specific hopes for himself in order to act morally—he can see his own life as over, the future closed and determined for him, and yet act well in his final days. But, does he need hope at all, and if so, what would that look like? In these imagined worlds, hope is not needed, because there is never a time in which one faces the unknown in which uncertainty or indeterminacy rules that unknown. Rather, one's unknowns are fully predictable, and so fully expectable. Insofar as I, the Stoic, or the prisoner, can still *do* things, we are still agents, despite the lack of hope.

The Stoic suggests that he can create a world in which indeterminacies and uncertainties of the world no longer affect him and he further suggests this is similar to the case of an imprisoned individual, whose world and scope for action have been severely curtailed. But, what I have shown in my above argument is that in order for agency to 'get off the ground,' one needs to conceptualize

the world successfully as including indeterminacy as well as certainty, such that there is simply *no getting rid* of indeterminacy. In order to be able to act, we need room within which to act, which requires indeterminacy. Now, one could, to a certain extent, minimize indeterminacy, perhaps. But insofar as one believes oneself to be *acting in or on* the world on one's own steam, one presumably believes that the world could have been otherwise, if he had not so acted. To return to an earlier example, that I can get up from my desk and consider that action my own, means that I consider it possible to act to change the world within which I live. That the Stoic can choose to do things in his retreat and can see these actions as *his* means that there is indeterminacy and uncertainty in his little house.

Given this, since there is indeterminacy in his world, his desires and actions will still at times be uncertain to obtain—he might fail due to various impediments, his desire and action to obtain—for instance—a cup of tea could be thwarted. His own body may betray him, or the teapot might break. This is not to mention the various ways in which the outside world may unpredictably impact the little house (or even more so the way in which the world affects the prison): someone may knock on the door, or an invading army may overrun the area. The Stoic can only argue such control if he imagines that he can fully insulate his life from the reality of other persons and the uncertainties of the wider world. But, as soon as we consider other people in relation to him and the unpredictability of the world outside his door, the indeterminacy that can impact his life expands exponentially. To claim such control as a goal is to fight a losing battle with the world around one.

This will not *fully* convince the Stoic, I would imagine. He might still claim the possibility, arguing that in limiting his life to such an extent, he can effectively still live only with expectations and intentions to act. As I have argued previously, it is true that expectation and hope are both

active *stances* toward the unknown, where the difference does not reside in that which is expected or hoped alone, but in the agent herself. In expectation, one treats *as certain* that which will be, based on predicted regularity; in hope, one treats as *uncertain*. And so, conceivably, the Stoic could believe he could so choose to treat all things as expectation—as certain—having supposedly limited his world sufficiently to lose the need for hope.

At root, however, such a claim amounts to the Stoic demanding the denial of human frailty and finitude. She demands that we control ourselves to such an extent that we *will* ourselves into certainty and expectation in all things, ignoring that whether one hopes or expects may not always be in a person's control. Whether a person can affirm 'treating as certain' any given unknown is, at least to a *certain* extent, beyond immediate or simple will power: for instance, we could all be, at some time gripped by the abyss of non-being, shaken in the realization that everything is contingent, and uncertain,[49] or we could suffer a psychotic break, or have a stroke. The vision of the human lauded by the Stoic ignores our susceptibility in mind, spirit, and body, treating these weaknesses as things one can externalize, ignore, or control.

Finally, when it comes down to it, I believe that the Stoic may confuse my argument, thinking that I mean to be saying that at each and every moment, an agent must be hoping in order to act. Of course, there are acts that are not explicitly rooted in hoping—I have argued as much throughout both of the chapters; hoping is not agentially motivating in any simple way. It is not, then, that we cannot imagine an individual living well for some moment—even perhaps some short and isolated period of time—without hope. We can. We can imagine an individual acting on her own steam and yet hopeless in that act. We can entertain the possibility of the imprisoned man

[49] See, for instance, Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology: Three volumes in one* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967): 64.

bound to die and limited in his actions to such an extent that we *might* say he does not hope in anything: he merely expects and responds agentially as he is able to those expectations. And so, *perhaps*, we can imagine a stoic sage retreating into a world so isolated and a character so determined that he need not have hope for the time he remains so isolated and so in control of his own being. But these are scenarios at the limits, parasitic upon living that include hoping, and that ultimately portray a human life most would deem untenable.

Because, ultimately, the Stoic's claim that one can retreat into both a fully formed character and into a created determined world, and l*ive well in that situation*, such that hope is never needed, demands a notion of living well that gives up most of what many people consider deep, necessary, human goods. It demands the denial of the goods of companionship, the goods of complex and risky projects, the goods of commitments to values not yet instantiated in the world, the goods of continued growth and development.

And not only goods, but also necessities. As the world becomes more crowded, and as unpredictability grows—due to changing global systems and increased agential interactions—we cannot expect that we can so retreat and isolate ourselves. The unknowns that are uncertain and indeterminate are vast and currently inescapable and being agents in this world as it currently is demands our hoping over time.

3.b Hope in Morality

Claiming that hoping is a required posture and activity toward the unknown for the human person, in order for that person to sustain agency, is a strong claim. It means that without hoping of any sort, we could not so much as be human moral agents. We will see how this connection may be undermined by aspects of the environmental crisis in the next chapter. However, there is another connection between hope and morality. For, it is not only that one must hope in anything,

in any way, in order to remain an agent, although this is true. It is also that there are several specific hope-contents that are in fact necessary for humans as such to maintain a moral life.

Consider that there are several moral claims that it *seem*s one must assent to in order for the moral life to be sustained over the course of one's life:

First, it seems that a person would have to *believe* that morality is itself meaningful, in order to engage and sustain a moral life. For, in order to reflect and act upon the good and/or the right, one *presumably* has to believe that these terms (the good, the right, the moral) themselves have meaning. This does *not* mean that one has to believe in any specific metaphysical status of the good or the right—one could be a conventionalist or a pragmatist; one could be a constructivist or a realist; one could be a relativist (of a certain sort) or an absolutist; one could have little thought as to how one believes these to be meaningful or real. But, in order to live in morally imbued and meaningful ways, one, we suppose, has to *believe* this. It seems that a person committed entirely to the deepest moral skepticism—i.e. one who does *not* believe this— could not herself engage in meaningful reflection and action on the good and the right, however those are conceived. Such terms for her would have no true meaning, and as such, it would be *meaningless* for her to engage them. She would not regard it as possible that morality is meaningful (and/or real and/or true), and as such, could not sustain the moral life.

Second, it would seem that one would have to hold that one's own moral commitments are valid or true. For, in order to act morally, one must have some confidence in the rightness or goodness of that act; otherwise, the act would not be grounded *morally*, as one would not think of one's own act (or reflection) as in the service of or grounded in the good or the right. Without such a commitment, one's ability to act or reflect morally with any confidence would be undermined.

The belief in the truth or validity of one's own moral commitments then seems necessary as a basis for the moral life.

Third, it would further seem that one would have to believe that the moral life is *possible* for oneself and for others. For, one must believe it is in the human capacity to be moral—i.e. that humans have the capacity of will to do the good (and/or the right and/or to *be* good) *and* that they have the capacity of intellect to *recognize* the good (and/or the right). Without these commitments, the moral life would not be sustained in the person, for without the belief in these capacities, it would seem that the human would not recognize in herself the ability to be or become moral, and so to engage in the moral life of reflection and action on the good and/or the right. In such a situation, one would not be able to maintain the moral life because one would not believe the moral life to be a possibility for oneself. This, it seems, does not require that one believe that oneself has the possibility to be morally perfect; many individuals clearly see this as beyond the fallen human's capacity (being a sinner and saint is the lot of even the saved). However, it would seem that belief in the capacity to act or be moral 'enough' or 'on the whole,' *or even* 'in the end' would be required to maintain commitment and concern with the moral life.

Lastly, it would seem that one would have to believe that the moral life is good for oneself and for others. Without such a belief, wouldn't a person be unable to engage in the moral life himself, and wouldn't he be unable to encourage others to do so? Now, by good for oneself and others, I do not mean necessarily *materially good;* certainly many people do not believe that being moral will lead to material and transparent happiness. However, a basic belief in the worthiness of being moral seems necessary for engaging in moral reflection and action.[50]

[50] I discovered after the initial formulation of my argument that Robert Adams has made an extremely similar argument: see "Moral Faith," *The Journal of Philosophy* 92:2 (1995).

However, despite the seeming necessity, it is the case that these basic moral claims *usually cannot* simply be believed, for the entirety of a human life. Why might this be the case? By the term 'belief' I mean that stance in which there is no doubt with regards to the content of the claim. Now, this can take one of two possible stances: the attitude of simple acceptance, held because one has inherited it or accepted it without question (think of the stereotypical distinction between a cradle-Christian and a convert), *or* something committed to on evidence alone.[51] This latter is exemplified, for instance, when someone believes that—let's say—monarch butterflies go south to Mexico for the winter. Based on evidence the person has seen or things she has read, she believes this to be true. Now, such a person could be either assured in that believe—they've done lots of research into monarch flight patterns, they've followed the migration, and so on—or they could hold the belief in an open or tentative way—they are open to the possibility that they are misremembering, or that they misinterpreted evidence. Either way, the belief itself holds no doubt; they believe it to be true in a simple way, unless proven otherwise. While these two stances—inheritedness and acceptedness on evidence—perhaps seem quite different, I want to claim that they can be classed together. Both are unworried in their belief—regarding the first, one has simply accepted as true that which one has been told, and so holds it without much thought. Regarding the second, one holds it based on evidence that demonstrates or suggests its truth, but one is not committed or concerned about the truth of the belief, beyond the evidence. Beliefs are accepted as true without concern, either on authority or on evidence. The believer has no doubt about the truth of the belief, in the holding of the belief, although they would be open to changing their belief if doubts or opposing facts were presented.[52]

[51] Adams, "Moral Faith," 89.

[52] In fact, belief demands it of the believer that he alter his belief in response to this.

Belief, understood thusly, is not a sufficient stance toward these four truth claims for the undergirding of the moral life. Regarding the first claim, a belief in morality's truth or meaning is not always easy to sustain—at one time or another, it is undermined or called into question. The radical moral skeptic's doubt pays a call. Whether it is in the face of seemingly meaningless violence, or in the philosophy classroom, or in Pilate's question, "what is truth?" skepticism seems to be part of the human experience. Particularly in an age of radical pluralism, the truth of moral claims is constantly confronted with the possibility of error, and that error easily leads to reflection on the possibility of a radical uncertainty or to the undermining of the meaning of moral claims themselves. As such, it seems that the moral life cannot be sustained simply by a *belief* in the *actuality* of the reality or meaningfulness of moral claims. It is not something easily assented to throughout one's life, either on *evidence* or on *authority*.

Similarly—with regards to the truth or validity of one's own moral commitments—in this pluralist, global world, we run up against differing moral views everyday, and as such, must confront the possibility of our own error in relation to this diversity and confrontation. This possible error puts our own moral commitments in a place of uncertainty and doubt. Could it be that we are wrong? However, even if we did not live in so pluralist a situation, the experience of moral fallibility, doubt, and conflict seem endemic to human experience. The terror, uncertainty, and gravity of the question, "what ought I to do?" has faced the human person as a constant, throwing into question one's previously held moral commitments, and causing one to question the way in which one has framed the moral life. Given this, the easy belief for the entirety of one's life in the truth or validity of one's moral commitments is beyond most people's capacity.

Thirdly, there is *not* simple evidence in the world that humans clearly *can* accomplish the moral life—acting on and recognizing the moral—and, moreover, within the individual, the doubt

can always remain as to whether one oneself has the capacity to realize morality at all. By this, I simply mean that it seems that the experience of moral failure is, in fact, universal.[53] We are not successful moral agents. And if this is the case, it cannot be a simple *belief* that we can be or are moral, *simpliciter,* that undergird our moral life.

Lastly, the basic problem that the good suffer and the evil rejoice seems to always remain. The moral life is not so easily equated with happiness, and that fact can always make a person question if the moral life is *good* for the individual who pursues it. Is it perhaps not better to seek one's own happiness, with no other thought, and forsake reflection on the good and the right? Such doubt lends uncertainty to the goodness of morality, and this uncertainty calls into question the simple belief in its goodness—both for the individual and for the world.

At this point, my reader might be highly skeptical. Surely, there *could* be a person who believes simply: 1) in the truth or meaning of morality itself, 2) in the validity or truth of their own particular moral commitments, 3) in the possibility of being moral, or 4) in the goodness of the moral life. Yes; there could be, and I am sure that there are some who do hold these beliefs. It could always be the case that there could be some person without such worry, for instance, a cult member who never questions the cult's moral system, which includes a belief in the attained moral perfection of all its members, and the true happiness and goodness of the life in the cult. This is possible. But, I see these primarily as exceptions to the rule rather than undermining the general point.[54] For most aware individuals, doubt in these claims come. The difficulty of the moral life is

[53] There may be people who disagree with me on this, but I'm not sure I have much to say to them if that is the case.

[54] The distinction here between exceptions to the rule and contingent relationships is a bit blurry. However, there are good reasons to think that the contingent relationships described above in section 2 *ought not* to be necessary, either because hope is simply far more ambiguous than assumed often or because demanding the necessity of such relationships curtails moral concern in serious ways. I do not see such a consequence from these four hopes for morality (see below).

something that faces us all, not simply those with the luxury of intellect and time to dwell on the complexity and confusion of morality.[55] And so, in these four reflections, I am claiming that we are the sort of creature on the whole that, in reflection and action on the good and the right, find ourselves confronted with skepticism, fallibility, moral failure, and evil. These confrontations are real in the lives of (nearly) all persons, and this confrontation disallows simple belief, with no doubt at all, in these things. Despite the possibility of an exception, I take it to be the case that my readers are not like the cult followers from above, and that for most people, such simple belief would (paradoxically)[56] not pass as a meaningful engagement in the moral life. Rather, I think most people would believe that such a life would somehow be an abdication of something basic in the human creature.

And so, I have argued that belief in these four claims is not enough to sustain the moral life, and yet that the moral claims seem intimately tied to the ability to sustain a moral life. And so, something must be needed, in the face of doubt and uncertainty. One suggestion, given by Robert Adams, is that we need 'moral faith,' given the 'remainder of doubt,' with regards to these four basic moral claims.[57] Adams defines 'moral faith' as the stance in which one decisively commits to a truth-statement, despite the fact that a reasonable person could doubt its truth, and in committing to it, one becomes 'for' it and acts on the basis of its truth, despite adverse experience and potential doubt. This faith is sustained by a felt encouragement, an emotional courage that

[55] Recall the quote with which I opened Chapter 2, from Mary Midgley: only a creature that had "genuine, but weak inhibitions" against harming another of its species would develop morality (*Beast and Man*, 39). In other words, the very fact of our moral concern is rooted in our moral failure.

[56] Paradoxically, given that above I said that these four beliefs *seem* to be required for the grounding of morality. I now say that simply *having* those beliefs would in fact *not* ground a very complete moral life for a human being.

[57] See Adams, "Moral Faith," 75-83. Adams has other faiths that I do not think are needed. Adams claims we must have both faith that a human life is worth living, both your own and others (78), and faith in the common good (81).

allows one to cling to the faith-content, despite the shortcoming or lack of evidence in the world around one.[58] Now, Adams seems to believe that moral faith in the four propositions, in addition to belief in more specific moral ends, is enough to undergird and sustain the moral life. Adams' schema of postures toward moral claims is then the following: first, there is faith, in which one decides in courage to claim the truth of a claim, despite reasonable doubt, and sustains that faith; second, there is belief, simple acquiescence without concern, rooted either in authority or on evidence. And these, it seems, are the two options. Faith says, well—there may be doubt as to the reality of my faith, but I am going to claim it is *really true* anyway. Belief says, I accept it as true, either as inherited or on evidence, but I do not risk anything, and have no doubt (although, if I hold the belief on evidence alone, I will give it up if I am faced with doubt or contrary evidence).

And so, with regard to the four claims considered in this section, Adams claims that despite possible doubt, one ought to be committed to the truth of morality itself, despite skepticism; one ought to commit to the truth of one's own morality, despite moral fallibility; one ought to commit to the possibility of morality for oneself and others, and despite the experience of failure; and one ought to commit to the goodness of the moral life, despite the evil that faces the virtuous so often.

There are several reasons to think that moral faith alone is an insufficient stance to these four claims to maintain the moral life,[59] but most basically, the experience of skepticism, uncertainty, failure, and evil simply disallows many from the commitment to the *truth* of these four moral claims. Now, as Adams has presented the argument, if one doesn't have faith, one either

[58] Adams, "Moral Faith," 94-95.

[59] At least one other reason an individual might not be willing to have faith in the moral claims outlined here is that she may consider humility a virtue, such that faith that one is right, etc., is itself immoral to cling to. She may not be willing to assert the simple truth of her own moral commitments, the possibility of her being moral, or the goodness of morality. She may instead be willing to hope for these things, understanding that others will disagree with her, and humbly accepting the limits of her knowledge.

simply believes, or does not believe. However, I want to claim that there is a middling position, a different stance that is that of "hope in morality." By hope in morality, I mean the stance in which, in the face of doubt and/or uncertainty, one still desires, as a good that is of value to oneself, a specific moral claim to be true (i.e. that morality is itself meaningful, that one's own morality is valid, that morality is possible, or that morality is good), and that the possibility of it *being* true, despite the doubt or uncertainty, is *good enough for you* to stand on and to commit to the hope for its being so. The main distinction between faith and hope that I want to highlight here is in the status of the claim. For hope, the claim is possibly true, but uncertain; for faith, despite the doubt that is possible, one claims the truth of the claim, and committing to that truth wholeheartedly.

Both involve risk and commitment, but in differing ways. Hope involves a courage standing on the possibility of the hoped-for, despite the real uncertainty; faith involves a courage of standing on the truth of the faith, despite reasonable doubt. And this latter truth-claim and the decisive courage that is required to maintain it is, at least in a lot of circumstances, uncalled for, and beyond many person's capacities (or even desire). As such, I claim that the more minimal requirement for all persons is the *hope* in the four moral commitments we have been discussing. For some, faith may be possible to sustain; for others hope alone will suffice in times of difficulty, uncertainty, and skepticism. As such, hope in these claims is the true *minimal* requirement for the moral life's sustenance.

Now, let us return to the four commitments: the meaning of morality itself, the validity of one's own moral commitments, the possibility of being moral, and the goodness of the moral life. What does it mean to hope in these four moral claims, and how does it undergird the moral life?

Let us turn to regard the first claim, that morality is itself real/meaningful/true. Hope in this, in the face of skepticism, would be the stance in which one sees that, despite skepticism, it

really is still possible that morality itself is meaningful, and that the possibility is enough for you to hold to, and to hope for. One desires this possible truth as a good that is of value to oneself, and in hoping for it, courageously commits to it as worthy to hope for. This hope—in a way that faith is unable to—can uphold and sustain one in commitment to the moral life, when gripped with the gravity of skepticism. In other words, in order to *be* a person concerned with morality in one's own life while—throughout one's life—faced with the reality of doubt and skepticism, one must *desire* that morality is real/meaningful; one must see it as a good and of value to oneself that it should be so; and see the possibility of it really being so, despite uncertainty or doubt, as *good enough* for committing to hope in the reality or meaningfulness of moral concepts. Such a hope maintains a person's commitment to the moral life when such commitment could be undermined or overcome by the skeptic's denial of the meaningfulness of morality itself. The desire for moral meaning, understood as a good that is of value to one, although *only* possible (rather than certain to be the case), committed to through standing on that possibility as 'good enough', must undergird the sustained moral life, when faced with such skepticism.

Similarly, faced with conflict or doubt about one's own moral commitments, hope allows one to navigate the realm of uncertainty and conflict without requiring either 'blind' commitment or cold unbelief based on the evidence that seems presented before one. Margaret Urban Walker perceptively recognizes this necessity in her work, writing, "our moral commitments are never reasonably seen as beyond question, and they are at times put in question by conflicts, dilemmas, and new challenges. But the stability of our ways of living requires the subscription and participation of most of us a lot of the time. This means that our confidence in the authority of our moral understandings is more or less hopeful. We want to lead worthy lives, and we incline to

believe that our moral understandings guide us in doing so…."[60] We hope in the face of pluralism and uncertainty that our moral understandings are true (enough), letting that hope undergird our commitment to the moral life, even while being aware of doubt and uncertainty. Faced with fallibility or pluralism, one must desire as good and valuable to oneself that one's moral commitments are valid (or 'true enough'), despite the uncertainty that attends one, and one must treat the possibility of them *being* true enough as *good enough* for hoping. Again, for some, faith in the truth of one's moral commitments may sustain one through such times, but for many—whether due to a commitment to a particular virtue of humility, or due to an awareness of their epistemological limits, or, alternatively, due to the gravity and challenge of the conflict at hand—such certainty in the face of doubt will not come. Hope must sustain them.

Thirdly, even if one *does* believe it is in human *capacity* to be moral, this does not then entail that one simply believes or has faith that one *is* (or can be) moral. The belief that is here required for the moral life is a belief about *possibility*, not *actuality*. In other words, it is a belief about a possible, but uncertain state of affairs, that one can hope for or despair of. And so, while not a simple fact, it *can* be something we think is a legitimate good possibility that we ought to commit to, and value, and so hope for in ourselves, and in others. As such, in order to engage and sustain a moral life, one has to desire to *be* moral, one has to see being moral as a good generally, and of value to oneself, and one has to see the *possibility* of becoming moral oneself as good enough for oneself to stand on, to commit to, and so to hope for.[61]

Returning to the Stoic from the section above, maintaining a hope that oneself can become or remain resigned to reality, and so capable of being moral *is* a precondition for continuing to

[60] Walker, *Moral Repair*, 66.

[61] Again, the hope does not have to be that one can be morally perfect, only that one has reason to continue to engage in moral reflection and action because one can be 'in the end' or 'at least in part' moral.

engage in the stoic moral life. An interlocutor may worry about this, asking, but isn't it the case that the only thing the Stoic needs to maintain a moral life is to do his duty; hoping for anything just doesn't have anything to do with the moral life—a person committed to stoicism need not hope to *be* resigned and content in reality, but must merely do his duty according to reality. But consider what this would be claiming: it would be saying that somehow an individual who did not think of herself as potentially moral (as opposed to immoral) could somehow so much as try to do their duty. Doing one's duty presumes that one believes that one could so much as do one's duty; and in the face of failure, fallibility, and imperfection, such belief requires hope (if not faith). As such, the stoic hopes to be content and resigned to reality, to live morally.

Lastly, the hope for the goodness of morality for the individual and for the world must be maintained in order for morality to be sustained in the human person. This could, of course, take the more developed form of Kant's hope for an author of nature and an immortal soul, but it need not.[62] Without such a hope to maintain one when faced with evil, suffering, and seeming meaninglessness, the fall from faith to despairing skepticism would be swift for many. For hope allows one to remain committed to the moral claim, in situations of excruciatingly deep uncertainty. Faith may be gone, when hope is not. It must be sustained by the *hope* that it is so.

[62] For Kant, there are several hopes that are what he calls practical postulates of the will that serve to sustain the human agent, given the fact that in experience, the highest good does not seem achievable in this life, nor does nature seem conducive to it. Given that, according to Kant, the highest good is a rationally necessary connection between morality and happiness, he claims that we can hope for its reality and achievability, despite not having evidence for it. In other words, these practical postulates are for things that we cannot properly know, but can properly hope for, given their moral necessity. In *The Critique of Practical Reason*, he claims that one can and should hopes for the reality of a) an author of nature, who can secure the highest good, b) immortal life, with which one can make the moral progress necessary to partake in the highest good, and c) one's own freedom to live the moral life, despite the this-worldly evidence of determinism. One can see the similarity in form to my argument there, although Kant has a much more detailed understanding of what the content of the hopes need be, given his other commitments. See *The Critique of Practical Reason* 5:122-5:150. Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 238-258.

And so, to maintain a moral life, the human must be able to sustain (at least) these four hopes[63] in morality. These more specific hopes for moral contents then sustain one amidst a world only partially hospitable to morality. They sustain one amidst one's own failures and the world's seeming indifference. Without them, one runs the risk of losing one's moral agency, given the threat of skepticism, fallibility, failure, and evil, even if one doesn't lose one's agency more generally (if one continues to be able to organize the uncertainties of the world according to one's hopes).

4. Conclusion: Human as Hoper

If one recalls my discussion of 'portraits of agency' in Chapter 1, I argued that there were aspects of our agency missed in discussions about climate change inaction. I suggested that most reasons given for inaction (ignorance, theoretical denial, structural constraints, psychological constraints, and moral failure) focus on human beings as blinkered, partial, context and evolutionarily bound, and immoral. Here, I have added to that description of human beings. I have argued that we are also hope-dependent. In this chapter, I have argued that hope—both as an activity and in specific moral contents—is a necessary aspect of maintaining moral agency over time. We need hope to make sense of and orient ourselves within uncertainties in our world. It allows us to 'map' the world around us and respond to that map in a variety of agentially invested ways. Moreover, we need specific hope contents to maintain moral confidence in a world often not friendly to morality. Therefore, it is not simply that hope can be useful in certain types of

[63] On the understanding that some individuals may be able to have moral faith, a stronger commitment, than the minimal requirement of hope, and even fewer may have the capacity for the stronger moral belief (although the benefit of having such belief is less certain).

situations and if developed in specific ways, but rather that hoping itself—in all its ambiguity and diversity among peoples—is central to our ability to engage in moral reflection and action.[64]

With regards to agency and inaction, however, this means we are vulnerable to hope. We are vulnerable to hope insofar as we are dependent upon our capacity to use hope to orient ourselves in a hostile and uncertain world. And this vulnerability is, I will argue, the problem we face in climate change: the faculty of hope can in fact be pressured by climate change predictions. Given this, we stand to lose much, according to this account: our nature, as moral, agential creatures, and with that the possibility of adequately responding to the crises facing us today. It is this vulnerability that helps us make sense of much inaction in response to climate change, and it is to limning this problem of hope, inaction, and climate change that I now turn.

[64] This argument does not entail that there are no virtues of hope, however. Instead, I am saying that no matter the way of organizing the world, hope is necessary to make sense of and respond to the uncertainties of that world if one remains an agent. That said, this does give us the possibility of developing virtues of hope: namely, those ways of hoping *that allow us to do this well*. See Chapter 5 for further discussion of forms of hope.

CHAPTER 4: Hope and Climate Change

In her novel *Flight Behavior*, Barbara Kingsolver worries through the characters about how the predictions coming out of the climate sciences relate to and threaten our hopes. In a conversation about climate change with a scientist, the main character Dellarobia says, "Sorry to be a doubting Thomas…I'm not saying I *don't* believe you, I'm saying I *can't*." This rejection of climate change does not come from a refusal to see the evidence (she doesn't *not* believe him), nor does it arise from selfishness or a lack of future thinking (over the course of the book she proves herself a thoughtful individual). Rather, she emphasizes that it is the "*Little hopes, you know*?" that define and orient her life: "Meeting the bus on time…Getting the kids to eat supper, getting teeth brushed. No cavities the next time." These hopes, she claims, are incompatible with the global predictions on offer from the scientist. She resignedly states, "There's just not room at our house for the end of the world." Her rejection comes from the need she has in her own life to make sense of her days, and the future of her family. She orients her life by her hopes, and these hopes disavow the possibility of "the end of the world."[1]

The basic contention of this chapter is that there is something deeply honest about Dellarobia's response to the scientist, and that even many of the most science savvy and worldly among us are far more similar to Dellarobia than we might like to admit. As I have argued in previous chapters, we, like Dellarobia, cope with an uncertain and hostile world and organize our lives within that world using our hopes. Moreover, I will argue that like her, we encounter climate change predictions as something like the 'end of our world,' and the hopes that organize those

[1] Barbara Kingsolver, *Flight Behavior* (New York: Harper Collins, 2012), 283. Italics in original.

worlds. Lastly, we, as she does, often either deny (she 'can't believe him') or remain inactive/inattentive in response to climate change for the sake of preserving those hopes.

In this chapter, I will argue for three claims to explicate Dellarobia's response and its commonality with our own. First, our capacity to hope and our hopes are potentially pressured by climate change predictions, both cognitively and evaluatively. Second, given hope's sustenance of the agential, moral life, these pressures potentially impact moral agency. Third, these pressures and their consequent impact on moral agency help to make sense of much of the tendency toward inattention and inaction with respect to climate change found among privileged American actors. More particularly, in addition to the reasons for inaction explicated in Chapter 1, preserving our hopes and hoping capacity fuels a) practical denial and b) paralysis.

I will further argue that, at the same time, it is precisely our capacity to hope, our hoping, that might allow us to respond humanly to climate change; in other words, hoping in light of climate change is itself a necessary (although not sufficient) precondition to responding to climate change well. By arguing thusly, I am turning in a small part from the more descriptive work of the previous two chapters. This is because, while I do not mean that hoping of any kind will result in good living in response to climate change, I am suggesting that at the broadest level we *do* need to hope in explicit response to the serious realities of the changing climate and world.

That said, as it has been the case throughout this dissertation, hoping—despite being a normative activity and undergirding our ability to so much as act morally—is itself in many ways an ambiguous phenomenon; we use it for good and for ill, for life affirming and life denying ends. As such, while I am making a minimal normative claim in this chapter—that today, we ought to hope *in legitimate response* to climate change and its effects on the world, rather than ignoring, denying, or disintegrating in the light of these predictions and their uncertainties—I am *not* saying

that everyone who does so hope will live morally. Rather, I argue that hoping in response to climate change is a crucial necessary condition for responding well to our changing and confusing world.

I will end by demonstrating how this shows us to be in a sort of aporia with respect to hope and climate change. Despite the need for hope, we are not responding with it. Instead, we see paralysis and practical denial of climate change, *à la* Dellarobia. Contrary to much psychology and ethics on the subject, I will emphasize in this chapter that climate change is not simply a problem that does not match well with our evolutionarily developed 'irrational side' of psychology, or the ethics that attended our earlier societies, but that it in fact challenges our ability to live as human hopers, and that this challenge makes sense of much of the tendency toward denial and paralysis currently pervasive throughout the first world. We are then in a sort of double-bind—hope is ever more important and ever more elusive: we need to hope to respond to climate change well and, at the same time, it is our hopes that lead us to deny and ignore climate change.

To argue this, I will first unpack and analyze the pressures put on hopes and hoping by climate change. Then I will explain how these pressures help make sense of people's tendency to practical denial of and paralysis in response to climate change. After this, I will argue that this is particularly problematic because hope is becoming more important to our agency, rather than less so, as we enter a time of dramatic climate changes. I will conclude the chapter by showing that this places us in the seeming aporia, where we both need hope all the more to properly respond to climate change, while at the same time hope is also a primary culprit for our inattention and denial of climate change.

A brief clarification before turning to pressures put on hoping. I've used the term 'our' a lot throughout this introduction. I mean to be arguing that these pressures to hope and consequent inaction could potentially impact anyone, even as they are not inescapable or inevitable responses

to climate change. Moreover, I will argue that all people will need to be able to hope in order to respond to climate change well. That said, this dissertation is primarily concerned with privileged actors and their inaction, so at times my argument will focus more exclusively on American privileged actors. Additionally, as will become clearer below, there are specific characteristics that privileged actors share that make it both more likely that they will feel pressured in their hoping, as well as more likely that they will respond with practical denial or paralysis in the face of climate change. With that clarification, I turn to potential pressures to hope.

1. Pressures to Hope

I begin by analyzing the pressures to hoping in light of climate change. Let us briefly recall the definition of hope I concluded with in Chapter 2. One hopes according to one's conception of the world when 1) one desires 2) that which one deems possible but uncertain to obtain, 3) when one deems the desired outcome good, valuable, and not immoral, and 4) if the possibility and valuableness of the state of affairs obtaining is deemed 'good enough to stand on' for oneself, such that the hope has a resulting impact on one's living over time. In that chapter, I emphasized that deeming something possible but uncertain made use of our cognitive faculties, while deeming something good, valuable, and not immoral made use of our capacity for evaluation.

In this section, I will show how these cognitive and evaluative aspects in hoping can be undercut when individuals attempt to confront and respond to the climate change sciences and the predictions coming out of them, making it difficult to deem something 'good enough to stand on.' Namely, with regards to cognition, climate change's uncertainties a) make it comparatively difficult for actors to conceptualize possibility in relation to their future and b) given that difficulty of conceptualization, these uncertainties make it hard to have the courage to stand on that which one desires and so hope. With regards to evaluation, climate change's threats to fundamental goods

of life (its gravity) threatens the content of our current hopes with trivialization and moralization, making them seem solely "little" and potentially impermissible. These threats also make it difficult to have the confidence to deem any desire good enough to stand on. I will take these pressures in turn.

1.a Cognitive Pressure

First, let us examine potential cognitive pressure put on one's capacity to hope. Broadly, I claim here that climate change predictions for the world's future have several characteristics which can pressure some people's ability to "deem X possible, but uncertain to obtain" in such a way that X's possibility is "deemed good enough to stand on for oneself," resulting in hoping. More particularly, I will argue that climate change predictions can confront the individual as both opaque, totalizing, and in flux—uncertain in a 'wild' sense—such that the individual can have trouble discerning the possible and may lose confidence in herself as a predictor of possibility. Recall the mapping metaphor of the preceding chapter. There I described hope as a mapping capacity people have, to orient themselves and their desires in a world of uncertainty. Here, the problem is that people are having difficulty in so much as making a map of the future, in which their desired values are meaningfully connected to the possibilities of the world, because the uncertainties of climate change make it hard to so much as recognize what is possible.

There will be at least two worries that one may have in reading this thesis. First, a reader may worry that I am doing some sort of about-face and am in fact emphasizing uncertainty in climate change to manufacture doubt, denial, or inaction. This worry can only have outright refutation—I am not part of such an ideological project and my emphasis on uncertainty here is to understand and respond to inattention and inaction, rather than condone or encourage it.

The second worry a reader might have is subtler. A person might think that I may accidently furthering such projects of denial because I emphasize the uncertainties of climate change predictions and I show how inaction is an understandable response to those uncertainties. If I emphasize uncertainties and inaction, might I not inspire doubt in my readers regarding the realities of climate change and in that way undermine the active response I seek? This second worry is widespread and may be what has led to an inattention to uncertainty on the part of ethicists, if not other scholars, in relation to climate change.[2] The idea is this: that uncertainty with respect to climate change fuels so much denial that it is best undiscussed if we are to encourage belief in and response to climate change. It is better, the thought goes, to emphasize confidence and certainty to gain the trust of skeptical individuals.[3]

However, this has led to a lack of ethical attention to the ways in which uncertainties about climate change in fact are present—they are not solely manufactured. I will argue that these uncertainties of climate change are important for understanding why people respond to the climate sciences in the ways they do and, moreover, that understanding them will help us to grasp the hurdles that we will need to overcome in order to encourage adequate response. Without attending

[2] There is fairly extensive work on uncertainty and risk in relation to climate changing, coming out of the social sciences, public policy, and philosophy of science primarily. See, for examples, Ash Amin, "Surviving the Turbulent Future," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 31 (2013); Timothy Ballard and Stephen Lewandowsky, "When, Not If: The inescapability of an uncertain climate future," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 373 (2015); R. Alexander Bentley and Michael O'Brien, "Collective Behaviour, Uncertainty, and Environmental Change," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 373; Anna Leuschner, "Uncertainties, Plurality, and Robustness in Climate Research and Modeling: On the reliability of climate prognoses," *Journal for General Philosophy of Science* 46 (2015); L. Phelan, "Managing Climate Risk: Extreme weather events and the future of insurance in a climate-changed world," *Australasian Journal of Environmental Management* 18:4 (Dec. 2011); D.A. Stainforth *et al*, "Confidence, Uncertainty, and Decision-Support Relevance in Climate Predictions" *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 365 (2007).

[3] See, for an example of such an attitude, Kevin O'Brien, who asserts: "The structural nature of this problem too often makes it seem invisible, an abstraction that public discourse suggests may or may not be real, may or may not be caused by human beings, and may or may not be related to the latest extreme weather events. But climate change is *very real, very much caused by human beings, and very much connected to hurricanes, droughts, and floods*" (*The Violence of Climate Change* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017): 2). I do not disagree with this statement, but the emphasis on certainty as a strategy for responding to doubt is quite apparent. Italics added.

to them, we run the risk of mischaracterizing the problem and misunderstanding what would be required to effectively address it. To restate the thesis of this section: the uncertainties that confront us in climate change predictions do, in certain contexts, make it difficult to make sense of and 'stand on' the possibility in relation to one's desires for the future, and thus, pressure some people's hopes.

Before turning to analyze these uncertainties, I will briefly describe several manufactured uncertainties that are not the ones of interest here, in order to further avoid misunderstanding. Namely, there are uncertainties people have about climate change that come from misunderstandings about climate science and predictions, which arise from misinformation, lack of education, or psychological features of humans. As emphasized in Chapter 1 on reasons for climate inaction, there is the uncertainty due to doubt regarding the science behind and evidence for climate change, that has been fueled by a mis-information campaign.[4] People are uncertain as to the reality of climate change because they do not trust the authorities or the science behind claims about climate change.

There is also uncertainty that arises from the way scientists have conveyed the situation, or rather, how laypeople receive scientific claims. Scientists, being responsible, have conveyed uncertainty in the situation and their predictions, which is often misinterpreted by the media and by the average individual.[5] Psychologically, people do not 'do well' when faced with uncertainty. With regard to climate change and scientific explanations of it, people tend to *decrease* the likelihood of negative climate change effects when presented with information that is itself

[4] See, for instance, Orestes and Conway, *The Merchants of Doubt* and Stephen Lewandowsky, Timothy Ballard, and Richard Pancost, "Uncertainty as Knowledge," 2.

[5] See for work on this, Susanne Moser and Lisa Dilling, "Making Climate Hot," 34; Robert Gifford, "The Dragons of Inaction," 292; and Naomi Oreskes, "The Fact of Uncertainty, the Uncertainty of Facts, and the Cultural Resonance of Doubt" *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 373 (2015): 3-4.

presented as possible but uncertain, rather than as certain and sure.[6] And so, the uncertainties reported are often ballooned, made crucial, as a barrier to taking the predictions seriously.

The uncertainties with respect to climate change and climate change predictions are also, in this process, often mis-located by individuals. While the scientists may present uncertainties within a range of effects—the sea level may rise three or six feet, the rate of change in global temperature may be faster or slower—these uncertainties are often treated as doubt about the possibility of the negative predictions coming about *at all.* The lay person treats the uncertainty as an uncertainty about whether or not the negative effects *will* come, rather than uncertainty about the gravity and the particulars of the negative effects *to* come.[7]

These uncertainties about climate change predictions are uncertainties that in principle can be resolved and should be—they are rooted in error and misunderstanding, rather than in the climate change predictions themselves. These are not the uncertainties with which I am interested in this chapter, despite their obvious relation to inaction (see Chapter 1). Instead, here I am concerned with uncertainties that more deeply pressure our usual strategies for predicting the future's contours and which cannot be overcome by education or good communication strategy. The wildness of these uncertainties comes from the way in which the predictions of climate change present a world that is opaque in its future, total in its changes, and extended in its time frame.

---

[6] For an explanation of this phenomenon, see Thomas Morton *et al*, "The Future that May (or May Not) Come." They write, "Cognitively, increasing uncertainty in communication increases the demands on the audience's ability to understand…motivationally, uncertainty about negative futures can allow people to maintain a relatively optimistic stance about current behavior" (104). See as well Liesbeth Van de Velde, Wim Verbeke, Michael Popp, and Guido Van Huylenbroeck, "The importance of message framing for providing information about sustainability and environmental aspects of energy," *Energy Policy* 38 (2010). When making choices under uncertainty, when the choice is framed or focused on potential losses, people will generally prefer to take risks (i.e. people will prefer to *not* make significant changes to their lifestyle when climate change effects are framed as potential, but uncertain loss, thus taking greater risk). Lastly, see Dominic Johnson and Simon Levin, "The Tragedy of Cognition." They write, "Other things being equal, prospect theory predicts we will be risk-prone in this situation, gambling on doing nothing in the hope that things will not be as bad as all that" (1598).

[7] Ballard and Lewandowsky, "When, Not If," 2-3.

1.a.i. Opacity

In this section, I will argue that there are several limits, both to our capacity to understand climate change's effects and to predictively envision the future world, that cause the future to seem 'opaque'; hidden, the future's contours are unknown, presenting to us as a blank screen, inhibiting our vision. This opacity arises from: a) incomplete knowledge of global systems and interconnections, b) combined with limits on our ability to model and predict the future in high-forced scenarios, c) which is generally predicted to be non-linear, featuring abrupt climate changes. These limits make it difficult to conceptualize possibility in a way that relates to human desires and values, and so to hope in to that future of climate change.

First, we have a vastly incomplete knowledge of global systems and interconnections, which causes deep uncertainty about how a changing atmosphere will alter our natural, climate, and weather systems. Now, this may sound counterintuitive. In many ways we know a lot about global systems and interconnections with respect to climate change. For one, the theory of climate change itself is built upon knowledge of the global carbon cycle and how we are affecting it. We know that due to our burning of fossil fuels, we are rapidly changing the composition of our atmosphere, increasing the parts per million of greenhouse gases[8] at astonishing rates. And we know that their emission leads to increased average global temperatures over time, given the usual behavior of these gases. Namely, these gases absorb the reflected energy of the sun, preventing that energy (heat) from being lost to space.[9] As they increase in concentration in our atmosphere

[8] Greenhouse gases primarily include Carbon Dioxide (CO_2), Methane (CH_4), Ozone (O_3), Water Vapor (H_20), and Nitrous oxide (N_20). Fossil fuel use, through globalization and industrialization, are primarily causing an increase in Carbon Dioxide and Methane in their gaseous form in our atmosphere.

[9] Of course, without any of the greenhouse gases, our planet would be uninhabitable for us. See Frank Incropera, *Climate Change: A wicked problem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). He writes, "Termed the greenhouse effect, this influence is the natural phenomenon without which the Earth would be a far colder planet. Although the concentration of CO_2 in the Earth's atmospheric is only 0.04% by volume, it and other GHG such as water vapor maintain the average surface temperature at a relatively balmy 15 degrees C, well above the

due to the emission of carbon dioxide and methane, we essentially are trapping more and more heat in our atmosphere, warming us up.[10]

This understanding of the mechanism of these greenhouse gases, however, is coupled with stark limitations to our understanding of the complicated interconnected systems that contribute to the makeup of our earth's climate. For just a couple of examples of our lack of knowledge: we do not fully understand the makeup, power, or vulnerability of the main carbon sinks (for instance, forests and oceans) and we have surprisingly little understanding of how the melting of permafrost may affect global systems. These are but two of a multitude of examples. These massive limitations on our understandings of the systems that dictate the state of our world cause for significant uncertainty with regards to how climate change will impact our world.

This is only worsened by the fact of extreme natural variability, of which we only understand in part. For but one example, oceans are affected by natural patterned variabilities that range from decade-long (El Niño,[11] for instance) to thousands-of-years-long (thermohaline circulation,[12] for instance). These variabilities affect weather, precipitation, and regional average

---

value of -20 degrees C that would exist without GHGs" (23).

[10] More particularly, what happens is that as GHGs increase, they absorb solar and terrestrial radiation (i.e. the solar radiation that has been absorbed into the earth and then released) at increased rates, thus warming us up. They essentially trap in heat that used to be lost to space. For there to be thermal equilibrium, the net transfer of solar radiation to the earth's atmosphere (combined between the amount of radiation absorbed by GHGs as the radiation enters the atmosphere (solar radiation) and the amount of terrestrial radiation absorbed by GHGs) must be equally balanced by the transfer of terrestrial radiation back into outer space (Incropera, *Climate Change*, 26). According to the most recent science, we do not currently have thermal equilibrium, and the temperature will increase due to this imbalance (Ibid., 27).

[11] This refers to the El Niño Southern Oscillation, or the oscillation of warm and cold temperatures in the Pacific Ocean due to normal variations in ocean currents.

[12] Thermohaline (etymological roots: thermo/heat, haline/salt) is the large-scale ocean circulation driven by density gradients in the water, in turn driven by the temperature of the water and salt content. Namely, as water is frozen at the poles, the water increases in density, due to an increase in salt content. This water then descends in the ocean basins and circulates across the globe in fairly steady patterns, whose variability changes on the scale of 1000 year+ cycles. It is the possible "shutdown" of this circulation due to global warming that may force much drastic abrupt climate change.

temperatures, but, while patterned, they are predictable only in the short-to-medium term.[13] In other words, how the changing atmosphere due to the greenhouse effect will in turn affect our climate and weather will depend on these natural variabilities as well, only some of which we can predict at all. These natural variabilities further complicate our understandings of systems, their fluctuations, and how the greenhouse effect impacts them.

This incomplete knowledge can be exemplified in our use of "chaos theory." Namely, weather systems seem chaotic to us, because of their extreme sensitivity to initial conditions, such that, in the classic example, "the flap of a butterfly's wings in Brazil set off a tornado in Texas."[14] As we do not have anywhere near complete knowledge of initial conditions at any time in the world, combined with our lack of understanding of systems, their interrelation, and natural variability, we have real limits on our capacity to make long term predictions. This has always been the case, but it is exacerbated by the changing climate, which increases variables and uncertainty.[15] If a butterfly's wings can wreak havoc unpredictably, what can tons of carbon dioxide do?

This incomplete understanding of global systems and climate change's effect on them creates a particular problem with regards to our ability to model possible future climate change regimes. This is the second limit that gives rise to opacity: limits on our ability to model the future in high-forced scenarios.

---

[13] A.M. Foley, "Uncertainty in Regional Climate Modelling: A Review," *Progress in Physical Geography* 34:5 (2010): 653.

[14] See Edward Lorenz, "The Butterfly Effect" in *The Chaos Avant-Garde: Memories of the Early Days of Chaos Theory*, eds. Ralph Abraham and Yoshisuke Ueda (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2000): 91-92. The chapter is a paper from 1972 that Lorenz gave at MIT, where he provides an introduction to the idea of the butterfly effect and the problem of initial conditions.

[15] See, for instance, Stainforth *et al*, "Confidence, Uncertainty, and Decision-Support Relevance in Climate Predictions," 2148-2151. Initial condition uncertainty is one of the primary problems in our attempts to forecast climate scenarios, which contributes to climate modeling imperfections, given that we have such limited understanding of the Earth's climate.

The way in which scientists have developed climate models and predictions are verified by past data and the reliability of the model's past projections. Because we do not have complete scientific understanding of all systems involved, we have, by in large, generally grounded predictions (one might even say at both at an individual lay level and at a scientific level) on past trends and experiences of regularity. We use historical data to forecast what we should expect in the future. However, past data and the models that arise from it are rooted in an assumption of a non- or low-forced climate context. Non-forced or low-forced scenarios are climate contexts in which there is not 'non-natural' impacts on the climate; nothing is forcing the climate out of its relatively stable state.[16] 'Non-natural' forcings include human impacts in general but are not limited to those impacts. An asteroid hitting the earth would also be considered non-natural, as it is not-internal to the climate system itself.[17]

Consider carbon dioxide levels, to better understand a 'high forced scenario'. As of December 2017, the mean atmospheric parts per million of carbon dioxide was 406.77.[18] This is an increase over 1950 levels by over 80 ppm, and over average pre-industrial levels by around 120 ppm.[19] In other words, in 1950, the mean atmospheric ppm was under 320 and prior to industrialization, the level hovered around 280 ppm. This increase in the last fifty years is accompanied by an increase in the mean growth rate as well, from below 1 ppm/year in 1960 to

[16] Of course, the climate itself shifts over time and has changed dramatically over the course of billions of years. Some of this has been externally forced (asteroids hitting the earth, for instance) and others have been internal changes due to natural shifts over time (glacial and inter-glacial periods, for instance).

[17] This is contested, given the difficulty in defining 'non-natural.'

[18] See Earth System Research Laboratory Global Monitoring Division, "Trends in Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide: Last Five Years," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, accessed March 23, 2018, http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/global.html.

[19] See Earth System Research Laboratory Global Monitoring Division, "Trends in Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide: Full Mauna Loa CO_2 record," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, accessed March 23, 2018, http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/full.html.

over 3 ppm/year in 2016.[20] Perhaps this does not sound significant. However, it is estimated, through the use of proxy measures, that prior to 1950 the highest ppm of carbon dioxide for the previous 125,000 years was around 300 ppm (at ~ 125,000 years ago)[21] and CO_2 levels have not been *significantly* above 300 ppm any time after around 400,000 years ago. We are entering nearly uncharted territory in terms of climate composition, and certainly uncharted territory for our species. Due to human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases, are 'forcing' the world system into new situations, and we do not have knowledge of what that will cause systems to do.

As Ash Amin writes, "the tradition of forecasting based on linear projections of past trends is considered inadequate for the purpose of anticipating the surprises thrown up by a world system in disequilibrium."[22] The exorbitant pumping of greenhouse gases into the earth's atmosphere has altered it significantly enough to force the system out of its equilibrium and into a previously unexperienced state.[23] As Roman Frigg, Erica Thompson, and Charlotte Werndl explain, "The problem is that climate projections for high-forcing scenarios take the system well outside any previously experienced state, and at least prima facie there is no reason to assume that [predictive] success in low-forcing contexts is a guide to success in high forcing contexts…many of the relationships and parameters described numerically in models are derived semi-empirically" and therefore are deeply entwined with past climate scenarios, rather than future human-forced climate

[20] See Earth System Research Laboratory Global Monitoring Division, "Trends in Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide: Annual Mean Growth Rate for Mauna Loa, Hawaii," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, accessed March 23, 2018, http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/gr.html.

[21] See Earth Science Communications Team, "Proxy (Indirect Measurements)" figure, NASA, California Institute of Technology, accessed March 23, 2018, http://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/carbon-dioxide/. Humans have primarily lived and developed civilization in the Holocene era, an interglacial period of increased temperature of climate stability. Hominids have existed for around 5 million years; modern humans (*homo sapiens sapiens*) for only 100,000 years or so.

[22] Amin, "Surviving the Turbulent Future," 140.

[23] See Roman Frigg, Erica Thompson, Charlotte Werndl, "Philosophy of Climate Science Part II: Modelling Climate Change," *Philosophy Compass* 10/12 (2015): 965.

change.[24]

Our incomplete knowledge of earth systems, combined with the fact that we are now forcing those systems in new ways, results in highly uncertain and variable predictions. There are extremely large ranges of possible outcomes and possible timescales predicted. For but one instance, the range of climate sensitivity (the response of the average global temperature to doubled CO_2 concentration in the atmosphere from pre-industrial levels) has remained between 1.5-4.5 degrees Celsius for more than twenty years, despite extensive research over that time; and a +1.5 degree future and a +4.5 degree future would most likely have extremely different consequences.[25] Moreover, probabilities cannot be attached to any specific climate scenarios modelled, due to our extremely incomplete knowledge of global systems and their sensitivity and response to atmospheric changes due to greenhouse gases.[26]

The opacity of our future under climate change is particularly stark when we consider the possibility of abrupt climate change, the third root of opacity I identified above. In addition to our incomplete understanding of global systems and our consequent inability to accurately model climate regimes, there is the problem of unpredictable possible thresholds, beyond which abrupt and dramatic changes to our climate might take place. These abrupt changes are almost entirely unpredictable in terms of timescale, effect, and sensitivity. In other words, while abrupt, non-linear shifts in global systems are—at the greatest level of generality—predicted to take place, when they are to take place, what will trigger them, and what they will cause is almost entirely outside of our predictive capacity.[27] As Mark Bellamy and Michael Hulme explain, "The nonlinearity of the

[24] Ibid., 969.

[25] See Mark Freeman, Gernot Wagner, and Richard Zeckhauser, "Climate Sensitivity Uncertainty: When is good news bad?" *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 373 (20150092), 2-3.

[26] Foley, "Uncertainty in Regional Climate Modelling," 649.

[27] See Phelan, "Managing Climate Risk," 227; Steven Skrimshire, "Approaching the Tipping Point: Climate

Earth's climate system suggests not only that changes may be abrupt, but also that there are significant challenges in prognosticating future systems behavior."[28]

In 2009, Johan Rockstrom and Will Steffen presented the idea of nine "planetary boundaries" (biosphere integrity, climate change, novel entities, stratospheric ozone depletion, atmospheric aerosol loading, ocean acidification, biogeochemical flows, freshwater use, and land-system change) or, in other words, aspects of earth systems that are vulnerable to change and, once crossed will most likely cause dramatic non-linear changes to global systems that will make our climate most likely less habitable to human beings and most current non-human species.[29]

These nine boundaries are not isolated from one another, but include positive feedback loops that are only partially understood and whose magnifying powers are merely hypothesized.[30] For one instance, consider ice. As the global temperature increases, ice pack melts. Ice, being white, reflects the energy of the sun readily and does not absorb much heat. As it melts, the now open water absorbs more heat, furthering the rate global warming.[31] This in turn, accelerates ocean acidification, which again in turn, slows the ocean's ability to act as a carbon sink, leading to even more global warming.[32] In this example, climate change affects ocean acidification, which in turn accelerates climate change. And this is only one example. There are, for instance, possible positive feedback loops expected surrounding methane emissions, around desertification and forest loss,

---

Risks, Faith, and Political Action," *European Journal of Science and Theology* 4:2: 10.

[28] Rob Bellamy and Mike Hulme, "Beyond the Tipping Point: Understanding Perceptions of Abrupt Climate Change and their Implications," *Weather, Climate, and Society* 3 (2011): 49.

[29] See J. Rockstrom *et al*, "Planetary Boundaries: Exploring the Safe Operating Space for Humanity" *Ecology and Society* 14: 2 (2009).

[30] See Leuschner, "Uncertainties, Plurality, and Robustness in Climate Research and Modeling," 370; and Frigg, Thompson, and Werndl, "Philosophy of Climate Science Part II," 971.

[31] "As much as 90% of the incident solar radiation is reflected by snow and ice and as little as 10% by open waters and leaf-covered canopies. Reflection is larger for barren lands than for foliated land" (Incropera, *Climate Change*, 24).

[32] Not to mention the harm done to ocean life due to acidification.

and many others predicted or suspected.[33] Knowledge about these feedback loops is only partial, and how the magnifications affect greater systems is by and large unknown. These positive feedback loops have the potential of bringing about abrupt climate change in unexpected ways, as they might cross thresholds much more quickly than previously thought, for instance. With all of this comes the reality that the world is possibly changing in inevitable and hidden ways: past and current emissions are altering the climate and our world for centuries, no matter what, and in ways that may surprise us, with potentially abrupt climate change.[34]

All of this combines to give an impression of opacity with regards to the future in climate change. Despite having a general sense of the predictions (higher global temperatures, flooding, more extreme storms), the future is in many ways opaque to us, foreign and unknowable in its shape and makeup. We have limited understanding of the global systems that affect the climate, we cannot reliably or probabilistically model climate change regimes, and we do not know the makeup of what abrupt climate change will occur. These combine to make the future seem in many ways obscured indeed.

Now, it may seem, given my emphasis on the science in this section, that the problem of opacity is only one for scientists or other very scientifically informed people: only if one knows all the intricacies of the science introduced above does one face the problem of opacity. This, however, is not what I am arguing here. Instead, I am suggesting that when people turn to confront climate change, whether they are equipped with a strong understanding of the science behind it or simply a more general understanding of the predictions and information on offer, the opacity of our future presents itself. It may be that opacity is experienced simply as a general sense that the

[33] See, for instance, Incropera, *Climate Change*, 77 on the increased release of methane from thawing permafrost.

[34] See, for instance, Bellamy and Hulme, "Beyond the Tipping Point," 49-50.

predictions on offer are very vague and hard to translate to local situations. Or, it may be a strong understanding of the limits to modelling climate regimes. Either way, opacity confronts one when one faces climate change predictions.

Due to this, I am also suggesting that the opacity of climate change and its pressures to our ability to predict possibility is foundational in a way the other hurdles to attending to climate change are not. In other words, even if the problems of ignorance, psychological tendencies, and moral insufficiencies were overcome, the opacity of climate change would still remain.[35] This is not to say that there is no way to address or work with this opacity—I will spend the next chapter arguing that there is a way to do so—, but it is the case that the problem will not simply go away for us, if we all just became better, more informed people. That said, how such opacity affects hoping remains to be investigated below. For now, however, I turn to the second issue affecting cognition, the problem of totality.

1.a.ii. Totality

This opacity of the future makes it hard to envision what the future will hold and what possibilities for the world seem reasonable. It is not, however, simply that there are portions of our future world that seem opaque. Instead, the uncertainties that render it difficult to envision our future cut through the entirety of our social and biological existence; in other words, the uncertainties of climate change are totalizing. It is not simply one system affected or one alteration to our world; rather they pervade. The systems, as they change, bring all other systems with them—there is no isolated alteration.

[35] As such, the problem of opacity is not one solely for Americans, but for all people. That said, how such a problem affects one's hopes may be culturally and situationally specific.

Consider an example to illustrate this totality. Due to loss of icepack at the poles, there is likely to be both changes to basic ocean currents, such as the gulf stream, and a rise in sea levels.[36] Further, due to temperature shifts and weather variance, desertification is predicted to further intensify and expand.[37] With these two changes come further secondary alterations in basic ecosystems, shifts in plant and animal species ranges, as well as vastly increased rates of extinction.[38] It does not end there. As desertification and sea level rises increase, environmentally-forced human and non-human migration is predicted to expand and accelerate.[39] This is predicted to be combined with increased malnutrition, starvation, and death, as food and water insecurity rises in the regions affected by such desertification and salt water inundation.[40] All of this has defense bureaus predicting that violent conflict is and will be on the rise, due to increased competition for arable land and resources.[41] How all of this, in turn, will further affect human societies and cultures—our systems of education, government structures, religious beliefs, and so on—, is beyond prediction, but it is sure to infiltrate and impact all aspects of life. Even if we *were* able to predict with statistical accuracy the changes to occur to earth systems (which, given opacity, we are not), the reality of that world seems entirely transformed, a total shift affecting all aspects of life.

---

[36] This is the most widely accepted estimate. More dire predictions go up to 23 feet if the Greenland ice sheet fully melts. See "Sea Level Rise," National Geographic, accessed March 27, 2018, http://ocean.nationalgeographic.com/ocean/critical-issues-sea-level-rise/.

[37] Santiago Miret, "Desertification: The Forgotten Side of Climate Change," Berkley Energy and Resources Collaborative, September 30, 2013, http://berc.berkeley.edu/desertification-the-forgotten-side-of-climate-change/.

[38] Schwartz, "Ecosystem Shift: How Global Climate Change is Reshaping the Biosphere."

[39] See, for instance, the Department of Defense's report to Congress from July of 2015. Department of Defense, "Response to Congressional Inquiry on National Security Implications of Climate-Related Risks and a Changing Climate," July 23, 2015, http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/150724-congressional-report-on-national-implications-of-climate-change.pdf?source=govdelivery; and Incropera, 101.

[40] Incropera, 90. As sea levels rise, fresh water sources will be swamped by salt water, severely affecting our fresh water sources and land use for agriculture. In Bangladesh, for instance, this is already a huge problem. See also, Martin Hodson, "Losing Hope? The Environmental Crisis Today," *Anvil* 29:1 (2013): 14-15.

[41] DOD 2015.

By totality, then, I have in mind the same sense of 'total' as in the doctrine of 'total depravity.' In the case of total depravity, the 'total' is not meant to indicate the depth of the depravity, but rather its breadth—that the consequence of sin affects all aspects of the human person. Here I mean something similar—the concern here is not that climate change is predicted to destroy all things completely, but that it is predicted to affect all things; there is no secure, unaffected location from which to take stock, by which one can easily imagine continuity and hope out of that predictability and continuity.

This potentiality for totality seems to come out in popular imaginaries: the obsession with catastrophic, apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic films (from *The Day after Tomorrow* to *Mad Max: Fury Road*), books (for example, P.D. James' *Children of Men*, Margaret Atwood's *Madd Adam* series, and the prevalence of tween series such as *Divergent* or *The Hunger Games*) and the growing and wildly diverse apocalyptic and quasi-apocalyptic movements (from the peak-oil movement to the popularity of the *Left Behind* series). Many seem obsessed with imagining the break between the present and the post-apocalyptic future; the fall of humanity and its broken remnant, utterly different, utterly devastated. There is what was, and what will be; the transition is total.

1.a.iii. Continual Change

Despite having general predictions about the changes that global warming will bring, we still encounter the future of climate change as in many ways opaque—we do not know the when or where of it, the how much—and total in its newness, in its impacts on life as we know it. And these features render that future deeply uncertain. The regularities and possibilities of that world to come seem foreign, inscrutable.

However, if we were in a situation where there was *a* change to come—even a change opaque and total that would result in a changed world—we could perhaps imagine facing that change and learning to live in that new world, with new regularities and possibilities, with new hopes arising from our desires and the possibilities present in that world. A political revolution might be a model to imagine.

However, it is not simply that the world has changed or will have changed at some discrete time in the future when 'climate change' has come to pass. It is instead that the world is changing and will continue to be changing for hundreds of years. Because of the extended atmospheric lifetimes of the greenhouse gases, the carbon dioxide and methane that has been released and that we currently release will continue to affect the climate for hundreds of years.[42] The climate change effects we currently experience are the result of emissions from the past 100 years, and even if we were to abruptly stop greenhouse gas emissions, we would continue to experience effects for hundreds of years.

We are not, then, so much in a situation of "crisis,"[43] but in a situation of unclear, extended change over time, that we will need to continually respond anew to. It is for this reason that I believe the apocalyptic literature so popular now, which I referenced in the section above, is more detrimental than helpful to people, as they try to imagine human living into a future of climate change. Such fiction tends to assume a clear and crisis-filled break between the past and the future: the apocalypse is often imagined as a swift acting epidemic or an abrupt weather catastrophe that provides a break between the old and new world orders. This sort of crisis-thinking and imagining

[42] For lifetimes of these gases, see "Climate Change Indicators," Environmental Protection Agency, Accessed March 27, 2018, https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/science/indicators/ghg/.

[43] If by crisis, we mean a discrete time of intense change or danger, that we must make a (single) decision with regards to.

is not particularly helpful for coming to terms with climate change which, while total and opaque, operates much more insidiously, hiddenly, and over much longer time periods. This 'totality' will not occur at once, but rather a slow transformation, hard to discern, will take place.

This means that the situation in which totality and opacity of our futures confront us may well extend into the future for a very long time. We have not simply to come to terms with a new world, but a world that is, in some ways, continually new. We are living, and will live for at least several centuries, in a world of flux.

1.a.iv. Hope and Climate Change

With opacity, hoping can become difficult because of the trouble we have discerning what will be possible in the future, given our uncertainties regarding the shape of that future. With totality, in a situation in which there is the sense that there will be complete alteration of the world, rooted both in predictions from the climate sciences and the social imaginaries coming out of them, hoping becomes extremely difficult. This is because the predictions present a new world, one that undermines what one had taken as secure, the regular within which one had confidently framed the possible. As Dellarobia expresses it, climate change presents as "the end of the world."[44] The continuity between our current world, its possibilities and regularities, seems undermined by the totality and opacity of the futures of climate change. Learning to 'stand on' one's hopes, to say for oneself this possibility is 'good enough for me' to hope, can become difficult given the deeper uncertainties that present themselves in climate change.

[44] On its own, a 'new world' that will change all things, that cuts through all biologic systems and societies, does not necessarily entail a difficulty in determining possibility in relation to uncertainty. One *can* imagine a scenario in which a new world is coming and is entirely (or at least very well) understood, in such a way as those preceding that world can hope into it, despite it being distinct from that which they have known, with regards to possibility and regularity. Of course, given the opacity of our future, we are not in this situation.

More particularly, consider that the result of this opacity and totality, combined with this extended time of flux, can undermine our usual strategies for determining possibility and uncertainty in the future, grounded by and large in our ability to use our past experiences of regularities and uncertainties, combined with confidence in steady authorities that have guided one in the past.[45] The future will be dramatically different from the past, it is hard to see its contours in any detail, and the uncertainties themselves will continue to change.

This is what makes these uncertainties 'wild' rather than 'tame.' Consider 'tame' uncertainties and hoping. Using past experience and relevant authorities, combined with our increased (or increasing) capacity to corporately predict the future and know our world (from its weather, market trends, and so on, to our current interconnectedness via social media and worldwide news networks, to our increasing knowledge of the past), people hope for things for themselves, their loved ones, and the world, in light of a relatively confident sense of the world and the shape of the future. In this sort of situation, a given hope may be very uncertain, in the sense of having a low probability or possibility of obtaining, or because there are a wide range of equally possible outcomes, but the understanding of the possible in relation to one's desires and the uncertainties of the world are manageable. So, one might hope to become a professional tennis player, knowing this to be a very long shot, and yet, the fact of their being such a thing as tennis, as professional players, as the social support for the game, and so on, remain in place. People have a relatively strong sense of the regularities or stabilities that will remain into the future, and see uncertainties, possibilities, and practical indeterminacies in relation to those regularities. From these possibilities, they cope with the uncertainties in relation to their desires via hoping. They

[45] Recall my discussion of 'Conceptions of the World' in Chapter 2 here. There, I discussed the necessity of having both authorities and experiences to base one's conception of the world (including its certainties and possibilities).

consider their past experiences and their established authorities as reliable as bases for predicting the future's contours and hoping into it.

Contrast this with the sort of uncertainties I've described above. The past experiences and steady authorities that had guided one's determination of the possibility or certainty of that which is to come are rendered less useful by the totality, opacity, and extended changes of the predictions of climate change. Under the predictions of climate change, these sort of past experiences and the sense of regularity—the sense of the world that arises from them—become untethered, no longer guiding for one's hopes for the future.

If the future is being forecasted in a way discontinuous from our present and past—as both opaque to us and total in its changes—, past experience itself is relativized. Moreover, due to the extended time of flux, the past is continually being made discontinuous from the future. In such a situation, it may be very difficult to treat a desired good as having a possibility 'good enough to stand on,' when one lacks confidence in one's ability to conceptualize possibility in the unknown. Our ability, then, to determine X possible but uncertain in such a way as to have X's possibility be "deemed good enough to stand on for oneself" is threatened.

Consider the Inuit as one example of the sort of problem we face. This example particularly illustrates the problems of opacity and continued change.

> "…experienced Inuit hunters have great depth of knowledge of the environment and weather patterns, founded on generations of wisdom and combined with a lifetime of experience on the land. Because Inuit knowledge of the environment, including weather, has always been tied directly to decisions that could mean the difference between life and death, it comes with precise, descriptive language, careful observation techniques, and a focus on practice, so that knowledge is constantly tested and refined….Of all of the changes witnessed, increased weather variability stands out as one of the most concerning changes shared across several regions…Many elders and hunters who are experienced weather forecasters are finding that they can no longer predict the weather using their traditional skills and knowledge."[46]

[46] E. Weatherhead, S. Gearheard, and R.G. Barry, "Changes in Weather Persistence: Insight from Inuit

The careful past experience of these hunters has been called into question by unknown changes in our world, that are opaque to them. Even more, the way in which they have tested and refined their knowledge, based on careful observation, is also no longer yielding helpful information. It is not simply that the knowledge of the past is no longer relevant; it is also that the skills that allowed them to discern patterns and forecast out of them are themselves made irrelevant. Flux and unpredictable variability itself have become a new norm.

Hoping, in such a situation, is markedly different. Consider the hope for an Autumn of fine weather. The past experiences they have are no longer helpful for guiding their sense of whether such a Fall is possible. The skills they have to discern patterns in the present also are no longer as relevant for determining possibility. In this world, past and present experience is called into question as a guide for understanding that which is possible and that which is certain. And, in such a world, the act of determining possibility and the confidence of the individual hoper is pressured.

Now, several caveats are in order. First, nothing I have said so far dictates that any and all humans will be unable to hope in light of climate change. One, despite opacity, totality, and flux, may be able to still deem for oneself a desired value possible, but uncertain, and consider that 'good enough to stand on.' In fact, there are several features of privileged hopers that may make them more susceptible to having difficulty hoping in this regard, as well as being prone to inaction due to it. Namely, they are used to extremely tame uncertainties. The lives of privileged people are stable, and they are used to being able to quite confidently imagine the future and its possibilities.

Knowledge," *Global Environmental Change* 20:3 (2010): 523. For further discussion, see also Henry Huntington and Shari Fox, "The Changing Arctic: Indigenous Perspectives," in *The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment Report* edited by Carolyn Symon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

In contrast, individuals who live already without much stability, with more wild uncertainties in their lives, may be better habituated to hoping under such circumstances.[47]

One should note that this does entail that I am not suggesting that climate change's opacity, totality, and even flux are different in kind from other problems we face. For instance, some version of the 'wild uncertainties' of the sort that climate change presents will also present at times of great cultural change. There are presumably could be times of greater and lesser regularities and uncertainties: living through a revolution would be very different from living in a monastery at a time of peace. Those living in the latter presumably might have a fairly constant sense of the regularities and indeterminacies in the world, whereas those living in the former might find themselves living in a world constantly changing, where the uncertainties expand and regularities contract. That these experiences happen in other situations and scenarios is undeniable. The difference, on my reading, would be one of degree, rather than kind: the biologic world *itself* is changing and will change for an extremely extended period of time, affecting (albeit in various ways) *in toto* the various communities, societies, ecologies that live within it.

Lastly, it is also important to understand that I am not suggesting that, because of opacity, totality, and flux, we do not have any real knowledge in relation to climate change. In fact, the predictions of climate change that we have *do* give us a wealth of actionable knowledge—we ought to decrease carbon dioxide emissions, strengthen flood preparations, decrease water usage, find green alternatives for power, fight desertification with native plantings, and so on. Uncertainty—of which we have much—often results in greater risk, which in turn ought to provide impetus to act in preventative and adaptive measures we know of, rather than acting as reason for inaction.[48]

[47] There may be other roots of inaction and inattention, of course. Please refer to Chapter 1, Section 1 "A Taxonomy of Inaction" for further reflection on many different roots of inaction, including systemic injustice.

[48] See, for instance, Lewandowsky, Ballard, Pancost, "Uncertainty as knowledge," 2-3.

In other words, the opacity and totality of the climate change future is a problem primarily for our hoping, not our knowledge of, at least broadly, what preventative and adaptive measures need to be taken.

Consider an analogy. I can know that I ought to wear a seatbelt to avoid injury in a crash, just as I ought to obey traffic signals and be alert when driving. I have knowledge of the preventative measures to take to avoid such an outcome. Now, imagine that I am somehow in the epistemic position to know that such a crash will occur—I do not know the details, but know in broad strokes that it will change my life dramatically and wholly. In this situation, I can still take precautions to minimize its damage—I still know to wear the seatbelt and so on. And yet, despite knowing these measures to take and the broad outlines of the crash to come, I may find myself struggling to hope into that future, to see my life and desires currently as meaningfully related to that future post-crash.

The problem I am highlighting here does not lie primarily in the lack of actionable knowledge regarding broad preventative (and adaptive, in the case of climate change) measures. It instead lies in my potential inability to imagine or conceptualize my life post-crash. It lies in my inability to connect my current life—my desires, ambitions, concerns, and values (my current hopes)—to the possibilities and realities of my life post-crash. That life and its regularities and possibilities are opaque, totally different, inaccessible, and these things make it difficult to treat any of my desires as possible, but uncertain to obtain.[49]

Now, this is a simplistic and almost outlandish analogy. But I hope it illuminates what I am trying to expose with regards to climate change predictions and human living. The opacity of the future predicted—its potential abruptness, the dramatic limits with regards to our knowledge

[49] This example, of course, does not have the feature of 'flux' that climate change does.

of its features and its ramifications—combined with the totality of it—its implications for all aspects of our lives—make connecting our lives' desires and values to that future hard. Moreover, the extended nature of the changes to come in climate change make that opacity and totality a feature of our existence for a long time to come. The uncertainties associated with that future make considering one's desired values possible but uncertain to obtain difficult.

1.b Evaluative Pressure

In addition to the cognitive pressures to hoping, I also claim that our evaluative capacities are threatened when we encounter the future as imagined through climate change predictions. More particularly, our ability to stand on that which we value and which we see as permissible (not-immoral) becomes threatened in light of the gravity of climate change. While the cognitive pressure was to our capacity to determine something as possible in such a way as to risk oneself on that possibility, the evaluative pressure is on contentful hopes. Namely, those hopes that had seemed worthwhile, that one staked one's life on, so to speak, lose their grounding in the light of the predictions offered from the climate sciences. The hopes that had organized one's life suddenly become both i) trivialized and ii) moralized.

1.b.i. Trivialization

First, let us examine trivialization. Recall that one hopes when one considers a desire good and valuable to oneself, meaning that one sees that desire as in some way mattering to oneself, such that one is emotionally vulnerable to it. We hope for those things that we have picked out as in some way mattering to us enough to expose ourselves to anxiety or potential disappointment; we care about that for which we hope. In trivialization, those things that had seemed of value to oneself suddenly are questioned due to their sudden seeming smallness, their "littleness," in the face of the breadth and gravity of climate change. While it is clear from the above discussions that

there are limits on our capacity to predict confidently the shape of our future, it is also quite clear that basic life systems are threatened with transformation and potential collapse. Given this, when we try to face these basic goods that seem under threat in climate change—agricultural systems, the health of billions of people, our species' resilience *in toto*—many of our desires that we value and hope for suddenly seem unimportant. They become seemingly trivial.

The valuableness of that for which one hopes has degrees, of course, and some can easily be acknowledged as trivial, whether or not one faces the predictions of climate change. If one hopes for an ice-cream shop to move into one's neighborhood, presumably such a desire is deemed valuable to oneself—one likes ice-cream a lot and wants there to be an ice-cream shop, perhaps one dreams about it, talks about it with others—but this value, most likely, is not particularly central to one's life. Its value to you is already itself 'little', of only mild importance. The sting of its loss as a possibility would not throw one into despair at its loss, nor does its presence in one's life deeply affect how you conduct your life or view the world. Given its present mildness or unimportance, if one were to experience the trivialization of one's hopes in light of climate change, presumably the hope that an ice-cream shop moves into one's neighborhood would not be central to the experience. It was already, on the whole, trivial and acknowledged as such.

Similarly, there are some valued hopes that are *rightly* trivialized when faced with the gravity of climate change. Humans often wrongly value things of little objective importance.[50] These rightly trivialized desires are often what is exclusively focused upon if scholars do attend to this sort of experience (which is few and far between). For instance, Robert Gifford, an environmental psychologist, discusses 'goals' and 'values' (related, one can assume, to a form of hoping) in his article on the barriers to climate change mitigation, writing,

[50] I understand that any given value's 'objective unimportance' would be open to debate.

> "Pro-environmental values positively influence at least the willingness to accept climate change policies…but they are not always compatible with other values, other goals, and other aspirations that inevitably lead to the production of more greenhouse gases. The aspiration to 'get ahead' often means engaging in actions that run counter to the goal of reducing one's climate change impacts: buying a larger house, flying by choice, or driving a bigger car."[51]

In other words, Gifford focuses on the fact that people often do not support or engage in climate mitigation, even if they have 'pro-environmental values,' because they have conflicting aspirations, such as 'driving a bigger car.' This is most likely somewhat true. Our hopes (more particularly, our valued goals and aspirations) are often the reason for inaction on climate change, and these goals are at times self-centered—the value of 'getting ahead' being seminal— and at odds with more laudable values, such as 'pro-environmental values'. When faced with the gravity of climate change predictions, the hope to drive a bigger car in order to be perceived as successful *ought to be* trivialized, ought to be seen as unimportant to the hoper, whether or not it in fact is so trivialized.

However, to focus solely on these sorts of properly trivial hopes in relation to the predictions of climate change is to miss the main problem we face in trivialization. The trivialization of one's hopes is not solely of those that were already either not that important or ought to be not that important. Rather, in trivialization one's central hopes for one's life are also 'made small' or relativized. It is not just driving a bigger car, but it is the hope for basic material security; it is also becoming a professor, or the success of one's children, or getting a fulfilling job. In light of the depth of the problem presented by the climate sciences—the basic structures of our world changing, the consequent devastation to plants and animals, including ourselves—the hopes that give meaning to our days, such as the flourishing of our children, are potentially made to seem

[51] Gifford, "The Dragons of Inaction," 295. This explanation for inaction sees the problem as human's tendency to value trivial, self-centered things (such as getting ahead), that give them a vest interest in the status quo.

not that important, "little", to the point that they are dismissively or merely "[m]eeting the bus on time…Getting the kids to eat supper, getting teeth brushed. No cavities the next time."[52] Legitimate goods that we have claimed as central in our lives, as particularly valuable to ourselves, are relativized in light of the basic quality of the goods threatened in climate change. Why should I take as a central value the pursuit of an academic life when the basic conditions for existence are threatened—when food systems, air composition, seasonal stability are endangered?

When faced with the predictions of devastation coming out of the climate sciences, one's values seem insignificant, beside the point, petty. Far more basic preconditions of a good life are threatened; once-assumed background values (food, air, water) that were previously seen as secure are now seen as vulnerable, and consequently present as more central values by which one should orient one's life. The gravity and breadth of climate change threatens such basic goods that the values by which one oriented one's life seem incidental in comparison.

Of course, this is not a necessary response to the experience of climate change; one could, conceivably, remain very firm in the 'valuableness' of one's values, even when one faces the gravity of climate change. One might not see the threats presented in climate change as threats to one's own existence or to those that matter to you, for instance. One could be a simple hedonist, only concerned with present pain and pleasure, and as such, less concerned with the possible futures and threats that climate change might bring. In such a case, one might feel secure from the potential trivialization of one's hopes in light of climate change. That said, the experience of trivialization seems to be a reasonable response to climate change: that people will question what they've made central to their lives in their hopes, and that those same hopes will be threatened therefore by the encounter with climate change predictions.

[52] Kingsolver, *Flight Behavior*, 283.

1.b.ii. Moralization

Additionally, however, these same sorts of hopes are threatened by what I am calling moralization. This is obviously very closely tied to trivialization, even as it can be independently examined. In the first chapter, I argued that while there are many exceptions to the rule, people generally hope for things that they deem not-immoral, i.e. things that they deem either permissible or obligatory. Recall, then, that some desired objects may be considered by an individual to be good and of value, but one may still not hope for that object, if the state of affairs that would result should the desire be realized be considered 'bad' on the whole.[53] When facing climate change, that which was deemed permissible under other conditions suddenly seems impermissible.

The sheer diversity of permissible human hopes—we desire various goods that we value, in all sorts of different ways—has made much of life rich and functional. Society requires grocers and attorneys, for instance. However, faced with the gravity and systemic nature of climate change predictions the realm of the permissible seems to shrink. The man who wishes for children in the second chapter experiences, in facing climate change, that perhaps he ought not hope for them, given the seemingly dark future that awaits or due to the rise in global population. Much of one's life previously seen as permissible suddenly becomes implicated in the perpetuation of a system of intensive carbon use that furthers and intensifies the problem of climate change.

Again, as with trivialization, some hopes are most likely *properly* moralized in this encounter with climate change predictions. Insofar as one did not adequately consider the ramifications of driving bigger car, one ought to be disabused on the simple permissibility of that desire—there are moral elements that need to be considered in hoping. However, the moralization

[53] People's definition of 'bad' differs and consequently this will change the content of their considerations, but not the form.

of one's hopes may reach far and wide: suddenly, one may ask oneself, is it permissible to hope to save money for a comfortable retirement, if such a retirement will only occur in a world of gross climate inequity? Is it permissible to hope to travel far and wide in one's adult life, if such travel depends upon extensive carbon dioxide emissions? Is it permissible to hope to hope to have one's own home, if such stand-alone homes are inherently less green? In light of the global nature of climate change and the complicity of one's involvement in it, many hopes previously seen as permissible suddenly, as the context widens, come to seem morally laden. This is the case from the very small—the hope to continue to have good coffee—to the central—the hope to pursue meaningful work unrelated to climate change adaptation and mitigation (and perhaps dependent upon the systems that further climate change).

Similar to what I wrote above regarding trivialization, this moralization need not happen to one. Many people may, for instance, not have conceptions of responsibility for those far away or in the future. Many may be fairly simplistic hedonists or individualists of some sort. But, as the general shape of the future looms before one's mind's eye, one's hopes that are permissible or moral may well seem to shrink in number.

The general point on both trivialization and moralization is this. When one attempts to take in climate change predictions, they trivialize. They make one's hopes seem solely 'little,' as Dellarobia put it. And, similarly, they make one's hopes seem potentially wrong—selfish and simplistic. Faced with the "end of the world," much of our lives seems small and wrong-headed. This experience of smallness and wrong-headedness threatens our hopes in the sense that they no longer seem tenable *as* hopes, but are questioned in their evaluative grounding. Is a given desire legitimately valuable or have I been incorrectly weighing goods in my life? Similarly, is a given

desire legitimately permissible or have I been ignoring relevant considerations that make my desires immoral, not permissible?

Two caveats. First, as with the cognitive pressures, these evaluative pressures to hoping are entirely novel to the advent of climate change. Trivialization and moralization can threaten whenever faced with a grave problem that seems to make relative those things you once held dear. When one is faced with the realities of global poverty or food insecurity, one may deem the hopes by which one oriented and focused one's life no longer permissible, if they depend upon a continued inequality and unjust economic system. Or one may alternatively simply see one's hopes as trivialized, made silly in light of the gravity of the problem. One may ask of oneself, *this* is what you have staked your life on?

Similarly, while I am arguing that this trivialization and moralization could happen to any person trying to face climate change, there are characteristics to privileged hopers that again make them more susceptible to these threats.[54] Namely, insofar as privileged people's lives and hopes are often further removed from basic human goods, their hopes are more likely to be trivialized and moralized. If it is the gravity of climate change and its threats to basic human goods that creates the conditions for trivialization and moralization, individuals who already are in situations where their most central hopes *are* for basic human goods may not experience the same threat to their hopes. A privileged TV entertainer is most likely, in light of trivialization and moralization, in a more precarious position—even if many of her hopes are not vicious or bad—than a woman whose central hopes include the hope for survival and for her children's basic needs to be met. As such,

[54] By suggesting privileged hopers are perhaps more susceptible, I am *not* suggesting that we ought to have more sympathy for privileged hopers. Rather, I am trying to get clear about hurdles to action for these privileged hopers, and I think that these are some of the hurdles that are particularly important to deal with in order to address privileged inaction. The inaction or action of non-privileged actors will most likely share characteristics with privileged inaction/action, as well as have distinctions in root causes.

while trivialization and moralization are not necessary responses to climate change, they threaten many hopers.

1.c. Conclusion

In this section, I have argued that hope can be pressured by climate change, both cognitively and evaluatively. I have claimed that despite the contentful nature of climate change predictions, we often experience the future under climate change as opaque and totally changed, resulting in a destabilization of our capacity to determine possibility in relation to our future and to 'stand on' that possibility in hope. Similarly, when facing climate change, one's hopes suddenly seem trivial in light of the basic goods threatened, as well as moralized, in light of complicity in the problem and the totality of climate change. Given these pressures to hopes and hoping, I will next argue that our moral agency is consequently threatened and that these threats help us to make sense of our tendency toward denial, inattention, and inaction in response to climate change.

2. Moral Agency and Inaction

Given these pressures to hoping in climate change, people tendencies toward both paralysis and practical denial begin to make sense. I will take these responses in turn. First, paralysis, or the inability to act in response to climate change, the feeling of overwhelming helplessness.

This experience of paralysis is widespread. For instance, Kari Marie Norgaard discusses it in her ethnographic work on her own students in Oregon, in which one of their primary responses to the realities of climate change is a feeling of overwhelming helplessness.[55] In fact, psychologists name despairing paralysis as one of the primary psychological response to the effects of climate

[55] See Kari Norgaard's discussion of her students' feelings of helplessness and paralysis in response to climate change. Kari Marie Norgaard, *Living in Denial*, 190-191.

change.[56] Perhaps most tellingly, in 2015, researchers found that approximately 53% of Americans interviewed claimed they felt helpless with regards to climate change.[57]

Given my argument in Chapter 3, it should be clear by now why such pressures to hope would result in this sort of paralysis, given agency's dependence upon hoping. In that previous chapter, I argued that humans deal with uncertainties and indeterminacies all the time and this is for the good insofar as they are agents. There, I discussed one boundary condition beyond which agency is no longer tenable, namely that determinacy and regularity cannot rule the entirety of our world. Rather, agents minimally require some practical indeterminacies that allow them to intervene with potential effect.[58] In other words, they need to experience their own world as having 'room within which to act.' The consequence of this minimum in a world of multiple agents (and/or in a world with agents of limited knowledge or power) is that agents require hope in addition to expectation, in order to *both* cope with the real limits of our capacity to bring about that which we desire *and* to orient themselves in a world beyond their ken and power. These hopes allow us to orient the world around us in relation to our own desires and values, even as we cannot determine or predict that world with confidence or complete success. Through such orientation of the world, we are able to then navigate as limited, partial agents in that world of uncertainties, acting when called for, coping with the limits to our power and knowledge, and investing ourselves in values and projects far beyond what we can accomplish on our own.

However, with opacity, totality, and continual change, our ability to so organize our uncertain, confusing world via our hopes, and consequently cope with and make sense of that

[56] Thomas Doherty and Susan Clayton, "The Psychological Impacts of Climate Change," *American Psychologist* 66:4 (2011): 269.

[57] See A. Leiserowitz *et al*, *Climate Change in the American Mind: October 2015*, 11.

[58] Recall that 'practical indeterminacies' refers to uncertainties that people treat as undetermined (and determinable) in their practical lives.

world, is undermined. If agents are unable to make sense of the uncertainties that face us in climate change and to hope in relation to them, they may struggle to organize and orient their lives. One could say that in addition to a minimal practical indeterminacy in a regular world and the consequent need for hoping, there could potentially be a maximal sense of uncertainty beyond which one's capacity to cope via hope is threatened, resulting in a consequent inability to maintain agency over time. Given the wild uncertainties that arise from opacity, totality, and continual change over time, our ability to make sense of the uncertainties of our world and coordinate them meaningfully with our own desires and values is threatened. This is only worsened when our values too are questioned by trivialization and moralization. In light of trivialization and moralization, agents may also have difficulty knowing what goods to hope for, even if they could so much as make sense of the uncertainties of climate change. Their own capacity to confidently hope in that which they value is undermined.[59] As such, many people's capacities to live as successful, limited agents into a world of climate change are threatened.

This pressure to agency helps to explain the paralysis that is so often reported by individuals when they face climate change. If our very agency is threatened via our inability to

[59] Additionally, while I do not examine it in any length here, I believe that it is possible that trivialization and moralization together pressure the second relationship between hope and morality, namely, that we need contentful moral hopes in the face of: skepticism, fallibility, evil, and failure. More particularly, I think that trivialization and moralization may pressure one's ability to hope that a) one can be moral, despite failure and b) one's evaluations are 'true' or 'good' enough, despite fallibility. In other words, I think it possible that, when trivialization and moralization extend wide for an individual, one may come to wonder whether one can meaningfully hope that one can be moral, if all that one hoped for (and thus valued) for the future is suddenly seen as impermissible or trivial. Similarly, one may worry that one's own capacity to value is fundamentally misguided, given that one's values are trivialized and moralized, such that the hope that one's evaluations are 'good enough' is made untenable. I do not go into this possibility here because I find it to be a less probable response to trivialization and moralization and because I am uncertain of the effects of such a response. This is for two reasons: 1) the other two hopes—for the truth of morality itself (against skepticism) and the goodness of the moral life (against evil) do not seem to be affected, as far as I can tell. Thus, I am uncertain as to the extent of the difficulty such pressure to these two moral hopes poses to the human agent and 2) one's moral faculty is at work in deeming one's own hopes moralized and trivialized, such that I am uncertain that one would so respond to moralization and trivialization with a loss of hope in one's own evaluative power or one's capacity to be moral.

organize the future by our hopes, paralysis as a response to climate change becomes understandable.[60]

This tendency toward paralysis in response to climate change in turn makes some sense of what I call 'practical denial.' By practical denial, I mean that, despite theoretical affirmation of the climate sciences and professed valuing of the natural world and human goods, in one's actions and attitudes, one practically denies the realities of climate change predictions. It is the willingness to manipulate one's attention and one's conception of the world in order to preserve one's hopes and one's agency.

Similar to paralysis, this 'practical denial' is reportedly widespread and of increasing interest to psychologists and sociologists. Such researchers usually term this form of denial 'implicatory denial,' defining it as: the denial of those people who *do* accept the science and predictions of climate change, and yet seem not to respond to that information with adequate concern or changes in behavior, because they do not allow themselves to reflect on the implications. It is a denial hidden from view; it is, in a sense, a denial of denial, a matter of intricate self-deception.[61] Such denial is widespread: for instance, psychologists and sociologists are documenting a phenomenon in which environmental worry is *decreasing* as predictions *grow* more severe and the science more *mainstream*.[62] Even more exacting, psychologists have found that

[60] Paralysis is not solely caused by this, of course. In addition, helplessness is most likely caused by the intractability of the political situation, as well as the difficulty of extricating oneself from the systems one lives in, for but two examples of other reasons for paralysis. This is not to say that they are not intimately related, however.

[61] By calling this self-deception, I do not mean to get into very technical philosophical argument about the possibility and content of self-deception. In general, as I will explain immediately below, I think this form of self-deception is accomplished by an inattention to various outcomes or ramifications of beliefs one does hold. This inattention has both psychological and sociological mechanisms of avoidance. As self-deception, it is probably partially intentional, insofar as one is capable of attending to that which one ignores, but it is also in part unintentional, insofar as it may be socially constructed and socially enforced inattention and/or (at least in part) subconscious.

[62] See Norgaard, *Living in Denial*, 2 and Kari Marie Norgaard, "Cognitive and Behavioral Challenges in Responding to Climate Change," *The Policy Research Working Paper Series* 4940 (2009): 13.

people with more information and more confidence about the realities of climate change show on average *less* concern.[63] Such individuals, it is claimed, tend to keep the threat out of the sphere of their everyday lives by downplaying or being inattentive to the ramifications of that which, factually, one accepts.[64]

Particularly of interest to many sociologists and psychologists are the various individual and social tactics by which individuals and groups create such denial.[65] For instance, people have studied the psychological distancing of the problems of climate change ("The effects will only happen in far off places")[66] as well as the moral exclusion of those far-off places affected ("As long as my family is safe…" or "they can handle it; they're used to surviving disasters").[67] Others have investigated the social norms that enforce inattention and ignorance of the ramifications of climate change. For instance, anxiety or panic about environmental realities or climate predictions are often treated as unjustified or unsuitable in social settings, making it impolite to talk and react to climate change realities and predictions.[68] Conversational norms also tend to exclude the possibility of engaging seriously with topics of climate change in most situations by only allowing

[63] Norgaard, *Living in Denial*, 2.

[64] Stanley Cohen, *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011): 22.

[65] See Susan Opotow and Leah Weiss, "Denial and the Process of Moral Exclusion in Environmental Conflict," *Journal of Social Issues* 56:3 (2000): 481, for a very thorough list of various strategies at an individual level.

[66] See, for studies on this phenomenon, Alexa Spence, Wouter Poortinga, and Nick Pidgeon, "The Psychological Distance of Climate Change," 959-960.

[67] See Opotow and Weiss, "New Ways of Thinking about Environmentalism: Denial and the Process of Moral Exclusion," 483-484, and Spence *et al*, "The Psychological Distance," 962. See also, for an illustrative example, Brigitte Nerlich and Rusi Jaspal, "Images of Extreme Weather: Symbolizing Human Responses to Climate Change," *Science as Culture* 23:2 (2014). The authors describe how there are several different tropes in photographic images of humans in extreme weather events correlated with climate change. One of the primary tropes "depicts people in non-Western contexts as 'getting on with it', thereby distancing extreme weather from the Western viewer of the images…to suggest that this is not a matter of life and death but rather an aspect of everyday life in this geo-cultural context" (262).

[68] See in particular Norgaard, *Living in Denial*, 97-137.

individuals to talk about it with a joking or distancing attitude, or alternatively by only discussing 'far worse' climate change 'villains' through which one can prove one's own group's innocence.[69]

This implicatory denial and its many daily tactics and forms seems better captured by the term 'practical denial.' This is because such denial is *not* simply a denial of the *implications* of climate change science, but rather a broad and various denial of the truth or reality of anthropogenic climate change at the level of practices, habits, behaviors, and norms.

Given the difficulties of coming to terms with the uncertainties and gravity of climate change and the tendency toward paralysis, such practical denial allows individuals to continue to live unaffected.[70] Through selective attention to the world around them, individuals construct for themselves a 'map of the world' around them that maintains their usual sense of the possible and the certain, without attending to climate change as a problem. Through selective attention to the problems facing us (climate change's gravity), individuals avoid the possible trivialization and moralization of the hopes they organize their lives by. These forms of inattention and inaction allow these individuals to live in the world as if that world were unaffected by climate change, keeping them from acknowledging or responding to the forms of uncertainty that demand hope if one is to live as a successful agent over time. We have chosen to live in fantasy for the sake of our hopes and our moral agency, rather than risk losing ourselves.

---

[69] Norgaard discusses this with regards to Norwegians' use of the United States as a foil to claim their own innocence. Norgaard, *Living in Denial*, 137-177. See also Robert Gifford, "Dragons, Mules, and Honeybees," 43-45; Gifford, "The Dragons of Inaction," 294; Opotow and Weiss, "Denial and the Process of Moral Exclusion," 485. For further discussion of tactics of denial, see Sue McGregor, "Conceptualizing Immoral and Unethical Consumption Using Neutralization Theory," *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal* 36:3 (2008). She discusses tactics of denying responsibility, denying injury, denying the fact of a victim, condemning the condemner, appeal to a higher loyalty, defense of necessity, and others.

[70] Practical denial can also be motivated by other things, like one's vested interests in the status quo, for instance. I am simply arguing that it cannot be *reduced* to such vicious reasons.

I believe this sort of inattention for the sake of one's hopes can be seen in an interview-based psychological examination of secondary school children in Australia, that focused on students' perceptions of the future. The psychologists found that when explicitly talking about the future generally and globally, the students had vague but deep worries and pessimism about the future, especially around climate change and environmental degradation, bordering on apocalyptic claims. So, they'll say things like, "I think we'll watch the world explode because of all these natural disasters that are going on."[71] They accept the realities of climate change when thinking fairly abstractly and globally.[72]

However, when talking about their own personal lives into the future, the students *completely* ignored these broader uncertainties and negativities, and oriented their futures by desires and values 'close in' to their own lives: their hopes and valued desires for university, different jobs, and so forth.[73] The problem here, I would claim, is that these students are unable to organize that global future in relation to their own lives and desires: it presented as a deep unclear, bad uncertainty, unrelated to their valued hopes by which they organize their lives. In response to that world, paralysis seems the only response. It is something that they cannot integrate into their 'map of possibilities,' into their hopes. Their inattention to this global, climate changing future, in their daily lives and hopes, then, is due to an inability to attend and orient their lives and their hopes to these uncertainties. Climate change pressures our capacity to understand and relate to

[71] Steven Threadgold, "'I reckon my life will be easy, but my kids will be buggered': Ambivalence in young people's positive perceptions of individual futures and their visions of environmental collapse," *Journal of Youth Studies* 15:1 (2012), 24.

[72] And even their implications, making implicatory denial an insufficient term for the practical denial I am discussing here.

[73] Threadgold, "I reckon my life will be easy," 20-21. I should note that I found the titular quote of Threadgold's article to be actually somewhat misrepresentative of the sort of concerns students expressed in the study itself, which included real fears and worries about the future in their lifetimes, not solely in the lifetimes of their children.

shifting uncertainties, making it difficult to stand on what one hopes for—or even to know just what to hope for in the first place. The valued desires by which one is accustomed to hoping and which help orient our lives seem unrelated to the world that one cannot get a handle on; they seem undone, made trivial and confused by the gravity and confusion of climate change.

The motivation for practical denial, in this situation, seems understandable. Learning to live in a foreign, changing world is hard; it is easier to stay at home. It makes a person less likely to change their conception of the world to reflect the new possibilities, uncertainties that face us, and as such, makes a person more likely to deny practically the climate change they know to be happening theoretically. It is in light of these threats that Dellarobia's 3response to the scientist, her claiming that "it's not that I don't believe you, it's that I can't" gains focus. She turns away to her "little hopes" because facing climate change—its uncertainties and gravities—presents as the "end of the world."

3. Potential Losses

When attempting to face climate change, the resulting potential losses are manifold, and come from several directions. In addition to trivialization, moralization, and wild uncertainty undermining possibility determination, we have some losses of our hopes due to the simple fact that when one faces our climate change future, some hopes become infeasible; our changed world demands changed hopes, and with that comes loss of things we value. Insofar as climate change predictions seem to be demanding that we give up valued hopes, or at least questions the possibility of those things we value and have hoped for, there is legitimate loss and the potential for consequent psychic and agential difficulty.[74] As I've written immediately above, such pressure to

[74] Loss of hope in itself does not necessarily lead to either psychic or agential distress. We lose hopes all the time, some with accompanied pain, others not— I had hoped that my children would know my father, and in his

one's valued hopes gives *reason* to attempt to ignore the realities of climate change. There is reason for practical denial—we can't believe that that which we have hoped for may be no longer.

Accompanying this is the further experience of loss through the intractability of the situation. As I wrote above, there is the sense that there will be lost possible goods because of human intractability—the political situation and individual's behaviors will not change, leading to worse climate change.[75] This belief in intractability is exacerbated by the experience, common among environmentalists, of repeatedly disappointed hopes in how we respond to climate change. Post-Copenhagen, many people who had hoped to get a real binding international treaty about carbon emissions lost their hope, despaired of it. And this example is but one of thousands that could be discussed— the lost hopes of scientists regarding particular species survival, the lost hopes of farmers faced with desertification, entire nations lose the hope to remain in place, as their islands slowly become inhabitable as the waters rise.

Because of the totality and foreignness of the future we are attempting to live in relation to, it is not simply that hopes will be lost, but that it becomes hard to know how to replace them. For, in addition to the future seeming alien, different, and as such undermining of one's powers to

---

death that hope is lost to me; I had hoped to become a concert flutist, and now I do not so hope. Both are part of life and perhaps a good part of life, and the loss of them doesn't keep me from living well. Moreover, the latter causes me no distress at all. One can lose a hope in several ways, only some of which will result in pain of loss or consequent difficulties in living well: 1. One could lose the desire for the hoped for good, as I did with becoming a concert musician. 2. One could, conceivably, still desire the content, but due to a change in values or in conceptions of the good, no longer endorse that which one had previously hoped for (the first two ways of losing may often go hand in hand: I might lose the desire and no longer see it as good, for instance). 3. Alternatively, one might still desire something, and deem it a good of value to oneself, and yet given either a) a change in one's conceptions of morality or b) a change in circumstances, one might lose a hope because one deems it now immoral to so hope for that good. And so, as we discussed in the first chapter, the individual who had desired many children, and perhaps hoped for it, ultimately may lose that hope due to a new commitment (or a commitment now activated given realities around them) to restricting population growth. 4. The most common way of conceiving a loss of hope, probably, is the loss of possibility. Often this last type of loss does result in distress, and it is primarily this form of loss that accompanies what I am discussing here.

[75] See also Stuart Capstick, "Public Understanding of Climate Change as a Social Dilemma" *Sustainability* 2013/5: 3494-3495.

predict detailed possibility and regularity, there is the further problem that in general the future is predicted to be *bad*. There will be the loss of possible goods, and the consequent loss of hopes. There is the sense that the future is one in which—while uncertainties are expanding—the uncertainties that we can affect for the good are potentially contracting.

In such a world, there is the potential loss of selves. As I wrote in the section above, hoping is made difficult due to the alien and opaque future, insofar as it makes us question our capacity for prediction of possibility. But lurking behind that potential difficulty is a greater one, the possibility that as the world shifts in new and deep ways, we may lose our ability to *be* humans. We might lose it biologically—if the world changing no longer sustains human life. And we might lose it agentially, if we cannot come to make sense of the indeterminacies and uncertainties that surround us. To be agents, we must be able to recognize regularity and indeterminacy, in ways that allow us to act from expectation and on hope. If recognized regularity is lost, and if indeterminacy rules our unknown in ways we cannot make sense of, our agential capacities could be lost.[76]

4. Hope needed

Everything I have argued so far—that climate change presents as opaque, totalizing, and in flux, and that it trivializes and moralizes much of what we value—actually holds for both

[76] I am not suggesting that *all* hopes will be lost and, consequently, that there will be no capacity to deal with *any* of the uncertainties of the world well. Rather, I am more specifically arguing that one's desires dealing with the future will be harder to hope for, and the realm of human agency would therefore shrink. For instance, past and present hopes may not be affected by the problems discussed in this chapter—one can continue to hope for those things that have already occurred, but about which one does not have knowledge, unaffected by the problems of trivialization, moralization, or wild uncertainties. But, these hopes only organize part of one's life, and are less obviously related to one's constructive agency. Moreover, one may still be able to easily hope for 'close-in' future things—that one can get out of bed easily and the like. However, if one is unable to invest oneself in valued desires that are longer-term or larger than this, one's life will be much narrower and one's realm of action will be much smaller.

expectation and hope. As you will recall from my previous chapter, I argued that hope and expectation are both required for successful agency to orient itself among and cope with the uncertainties and indeterminacies of the agent-friendly world. Expectation helps frame that which we treat 'as certain' and act into and out of. Hope helps us map the world around despite uncertainties and to orient ourselves and our desires to that world. As the future becomes more opaque and far graver, both expectation and hope lose their grounding: it becomes harder to know what we can treat 'as certain' and what we can understand as uncertain, but possible. I have focused on hope in this chapter, however, because of hope's particularly crucial role in maintaining our agency into that climate changing future. Namely, the realm of expectation—our ability to treat things 'as certain' and live agentially in response to those expectations—is contracting, while the realm of uncertainties is expanding. Learning how to live agentially among increased uncertainty is the task at hand. In other words, learning to live more on hope becomes increasingly important, even as preserving our hopes has been an unfortunate reason for denial and inaction. Why is this the case?

First, as I argued above, we are living in a world of increasing flux. And, living in a world of change is the same, practically speaking, as living in a world of fewer regularities and greater uncertainties. As such, expectation will have to play a smaller role than it currently does in guiding agency and hope a consequently a greater role. As far as hope deals in and responds to uncertainty, these greater uncertainties demand hope. Now, it is not the case that change over time results in greater uncertainties *necessarily*. If we were, for instance, *fully* aware of all of the initial conditions of our world, as well as how the increase in greenhouse gases affects these initial conditions and interactions between systems, it could be the case that living through change does not mean living with greater uncertainty and indeterminacy. While past experience and data might be rendered

void as ground for prediction, we would have as 'replacement' the needed sciences and knowledge to tell us in full how to live into the future, and that which we can expect and that which we ought to treat as uncertain, but possible. If such knowledge were in our hand, we would still need to learn to live in a changed world, with changed expectations and hopes. But, we would not have an increase in the realm of uncertainty.

As an example, consider the differences between an individual going through puberty without knowing the causes or processes versus an individual who does. The individual who does not know what is happening experiences the changes as an increase in uncertainty and indeterminacies. She does not know the cause of the changes, nor what to expect. The individual who does understand the underlying causes and has predictions based on this does not so experience an increase in uncertainties, even as she does alter her sense of that which is certain and that which is uncertain, based on the changes happening to her. In other words, if climate change and its effects throughout the world were fully understood, I will know *how* and *why* the world is changing. This would give me a form of certainty and predictability, despite the changes happening. I would know the regularities *beneath* the changes, causing the changes, and as such the expansion of the realm of the uncertain would not occur.

Of course, given my argument in the section on opacity above, it should be clear that we do not have the sort of conditions needed to *not* have flux result in a wider range of uncertainties for us. We do not have an understanding of the initial conditions and the mechanism of their changes. We do not have the modelling capacity to forecast in detail what climate change will bring. And given the real possibility of abrupt climate change, surprises are almost inevitable. All of these result in 'wild uncertainty' that pressures many people's capacity to hope based on senses of what is possible.

But, this also means that many things that were simple expectations have now become undermined as well: the expectation of fairly reliable seasons, the expectations of semi-stable social systems, the expectations for availability of certain kinds of foods, and so on, all may well be rendered uncertain by climate change's flux. As such, this increase in perceived indeterminacies and uncertainties will require that we come to live well *with* these. This will, of course, require that we learn to live *on* hope more of the time than we have been often used to.

These various growing uncertainties and indeterminacies in our relation to the changing climate result in further inevitable uncertainties in our attempt to explicitly respond by adaptation or mitigation measures. As an example, consider that, given the interconnectedness of systems, and the ways in which small actions can have magnified and distant effects, there is a sense in which we have lost control over our own actions in many ways. Combine this with our lack of full understanding of systems and relationships, and we have a situation in which actions result in unintended and wide-ranging effects. Our acts may be intended, and yet have potentially unintended effects that reach temporally and spatially far beyond one's recognition and potential response. This is, of course, the situation that gave rise to climate change in the first place, and this epistemological insufficiency will continue to mark our attempts to respond with any adequacy as we move forward.[77] The uncertainties that attend our actions are going to be far wider than previously experienced.

Moreover, given the complexity and globality of the problem, we will always be uncertain as to whether we have adequately described the problem. We can always legitimately ask, are we understanding with clarity that which is going on? If not, are we then undertaking the wrong acts

[77] See Stuart Capstick, "Public Understanding," 3484-3501; and Richard Bradley and Katie Steel, "Making Climate Decisions," *Philosophy Compass* 10/11 (2015): 801.

in relation to it?[78] This uncertainty to will need to be met with hopes for our own adequacy with regards to climate mitigation and adaptation attempts.

These irresolvable uncertainties are often in part described as climate change's 'wickedness:'[79] the problem is marked by, among other things, "uncertainty; inconsistent and ill-defined needs, preferences and values; unclear understanding of the means, consequences or cumulative impacts of collective actions."[80] This wickedness, and the uncertainties and indeterminacies of the future, affect the way in which governments and policy makers are attempting to think through how to govern and plan: "Governments and experts are beginning to think the future as ungovernable, radically uncertain and dangerous, a test to established cultures of risk management based on honed technologies of prediction, prevention, and protection."[81] And so, living in a world in which that which has been regular is now in flux means we have to learn to live with these uncertainties in a new way. Coping with uncertainties is the big task at hand. Any actions or ways of life we undertake—as individuals and as political bodies—will be and will remain rife with uncertainties that cannot be denied, ignored, or given as reasons for inaction. We will either live well acting and living in uncertainty, or we will not live at all in relation to it.

This will need to be the case in terms of an individual's life in general, as well as her living in response to climate change explicitly. In other words, she will need to learn to live on hope both

---

[78] See, for instance, Donald Ludwig, "The Era of Management is Over," 759. The problem of climate change has no 'definitive formulation' and a 'plurality of legitimate perspectives.'

[79] See Bellamy and Hulme, "Beyond the Tipping Point," 3485: "a number of scholars have spoken of climate change as a 'wicked' problems due to the many complex interdependencies in society that contribute to climate change and the attendant difficulty in reaching solutions. One component of a 'wicked' problem by this formulation is the lack of a clear understanding of the cumulative impacts of collective action".

[80] M. Carley, I. Christie, *Managing Sustainable Development* (London: Earthscan, 2000), 156.

[81] Amin, 140. For further discussion of changing governance due to climate change and wicked problems, see also Irene Lorenzoni, Mavis Jones, and John R. Turnpenny, "Climate Change, Human Genetics, and Post-Normality in the UK," *Futures* 39 (2007): 66; M. Granger Morgan, "Certainty, Uncertainty, and Climate Change," *Climate Change* 108 (2011): 716-17.

with regards to the various possible goods she desires in relation to her own life and with regards to the possible goods she desires as part of explicit amelioration and adaptation responses to climate change. Her hopes for her own career, as well as her hopes for a binding climate treaty will both be affected.

What I most emphatically do *not* mean here is that we need to be more 'hopeful'. We need not have a rosy picture of the future, nor do we even need to have specific high senses of the possibility of some goods. I am suggesting neither generalized optimism or specified hopefulness. Such positions would potentially be unsustainable (or, at least, probably ought to be unsustainable) in the face of disaster and worsening environmental and social situations. Neither am I suggesting that we need to *act* more on hopes or have exclusively agentially motivating hopes in order to live well in a changing world. If one recalls from chapters one and two, I argued against the possibility that hopes were motivating to end-setting action in themselves, necessarily. There are, quite clearly innumerable hopes that do not lead to action in any straightforward way, nor should they. Obvious examples include the hope that Donald Trump dies or the hope one's spouse's employer gives her a raise. Analogously, for example, one might hope that a hurricane does not come ashore and affect one's family or that the social strain of climate change effects does not lead to tyranny in England. These hopes arise from a changed world and from explicitly coming to terms with that changed and changing world due to climate change. They do not however motivate one to specific end-setting actions for the sake of accomplishing that for which one hopes.

Rather, we need our hopes to provide for us ways of living through uncertainties while both acknowledging the uncertainties and not succumbing to frustration or being debilitated by them. Some of these hopes will need to be 'goal-setting' hopes, that involve actions for the hoped-for end. Others will not. All will be needed to live in a world of increased uncertainty. For instance,

as emphasized in the previous section, we will need to attempt to live in response to climate change and alter our ways of life without knowing *if* we are doing the right thing. We, as political entities or corporate bodies, will have to attempt policy alterations and mitigation/adaptation projects without the assurance of control of the outcome and of the *efficacy* of our projects. Again, as individuals and as political bodies, we will have to live our lives in relation to the future more broadly *without* confidence that those goods we desire will come about, and we will have to live unsure if the future will sustain us.

This means, as I wrote in the introduction, I am making a minimal normative claim: that first, we ought to come to terms with the uncertainties that attend climate change and that our hopes ought to take seriously these uncertainties, rather than denying or ignoring the nature of the situation. It also means that I have claimed a stake on a certain form of realism: that people who do not take seriously climate change and the uncertainties and indeterminacies it creates for us will be worse off, will lose something important, because there *really* is change taking place.

5. Conclusion: Aporia of Hope

In this chapter, I have argued that hope is needed in order to respond well to climate change, given the increasing realm of uncertainties with which we must contend. Simultaneously, given the difficulty of so contending, I have claimed that preserving our hopes (and, consequently, our agency) is also a prominent reason for inaction in response to climate change. We do not know how to hope amidst wild uncertainties, as well as grave and systemic global problems, and so we turn away into practical denial to avoid the tendency toward paralysis in the face of climate change. This places us in an 'aporia of hope,' in which we seem to be in a double-bind: we both desperately need to be able to hope in order to respond to climate change, and yet it is our very ability to

organize our world via our hopes that allows us to ignore the problem in the first place. Hope is both the cause of denial and our way out of it.

In the next chapter, I will turn to examine some resources within the Christian tradition for dealing with this aporia. I will suggest that, in order to respond to this problem, we will need to consider ways of overcoming the tendency toward practical denial for the sake of our hopes, as well as the tendency toward paralysis when we confront the problem of climate change. More particularly, I will suggest practices of lament and vocation, as well as a commitment to God's presence amidst forsakenness, as grounds for combatting these tendencies. Moreover, I will suggest that, together, lament and a form of hope that is vocational and courageous can help us to live amidst a changing climate as moral agents.

CHAPTER 5: Christian Hoping

We have proved ourselves masterful at practical denial in response to climate change.[1] However, we turn away from climate change and its potential futures for deep reasons: not merely because of vested interests in the status quo or because of viciousness, but for the sake of our agential self in relation to the world, supported and made coherent by the hopes and expectations that orient and sustain our lives. When we try to face climate change, we are confronted with threats to and the loss of our hopes[2]—they become trivialized and moralized in the face of climate change's gravity—and we are challenged with threats to our capacity to hope—the deep uncertainty of the future undermines our usual strategies for determining possibility and probability. Given all of this, the widespread paralysis in response to climate change makes sense due to this pressure to our agential capacities. Moreover, bearing in mind these hazards, practical denial is a concerted, if unfortunate and often unaware, attempt to maintain one's agency and one's meaning-making strategies by avoiding the realities of climate change.

I will argue that coming to live in hope in light of climate change will require learning to overcome *both* the tendency to turn away from climate change in practical denial *and* the tendency toward helpless paralysis that often results from attention to climate change. To overcome practical denial, we will need to foster the ability to truly sustain attention to climate change and the perils and losses we face when we do so. Overcoming practical denial will mean learning to face the paralysis that threatens one when confronting climate change. Only when the problem is first faced

[1] In keeping with my argument from the preceding chapter, the 'we' here primarily refers to privileged hopers, for whom the problems of trivialization, moralization, opacity, totality, and flux are particularly acute. That said, the 'we' can extend out to other hopers, insofar as the problems identified in Chapter 4 accurately represent their experiences.

[2] As well as expectations. However, given the particular necessity of hope for agency as we move into a time of more drastic climate change, I will continue to focus on hope exclusively.

as problem can one begin to consider ways of living well in light of it. Only with the ability to face climate change will we then be in a position to overcome paralysis, which will require finding ways of responding creatively to the uncertainties and hostilities found in climate change.

Overcoming practical denial and paralysis is needful for anyone for whom the problem I've outlined in Chapter 4 is accurate. However, in this chapter, I will particularly look at Christian resources for coming to live in hope, as such resources for overcoming paralysis and practical denial will be, at least in part, specific to communities' beliefs about the world and its possibilities. I will first examine how Christians can learn to sustain attention to climate change, in so doing overcoming practical denial, before turning to suggest a possible Christian response to paralysis.

More particularly, I will argue that, for Christians, overcoming practical denial can be aided by renewed practice of lament, that a) provides public spaces for attention to the agential problems that face us, b) gives us vocabularies and grammars to discuss these threats, c) attends to our complicity, d) gives voice to religious questions that follow from clear attention to our situation in climate change, and e) provides a first step toward overcoming paralysis, insofar as it does not simply acquiesce to the problems facing us. Regarding paralysis, I will argue that Christians should develop forms of hope (virtues) that are both vocational and courageous. Namely, against trivialization and moralization, one can reclaim the content of one's hopes through vocational reframing of them, made possible through the idiosyncratic expressions of the *imago dei* in each person, as well as the reality of justification; and against the wild uncertainties that challenge our ability to hope, one can courageously learn to 'hope on less' grounded in a) the experience of God's providence amidst lament and/or b) the recognition that God is present even amidst forsakenness and absence, in the person of Jesus.

Before turning to these constructive claims, however, I will briefly orient my position in relation to two other possible Christian responses to practical denial and paralysis, both of which use the tradition to ultimately evade the problems I have identified in this dissertation. These two possible responses demonstrate why it may be difficult for Christians in particular to overcome practical denial and paralysis, precisely because there are theological and pastoral tendencies that push against the sustained attention and practices for which I am calling here. As such, I will discuss these alternative theological and pastoral impulses, before turning to suggest the sort of practices Christians that will be more beneficial to responding to the issues at hand.

1. Christian Responses to Climate Change: Some Difficulties

These two insufficient responses are that of the blithe eschatologist and the repentant ascetic. As I will present them immediately below, both represent, in overdrawn outline, possible responses to the climate pressures to hope, which use the Christian tradition to erase or efface the problem described in this dissertation *as problem* and, instead, claim that the Christian is somehow immune to the situation we face today.

These positions will be presented here as possible types: they are, as I have just written, overdrawn, intended to be broad-stroke representations of theological and pastoral impulses, rather than the careful representation of specific thinkers' idiosyncratic positions. I mean to be giving an outline of two probable, but insufficient responses, rather than a detailed or systematic account of the whole theological landscape. That said, this characterization is useful only insofar as it touches upon real tendencies and, as such, I engage works that, at least in part, illustrate the tendencies of the blithe eschatologist and the repentant ascetic. This said, let us turn to the two possible responses.

First, the blithe eschatologist. The blithe eschatologist might acknowledge the threats and losses to hope I've outlined in the previous chapter, but believe that for Christians, such concerns do not ultimately hold weight. They do not do so because a) God's assured promises for ultimate fulfillment secure the Christian b) such that she is (or should be) unmoved by the opacity and hostility of the world, and instead should remain faithful and hopeful in the ultimate promises of God, even in a changing and chaotic world. There are varied versions of this basic response. As a pastoral posture, it pervades modern Christianity: from hymns that promote the posture of calm assurance amidst the trials of life while one looks to the Kingdom, to gospel proclamations that focus on trying to free individuals from the uncertainties of life by providing them with a sure foundation in Christ's resurrection. It is quite popular to turn to eschatological hope as the answer to worldly uncertainty and confusion and to see Christian hope as distinctly unrelated to and unconcerned with the uncertainties or problems of this world.

In more academic theologies and ethics, this sort of turn is present as well. For instance, consider John Bowlin's brief rendition of Aquinas's understanding of Christian hope in *Contingency and Fortune in Aquinas's Ethics*. There, he characterizes Aquinas's understanding of Christian hope as 'Stoicized,' rendering the Christian less susceptible to the interference of fortune on life of virtue.[3] On the one hand, Christians' eschatological hope is precisely in response to the experience of discontent with regards to fortune, and as such, is the hope to transcend and overcome exposure to fortune in the beatific vision.[4] On the other hand, in hoping Christianly, the Christian does so transcend fortune's grasp, precisely because in so hoping, hope's success is

[3] John Bowlin, *Contingency and Fortune in Aquinas's Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 220.

[4] Ibid.

secured.[5] How can this be? He explains that because Christian hope "cannot be without charity (ST I–II.65.4), and because charity entails…friendship with Him [God] (ST I–II.65.5), genuine acts of hope, in a sense, already achieve that happiness (ST II– II.17.1)" of union with God.[6] Because the end of hope—union with God—is made present through charity in the act of hoping, Christians achieve union with God in the very act of hoping, making worldly trials, uncertainties, and failures of less importance to the Christian hoper. As Bowlin concludes, "success is guaranteed, the difficult good achieved, in the very act of hoping…there is no chance that fortune might interfere with the hopeful."[7] The uncertainties and disappointments of this world recede in importance to the Christian, insofar as success in ultimate hope is secured.

Blithe eschatologists, in response to climate change, would then see it as their *duty* as Christians to remain ultimately unconcerned with the uncertainties and problems that face us today. The opacity, totality, and flux of our future, and the consequent difficulty in envisioning the future and hoping in relation to it, may simply not be of consequence. If our ultimate hope is secured, why worry? If success in our ultimate hope—union with God—is guaranteed, how important could threats to our this-worldly hopes really be? As such, this account of hope could be used as an excuse for inattention to the problems of climate change, because climate change's uncertainties and difficulties are considered to be not ultimate. It would not be considered practical denial to be inattentive to climate change's uncertainties, but rather a manifestation of trust in God and hope for God's ultimate future. Similarly, paralysis need never seize one, as the Christian is not undone by or overly concerned with the uncertainties that threaten us in this life. This response *is* a response of hope, but one that does not sufficiently attend to the threats to this world and the

[5] Bowlin, *Contingency and Fortune in Aquinas's Ethics*, 220.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

goods therein. It turns away from the problem of climate change, rather than attempting to hope in light of it.

Of course, this use of Christian hope is itself a *mis*use. One would suggest that such accounts of certain Christian hope should simply encourage treating worldly hopes *as* penultimate, in proper reference to God. Threats to worldly hopes should still concern Christians, although they ought not undermine them. Consider Bowlin's (and Aquinas') mitigation of the claim to 'Stoicization.' Bowlin writes, "Of course, caveats are important…A proximate end is still desired and more often than not its pursuit remains subject to disruption by fortune…It is still quite possible for misfortune to trip them [Christians] up short of their proximate ends and their happiness may be diminished accordingly."[8] As such, the uncertainties of this world can affect how one lives and hopes, and yet one remains steadfast in one's hope for union with God.

Despite these caveats, the worry remains. Might not such confidence about ultimate attainment of one's hopes undermine concern for this world? Certainly, this sort of attitude seems plausible, especially given the fact that we are most decidedly not, as Christians, fully sanctified such that our hopes are properly oriented toward the world and toward God. Combine this fact with the pastoral tendency to advocate the attitude of "all is well with my soul," no matter the trials and uncertainties that face us in this world, and such attention to security and ultimacy in Christian hope could, it seems, easily justify inattention and inaction in response to climate change. My 'type' of the blithe eschatologist is one who does precisely this: who treats the security of her ultimate hopes for fulfillment as sufficient reason to be blithe today in response to the struggles of this world.

[8] Bowlin, *Contingency and Fortune in Aquinas's Ethics*, 218.

However, there is an additional problem with focusing exclusively on eschatology with respect to the issues facing us in climate change, even if one is not solely 'blithe' in one's attitude toward this world. This is the fact that, even if people are not using such assured Christian hope as an *excuse* for denial or inattention, the object of such hope has limited decision-informing relevance. The world within which we operate is one of limits, marked by finitude, tragedy, sin, and death. The object of Christian hope is precisely a fulfillment that does not include these limits.[9] Such an eschatological object of hope may well (and should) both help us to recognize that we are made for something beyond the tragedy of this world (i.e. that we are made for true fulfillment) and, at the same time, help us to free ourselves from absolutizing intra-worldly hopes, insofar as that fulfillment is pushed to the *end* of history and, as such, should not be part of our hopes or expectations for this interim life. As such, it has a regulative function, clarifying for us what *not* to hope for here, and a potential psychological function, to help us retain an ultimate hope for fulfillment, despite the tragedies of this world.[10]

That said, insofar as it is an object of hope that does not include tragedy, it is limited in its ability to help us to arbitrate what to hope for and how to act in conditions of tragedy. How can an

[9] See, for discussion of eschatological hope as an overcoming of the 'eudaimonia gap,' or limits to our happiness in this world, David Elliot, *Hope and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[10] For Elliot, Christian eschatological hope provides important moral goods, insofar as a) it makes this-worldly hopes properly penultimate, avoiding presumption (137-138), b) it is a 'habit of the will' rather than a psychological characteristic, and as such can 'keep going' even when one does not feel hopeful and despair threatens (10), c) it properly relies on God for help to keep going, despite the threat of despair (63-65), d) directs one to one's proper end in God and as such avoids "existential boredom" or "technological hedonism" (102) by providing us with "transcendent meaning and purpose" (103), and e) through God's grace infuses a change in our other habits of will, such that we properly orient our lives with charity and patience, and avoid acedia, presumption, and despair (85, 104-105, 142, 149). I would say that these five supports that hope gives are summarize in the body of this paragraph. Namely, that it relativizes this-worldly hopes, thus helping us to keep a proper posture to this-worldly hopes, and it can help sustain one amidst tragedy. That said, all sustaining force depends upon one's continued belief in the promise of fulfillment, which is not itself determined by hope, but belief. He does not provide an argument for how/why the hoper should remain confident in her belief in the promise of God amidst tragedy and forsakenness, but simply asserts one should (and suggests that God's grace grants it). I will suggest below one reason why people might be able to retain hope amidst tragedy, below, see section 3.b.ii.

ideal in which the risks and hazards of our world are overcome help us to navigate the real and present unknowns?[11] Knowing how and what to hope for intra-worldly, under conditions of climate change, is not itself fully clarified by the hope for the eschaton. We need ways of navigating deep uncertainties and threats to our well-being, and we need ways of hoping amidst and in response to these uncertainties and threats. As such, focusing on a secured, ultimate hope in the eschaton does not alone provide a sufficient response to help us make sense of our situation and live well in relation to it.

A second potentially popular Christian response to the problem I've presented in this dissertation is that of the repentant ascetic. The repentant ascetic is one who focuses exclusively on our sin, arguing that it is what drives us to cling to our hopes in denial and inaction, and thus claiming that Christians need to exorcise and/or reform their desired hopes that have been exposed as trivial or impermissible in light of the gravity of climate change. The ascetic suggests self-discipline and disavowal of the hopes that motivate denial or inattention.[12] Through such disavowal and transformation, the ascetic believes one can then live well with proper, moral hopes in response to climate change.

[11] In my opinion, insufficient answer to this question is one reason why I am dissatisfied with Jurgen Moltmann's *Ethics of Hope* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), coming out of his theology of hope. While I do not disagree with some of what he has to say regarding Christian theology, nor some of his suggestions for action, I have some trouble throughout the text understanding how he relates his suggestions and theological vision to his claims regarding eschatological hope. At the beginning of the text, he writes, "An ethics of hope sees the future in the light of Christ's resurrection. The reasonableness it presupposes and employs is the knowledge of change. This points the way to transforming action so as to anticipate as far as possible, and as far as strength goes, the new creation of all things" (41). But what *is* "as far as possible" and "as far as strength goes" in conditions of tragedy and non-fulfillment? How does one concretely relate a hope for the eschaton to this-worldly conflicts and uncertainties, as guidance for decision making?

[12] Of course, the two responses could be coordinated. In order to *be* the blithe eschatologist, one must pass through askesis with respect to one's false or worldly valued desires, to repent toward the end of attaining proper Christian hope.

This type of response is present in much Christian environmental thought that demands personal conversion or transformation to an environmentally virtuous way of living. Whether or not one focuses on hope, there is a wide emphasis on the impermissibility of our current ways of life, which lead us to inaction, and a demand for conversion to a new set of values and desires. For one example, consider Sallie McFague's argument in *Blessed are the Consumers*. There, she suggests that we are guided currently by false values of consumerism and greed, and that in order for us to adequately address and respond to climate change, we need to convert to a 'kenotic' way of living, where we love and value differently. In this kenotic way of living, we take on voluntary poverty and live in harmony with one another and wider creation.[13] According to McFague, to respond to climate change demands a disavowal of current ways of being and a taking on of a properly moral, spiritual way of living. While not explicitly about hoping, the basic impulse translates. What is keeping us from proper attention to climate change is our attachment to sinful desires and these must be transformed appropriately so that we might become new hopers, guided by properly moral hopes. Only through such transformation can one come to live well in response to climate change.

This kind of account is present outside Christian circles as well. For instance, John Foster, in *After Sustainability: Denial, Hope, Retrieval*, argues that the current commitment to "progressivist attitudes" and the hopes that arise from these attitudes are keeping us in denial about climate change and, moreover, that a disavowal of these hopes and a transition to hopes rooted in "natural responsibility" will allow us to overcome denial and properly attend to climate change.[14] The structure of this sort of response to the problems of climate change is one of a) disavowal of

[13] Sallie McFague, *Blessed are the Consumers*, e.g. 162-168.

[14] See John Foster, *After Sustainability: Denial, Hope, Retrieval* (London: Routledge, 2015), 87.

people's current ways of being in the world and b) a demand for a conversion to new values and/or new hopes, in order to c) overcome the denial and inaction that currently plague responses to climate change.

This response clearly differs from the eschatologist's response from above and, in some ways, for the better. It would not so easily fuel inattention, for one, as it demands attention to and transformation of that which is fueling denial. Practical denial is treated as a problem that we must address. However, the response is also insufficient in two ways. First, it ignores the problem of wild uncertainty in climate change and the way that uncertainty affects our capacity to hope as such. By focusing solely on the problems associated with our contentful hopes, the response does not adequately grasp the depth of the problem. It is not merely a matter of our specific hopes being trivialized or moralized by climate change, although that is part of the issue. It is additionally that we have trouble so much as understanding how to make sense of the future sufficiently to hope at all with regards to it. That future presents to us as a blank wall, full of uncertainties, making it difficult to formulate possibility and to consequently "stand on" our hopes. While the repentant ascetic treats practical denial as an issue of sinfulness, she does not attend to the problem of paralysis.

However, even in addition to ignoring paralysis, this response inadequately describes the problem with regards to contentful hopes. As I have argued in previous chapters, equating people's everyday values and consequent hopes with sinful misalignment is a reduction that is both unfair to individuals and insufficient to motivate people's transformation. While there is certainly much sin and evil in the world, people's hopes that drive them to inattention are *at least in part* good, even as the inattention and denial they fuel is not. The hopes that fuel inaction and inattention are not merely vicious ones, but human ones, and that is part of the conundrum. By not addressing this

aspect of the problem, the repentant ascetic inadequately addresses the problem at hand. Given this inadequacy, the call to complete transformation is most likely motivationally insufficient for people, who are trying to make sense of their lives and live well in challenging times.[15]

I am not suggesting that either of these responses (of blithe eschatology or repentant asceticism) are utterly false or foolhardy, but rather that they are insufficient. That eschatology is an important part of Christian faith is unquestionable, as well as the fact that sin and viciousness have played a large part in our inaction in response to climate change. Both ways of responding have elements of a genuine Christian response and should not be completely discarded. In fact, elements of their responses will be present in my constructive portion, as I will point out later on in this chapter.

However, on their own both too quickly treat the threats and losses as analyzed in the previous chapter as something *other* than threats and losses to human persons. Both of these responses tend toward treating the threats as simply mirages. The blithe eschatologist treats them as not true threats given God's eschatological promises, which are sure and which relativize all uncertainties and problems in this world. A life of hope, according to the blithe eschatologist, ultimately means a life without tragedy, without the need to face the tragic threats to ourselves and our earth in climate change. Such seeming tragedy is penultimate, not ultimately true. One need only turn away to ultimate security in God's eschatological promises to live well in hope. Even more exactingly, the repentant ascetic reformulates the problems facing us today as mirages *due to* our sinful hopes: if our sin were properly exorcised, we would overcome this tendency to avoid

[15] Not to mention, this response can be inadequate insofar as people are not prone to total and complete transformation. The very fact of our sinfulness, which the ascetic recognizes, should preclude (it seems to me) the demand for complete transformation, at least as a practical demand of what it will take to accomplish climate change action. Of course, one could be an ascetic without holding that one can change completely; however, the two often go hand in hand.

climate change. Again, the seeming tragedy is only illusion, only based on sinful misperception of the situation. Tragedy, again, can be avoided and one can easily lead a life of hope, if only one goes through the proper askesis. Both suggest a form of living in hope that avoids the tragedy of our situation.

Contrarily, I will argue that truly overcoming practical denial in order to be in a place to confront climate change will demand sustained attention to the problems facing us *as problems*, as genuine tragedy, with true threats and losses facing us, in order to be in a place where one can begin to consider what a life lived in hope in our situation today might look like. Without learning such sustained attention, the tendency toward practical denial for the sake of protecting our agency will, most likely, continue.

2. Overcoming Practical Denial

I suggest that a first step toward overcoming practical denial for Christians will be to emphasize theologically and ritually the goods of finite creation, precisely as those goods are under threat, in the loss and undermining of our hope. I would in fact argue that Christianity *demands* the affirmation of finite creation as a good in this situation. However, when environmental thinkers claim that we need to "affirm creation," they often mean that we need to emphasize and value the wider-than-human creation and its goods, precisely as a means to relativize perceived human goods.[16] This is for good reason, given the history of thought and historical attitudes toward non-human creation.[17] That said, this is not what I mean here; and, moreover, I mean something close

[16] See, for a few examples of texts that focus on wider creation as a way of destabilizing currently held attitudes, Sharon Delgado, *Love in a Time of Climate Change: Honoring Creation, Establishing Justice* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), 91-101; Erazim Kohak, *The Embers and the Stars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 3-28; McFague, *Blessed are the Consumers*, e.g. 195-203.

[17] See, for classic examples environmental arguments about historical attitudes toward non-human creation: Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia and God* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994) and Lynn White, "The Historic Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155: 3767 (1967).

to its opposite. Here, I am instead suggesting that we need to find ways of affirming a) the finite goods of creation present in the hopes people currently have, *even* when they are fueling inattention and denial and b) the finite goods of creation present in hoping itself, as it supports our finite human agency, threatened by the uncertainties of climate change. This affirmation needs to both be an endorsement of the finite goods of these things *and* a recognition of the threats and losses they face.

I claim this because, whether or not they are relative and, even, whether or not they are in need of reformation and education, many if not most human hopes are for real goods in our world, and as such, should be Christianly affirmed as part of good creation. Hopes like the hope for a good education, for decent work, for health for one's family, for retirement that is comfortable, for a meaningful participatory democracy, and so on, all can fuel practical denial of climate change, and yet the hopes themselves are for finite goods that need to be affirmed and recognized. This is, of course, not to say that all hopes people have that fuel their denial are good: there may be well be hopes that are significantly misdirected; this fact is what lends the repentant ascetic's position power. But, despite this fact, there are still vast and myriad good hopes that orient people's lives and, at the same time, provide motive for denial. Similarly, the agency supporting role of hoping, that allows us to meaningfully engage with and respond to the uncertainties of our world, is a good that should be affirmed as part of good creation. This affirmation—of both our hopes and our hoping—should not simply occur in the abstract, however, but in relation to threats toward the

goods of hope. This is precisely because without the simultaneous recognition of these goods as threatened,[18] the mere affirmation of them could further denial and inattention.[19]

Here, I suggest that lament is the practical form this simultaneous affirmation and recognition of threat ought to take for Christians.[20] Through the renewed development of practices of lament, Christians may be better able to sustain attention to the problems with regards to hope, that we face in climate change. And, if able to overcome practical denial of climate change through such lament, we will then be in a position to honestly assess and consider ways of living in hope despite these dangers. We will be able to face paralysis and will be able to try to overcome it.

But, what do I mean by lament? I will argue that for this problem in particular[21] an adequate practice of lament will require three separate elements: lament as sorrow or grief expressed, lament as repentance, and lament as a questioning of God.[22] Only when rituals and practices of lament include all three of these elements will they allow people to fully sustain attention to the problems we face in hoping in response to climate change. More particularly, I will argue that this practice of lament will a) provide public attention to the threats to our agency, b) give us vocabularies and grammars to discuss these threats, c) attend to our complicity and sin, d) give voice to religious doubt, and e) provide a first step toward overcoming paralysis.

---

[18] Of course, all finite goods are in one sense threatened, insofar as all things are subject to the possibility of nonbeing, of decay and death. By threatened here, I mean particularly threatened by climate change, which, insofar as climate change threatens the very possibility of the continuation of human valuation itself, as well as many biologic goods (such as other species, etc.), is a very particular kind of extreme threat.

[19] In the process of affirming, one could simply entrench oneself in inattention to climate change, if one does not attend to them *as threatened* but merely as good.

[20] I think that lament might be helpful more broadly as well, although I am not discussing that possibility here.

[21] I am not suggesting that all practices of lament in any time or place, for any loss or threat, require these three elements. With regards to this broader hypothesis, I make no claim one way or the other.

[22] This tripartite account is my own, I have not encountered this particular characterization in literature on lament.

2.a. Grief and Lament

First, in response to the problems that climate change presents to our hopes, practices of lament should be developed that simply emphasize sorrow or grief expressed publicly (by which I mean simply "to others").[23] Lament here is understood as mourning. This is the most generally accepted understanding of lament.[24] While usually lament is associated with *lost* goods, expressions of mourning can take place due to both lost goods or *threatened* goods. The latter may be lamented in two different ways. First, one may lament a threatened good in anticipated mourning, where one imagines the future loss of the good and responds with grief at its future loss.[25] One anticipatorily mourns the loss of a parent, for instance. Second, however, one may lament the loss of the *security* of the good itself. One laments the 'status change,' as it were. To go with the same example from above, rather than anticipatorily mourn the loss of the parent, a young person might lament the very 'threatenedness' of her parents at all, at the moment she becomes aware of their eventual deaths. The good, permanent security of her parent's presence is lost to her; they have become a threatened good and she laments that transition. In all forms, however, lament on the one hand affirms goods—one only laments that which one deems good—and on the other hand grieves in the face of their being threatened or lost.

[23] Walter Brueggemann suggests that "grief" is helpful in countering denial, insofar as it acknowledges the loss denial tries to avoid. Brueggemann sees such grief as essential forerunner to authentic hope. See Walter Brueggemann, *Reality, Grief, Hope: Three urgent prophetic tasks* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 57.

[24] For instance, all of the Oxford English Dictionary's entries on 'lament' define it in terms of public expression of grief. See, for instance, "a passionate or demonstrative expression of grief" and to "express profound sorrow…to mourn." See *Oxford English Dictionary*, "Lament, n." accessed April 4, 2018, http://www.oed.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/search?searchType=dictionary&q=lament&_searchBtn=Search.

[25] See Ashlee Cunsolo Willox, "Climate Change as the Work of Mourning," *Ethics and the Environment* 17:2 (2012): 140.

Some work on environmental thought has focused on the importance of lament as mourning.[26] This work has focused primarily on the need for mourning in response to degraded environments or lost non-human goods (species extinction, for instance).[27] For example, Ashlee Cunsolo Willox argues that we need to develop public practices of mourning for the non-human world and its degradation, as a means to public recognition of the responsibilities that we share for that wider world, and to recognize the value of non-human subjects as "grievable."[28] Insofar as I am focusing here on the importance of developing practices related to hope, I will focus on the need to lament the good hopes and the good of hoping that are lost and/or threatened when one attends to climate change. This may well include the good hopes one has for environments and non-humans, but should not be constrained solely to these.

So, what does this mourning lament of hope more particularly consist in? As I have written above, we are faced with losses and threats in two aspects of hoping: our contentful hopes and our hoping capacity itself. First, contentful hopes. Recall from Chapter 4 that our contentful hopes are threatened with both trivialization and moralization in light of the gravity of climate change. When people attempt to face climate change's extent and its harms and hazards to foundational goods, the contents of one's everyday hopes are called into question: one asks, is it trivial of me to hope

[26] See Willox for both a presentation of mourning as an important element of environmental ethics and for a review of work done in this area, primarily in psychology.

[27] For discussions of environmental grief and loss, see Neville Ellis and Ashlee Cunsolo, "Hope and Mourning in the Anthropocene: Understanding Ecological Grief," *The Conversation,* April 4, 2018, http://theconversation.com/hope-and-mourning-in-the-anthropocene-understanding-ecological-grief-88630; Rosemary Randall, "Loss and Climate Change: The Cost of Parallel Narratives," *Ecopsychology* 1:3 (2009); and Jordan Rosenfeld, "Facing Down 'Environmental Grief,'" *Scientific American*, July 21, 2016, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/facing-down-environmental-grief/.

[28] Willox, "Climate Change as the Work of Mourning," 150. Willox does suggest that out of mourning, one might come to a place of hope, where, because of mourning and making public that which was hidden, the possibility of transformation, of new ways of responding to environmental degradation, may emerge. She has, in my opinion, unrealistically optimistic views of what the possibilities for a new social regime might look like, as a transformed 'ecological democracy.' See especially 156.

for the things I in have in fact hoped for: for example, becoming a professor or that my nieces' educations be well-rounded; and one asks, is it no longer permissible for me to have the hopes by which I have oriented my life, like the hope to have children or to travel; have these hopes become moralized in the light of climate change? In the context of trivialization and moralization, there is real motive for practical denial—for turning away from climate change to inattention and inaction—in order to avoid this destabilization of our values.

By developing practices of lament that *both* name the threat of trivialization and moralization *and* affirm the goods that are being so threatened, we might find a way to speak publicly and so to confront the threats we face and the reasons for our denial. In lament of our hopes, one grieves the way in which one's confidence in one's own desired values has become unsecured, doubtful, due to trivialization and moralization. And one laments the way in which this can in turn cause one's life to be unmoored once one's central hopes are called into question. This is a lament of the threatened security of one's orientation to one's own life.

But this is not all one laments. One also grieves the threatened ground of hoping itself, insofar as the totality, opacity, and flux of climate change pressure our capacity to recognize and respond to the uncertainties of our future in a meaningful way via hope. We lament the threats to our agency, insofar as hope is a necessary aspect of our limited agency that helps us sustain ourselves in an uncertain world, only partially hospitable to our intentions and actions.

These goods should be grieved and in being grieved, they are affirmed in their good finitude. Such lament as mourning provides existential and moral goods to the community that are essential elements to a successful recognition of the problems we face in climate change. First, it provides a means for sustained attention to the threats *as* threats. Through public naming of losses and expressions of sorrow, lament forces people's awareness of climate change and its threats.

This public attention to the problems that face us press against practical denial, which feeds on inattention and social practices that enforce that inattention. Simultaneously, lament as public grieving provides a space for the communal articulation of valued goods and how they are threatened, which can generate shared ways of speaking about the problems we face. A vocabulary of loss and a grammar by which to discuss that loss can be developed through public articulations of grief and the development of rituals to convey that grief. This too combats the silence that surrounds climate change and our fears about it and could, in turn, potentially create radiating social practices that combat inattention.[29] Additionally, and perhaps more basically, such lament as grief expressed publicly can provide catharsis, emotional release of the anxieties and fears that were fueling inattention.

2.b. Whence?

However, the act of lamenting grief easily raises within it the question of the whence: from what source(s) did these losses come? These simple questions—of "why?" and "whence?"—are not answered in the experience of lamenting grief itself and yet are raised there: from Jesus's cry of "why have you forsaken me?" to a grieving mother's panicked demand to know the reason for her child's death. In addition to lament as mourning or grief, then, I suggest that we need practices of lament that include questioning and examining the 'why?' or the 'whence?'. With regard to lamenting our hopes, this questioning of the whence has two aspects: a lament of our sin and a lament to God. I begin with lament of our sin.

[29] In other words, people might use these vocabularies and grammars in other arenas of their lives, say, in conversations with their friends or in their protests for particular governmental policies.

2.b.i. Lamenting our sin

Part of our practices of lament, then, particularly on the part of the privileged within a first world context, must be lament of our own contributions and complicity in creating this situation with regards to climate change. Much of our current situation is not simply due to inexorable happenings, but has arisen from human agency and the (sometimes unknown) consequences of that agency. Lament then should include public grief and mourning over our own contributions to the threatening situation we now face: it should include lament of our sin. This lament over sin as it is related to our hopes should have at least two sides. For one, we should lament our own part in creating the conditions that threaten these goods of hope and hoping. When we grieve these threats to our hopes and hoping, we are grieving in some real way self-inflicted harms.[30] This fact should color our attitude and relation to the threats we face and should be acknowledged as such in lament. Lamenting the threats and losses we face in climate change will be an honest lament—honest in its assessment of the type of loss we face—only if we acknowledge our hand in creating the threats.

A second aspect of 'lamenting our sin' is lamenting the very way in which we use our hopes and hoping as motives for denial and inattention and the harm we have caused by these behaviors. This may sound at odds with what I have written earlier. There I emphasized that the repentant ascetic Christian who focuses exclusively on repentance and the need for transformation of our contentful hopes insufficiently understands the situation, given that good hopes and our good capacity for hoping both still fuel denial. This critique holds and the need for affirmation (and lament) of the goods of hope and hoping remains. That said, there is sin that also needs to be

[30] By 'self-inflicted' harms, I mean insofar as we continue to emit extensively and continue to sustain and participate in structures that are carbon intensive. There is, of course, a real sense in which these effects are not solely self-inflicted, insofar as they are wrought by previous generations or others. This will be discussed further below, in section 2.b.ii.

recognized, lamented, and repented of, particularly in our willingness to put our own hopes and agential good ahead of others' goods and the global situation. One can see our attempts to preserve our hopes and our agency via inattention and denial as fallen attempts at self- and world-integration. In other words, we try to organize ourselves and our world in such a way as to sustain our hopes and to manage uncertainties, which is a necessary human task; but, fallen, we do so with an over-valuation of our own personal goods and a wrongheaded willingness to manipulate our understanding of the world around us for our own seeming benefit. While preserving real goods in our turn to practical denial for the sake of our hopes, we are also valuing certain goods—our own easy sense of agency and our own contentful hopes—over other goods—meaningful response to climate change that may help mitigate vast human and non-human suffering. It is not that the goods one is protecting in practical denial are sinful themselves (at least not necessarily). It is rather that, to the extent that these latter goods are more basic to possible human flourishing as such (as exposed in trivialization), one is most likely mis-valuing goods in a way that promotes one's own good over others.

Once we turn to examine the whence of our threatened and lost hopes, we recognize that the lamenting practice must widen. Because our fallenness has not only affected our own lives and hopes, it cannot solely be a matter of lamenting the threats to our hopes and hoping. We must lament the way in which the threats to our hopes and our consequent inaction have fueled present and future harms to others, material and existential. As Emilie Townes suggests, there is a "place of deep reckoning that is found in lament" as we must "begin with confession, which is an integral part of lament—that we have done those things that we ought not to have done."[31] Lament, then,

[31] Emilie Townes, "Meditations on Love and Violence," in *Love and Christian Ethics*, eds. Fred Simmons and Brian Sorrells (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016), 309.

cannot simply be public grief over lost or threatened goods of our own; it must include a) recognition of the source of loss and, as far as that source is ourselves, b) confession and c) repentance.[32]

At times, this confession and repentance as part of lament is understood as part of confession and lament *before* God. Certainly, one could understand the ritual formula that most Christian churches take in this way: the confession of sin is to God, performed with other people who have also so sinned.[33] But, I argue that, in this situation, this lament of sin must be *to* others as much as with them and before God: it is not simply that we have sinned before God in thought, word, and deed; we have also not loved our neighbors as ourselves. To avoid a potential solipsism in lament,[34] lament should include lament of sin *to* those we have harmed and not simply to God. Lament is public, the public expression of losses and threats. This publicity should remain in the naming of sin as the whence; and the fact that others have been harmed must be recognized and repented of.[35]

Including lamenting repentance of our sin as part of the practice of lament of our hopes is necessary in order for the lament to be honest. Lament as grief alone would be unmoored,

---

[32] See Richard Floyd, *Down to Earth*, 102-105 for discussion of importance of repentance and lament.

[33] Consider the brief order of confession and forgiveness in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which could be read as focusing almost exclusively on each individual and their relation to God, although it need not be: "We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We *have sinned against you* in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We *have not loved you* with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name." (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006), italics mine). Of course, one could focus on the communal elements of the same confession: "we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves," but even this is said in the context of addressing God exclusively.

[34] By a potential solipsism, I mean that to lament our sin to God alone may become very self-oriented, focusing on the sin one has committed in the eyes of God, without proper acknowledgement to others of the harm one has committed to them.

[35] The implication of this claim is that solely lament to God over our sin loses this publicity insofar as the lament is directed away from one another to God. In this situation of climate change and global harm, we need lament that includes repentance to God and to one another in order to keep the fully public nature of lament.

insufficient. To have the proper posture to our own grieving lament requires a recognition of our complicity in creating the condition for our lament. Additionally, practical denial is in many cases in part fueled by the experience of moralization and trivialization of our hopes. This reason for practical denial—the turn away to inattention given the experience that, in light of climate change, one's previously held hopes seem no longer permissible and trivial—can be acknowledged and faced via this lament of our sin. Lamenting our sin can again, like lamenting as mourning, give us a public vocabulary and grammar for acknowledgement of our complicity. By acknowledging, confessing, and repenting of our sin as part of the lament of our hopes, the hopes that should be properly moralized and trivialized can be exposed and (hopefully, at least in part) reformed; our situation as sinners recognized and lamented.

So far, then, I have suggested that lament must include naming together and grieving the good hopes and good hoping that are threatened by the situation of climate change. I have further argued that lament demands attention to the "whence" of the threats, which in turn requires lament of our own sinful contributions to the problems the world currently face. This requires confession of sin and repentance. In the ethical reflections on lament I have found, of which there are few, it is these two elements that are emphasized: lament as mourning lost/threatened goods and/or lament as confession and repentance of sin.[36] However, exclusively defining lament in these two ways is

[36] Willox, of course, discusses 'mourning' rather than lament, but I see a lot of overlap in her understanding of mourning as public, active, potentially transformative, as well as mourning as including recognition of complicity. See Willox, "Climate Change as Work of Mourning," 155. Emilie Townes, as mentioned above, emphasizes the lament of our sin aspect of lamenting. For other work on lament and ethics, see Elliot, *Hope and Christian Ethics*, 107. He prefers to emphasize "rejoicing in hope" more than lament, as he sees lament as already sufficiently covered as part of hope, insofar as hope implies a not-yet that one suffers. That said, he does briefly mention lament, which he identifies as the practice of "ritual enactment of dissatisfaction" (i.e. public grief) with our current state, rooted in "the sin-damaged alternations to life" (107) (i.e. attention to sin and complicity). In other words, he, like the above two thinkers, focuses exclusively on lament as: lament of that good which is not present or is threatened, combined with a focus on our sinfulness. Similarly, Richard Floyd, in *Down To Earth*, briefly mentions the place of lamentation in the life of hope, writing "If we construe our ecological crisis as divine judgment, rather than simply the inexorable flow of natural processes…it may evoke responses of confession (speaking the truth about our alienated and alienating ways-of-being), repentance (embodying new possibilities), lamentation (breaking through

insufficient to the task of coming to sustained attention to the threats of climate change and is also theologically inadequate.

2.b.ii. Lamenting to God

Why would such an account of lament be "theologically inadequate"? Most basically, it is because "our sin" does not seem to be an exhaustive answer to the question of the whence of our current situation. At a general level, one would simply say that there is a remainder, that we find ourselves in a situation of threat and hazard that is not (entirely) of our own making (or at least which for which responsibility seems to outstrip human agency).[37] When we direct our attention in to the question of "what or who is responsible for this situation?" there is not solely an inward response of "we, ourselves," but also a look to some external source, a demand for an accounting from *something*, whether that be fate, the universe, nature, karma, or something else.

From within the Christian tradition, the demand for an accounting is our lament to God over the suffering and loss we face. As Nicholas Wolterstorff describes in *Lament for a Son*, "the Christian gospel tells us more of the meaning of sin than of suffering…Sin belongs to us…To the 'why' of suffering we get no firm answer. Of course, some suffering is easily seen to be the result of our sin…maybe some is chastisement. But not all…There's more to our suffering than our guilt."[38] Lament is a response to this remainder of suffering, a remainder to which one asks of God, why? and where are you?

---

numbness and empowering action by grieving what has been lost), and, finally, hope" (102-103). I will discuss divine judgment and punishment more below, but suffice it here to notice that Floyd also exclusively emphasizes recognition of sin and grieving lost goods as the necessary precursors to hope.

[37] For example, the fact that much of the climate change that we will experience was due to greenhouse gas emissions undertaken unwittingly causes problems when thinking about human responsibility. The relationship between our intended actions and the effects of climate change is extremely convoluted, and that fact itself makes one wonder about the totality of our responsibility for climate change.

[38] Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Lament for a Son* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987): 74.

Lament, throughout the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, is always this lament before God. Lament in these texts includes grief over goods lost and repentance of sin, but it also includes a questioning of God's absence and a call to God in God's justice and mercy. To our lost and threatened hopes and hoping, lament to God asks why our good desired finite values are threatened, both in their possibilities and in their valuableness. Lament asks of God why our agency seems potentially undermined in light of climate change. Lament addresses God in God's seeming absence, bringing to God the complaint and the question, refusing to be answered by platitudinous theodicies that shift full blame for all suffering to human hands.[39]

In this situation, in lament of the threats to our capacity for hoping and our hopes, we ask of God why the very good of our finite human agency is left unsecured by the uncertainties of climate change. We ask of God why our good finite hopes are threatened so extensively. Such lament includes the questions and demands: 1) Where are you, God? 2) Why have you left us to this disaster? 3) What of your promises of sustenance and flourishing?

Many might see this lament as unfaithful. Certainly, both the blithe eschatologist and the repentant ascetic would be wary of it. The blithe eschatologist, as I have characterized her, might see the demand for an accounting as unnecessary, because nothing is ultimately wrong with the situation. The promises of God are sure, and we respond with calm assurance, not with lamenting demands of God. The ascetic repentant would see our sin as a satisfactory answer to the question

[39] See Carleen Mandolfo, "Psalm 88 and the Holocaust: Lament in Search of a Divine Response," *Biblical Interpretation* 15 (2007). She describes the way in which lament can function to resist theodicies that have "a ready answer to the problem of evil/suffering" (170). See, as well, M. Elizabeth Lewis Hall, "Suffering in God's Presence: The Role of Lament in Transformation," *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 9:2 (2016): 231.

of the whence and could well consider a demanding lament to God a manifestation of sinfulness, rather than a faithful response.[40]

However, I want to argue that such responses are insufficiently serious about Christian theological commitments. Insofar as Christians believe God to be the good creator of a good finite creation, in which humans have a particular place as bearers of the *imago dei*, we ought to question threats to humans and to our finite goods in creation. This is not to say that all worldly threats at all times call for demanding an accounting from God—death, predation, and evolution, coming to be and passing away—seem to be part of good creation, to be affirmed at least at a general level.[41] That said, the particulars matter. Lament asks of God why, if finite good creation is affirmed, we are seemingly left to a situation in which our hopes for flourishing and our capacity to hope itself are threatened. It asks of God why we are left to our own destruction, even if 'we'[42] are in part to blame for the threats we and other species face.[43] Insofar as God's justice and God's mercy are

[40] See Jonas Bauer, "Enquiring into the Absence of Lament," in *Evoking Lament: A Theological Discussion*, eds. Eva Harasta and Brian Brock (London: T&T Clark, 2009) and Walter Brueggemann, "Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 25 (2003) for more extensive discussions of the reasons for inattention to and theological dismissal of lament in its theological form. Bauer suggests Luther's claim that accusing God is tantamount to blasphemy, as well as the Enlightenment critique of intercessory prayer, combine to create a theological climate in which lament is seen as an inappropriate attitude toward God (see 28-29). Contrarily, Brueggemann sees Luther, with his theology of the cross, as maintaining and restoring the importance of the lament psalms, whereas he agrees with Bauer that the Enlightenment and a culture of self-sufficiency as the root of the loss of lament today (19).

[41] Two notes on this. First, affirming these seeming disvalues as part of good creation at a general level does not entail that we ought to simply affirm any given instance of these disvalues as necessary or good. That predation is part of life does not entail that one should not lament or question the loss of a beloved pet to a fox, for instance. Second, the question of evolution and God's promises and commitments to good creation is beyond the scope of this project, but is theologically difficult and important.

[42] The 'we' here is necessarily vague and at times shifts. Sometimes the 'we' is humankind and other times privileged individuals who continue systems that contribute who the worsening of the greenhouse effect. It is necessarily so, for two reasons. First, because complicity and responsibility for climate change itself is a shifting and nebulous in its boundaries. Second, because those (potentially) affected by climate change extends to all humans. As such, when one speaks of the 'we' who are being harmed, this extends wider than the 'we' who are primarily responsible, although the latter is a nebulous and graded category itself.

[43] There is a confusion in some environmental humanities' thought regarding the gravity and extent of climate change. It is important to note that anthropogenic climate change severely threatens life *as we know it* on this planet. It threatens a majority of the species currently alive, including *homo sapiens sapiens*. That said, we cannot claim outright that it is threat to life itself in any real sense. The fact that the earth has changed atmospheric composition

real, we ought to question its seeming absence in this situation. Why are innocents being punished for the sins of their fathers?[44] Why are innocents in Bangladesh being punished for the actions of past (and present) Americans?[45] Why are human goods and human hopes being diminished, while God is seemingly silent? Taking seriously the Christian commitments to a God who is good creator, who is just and merciful, should entail questioning deep threats to our finite goods and questioning the seeming absence of justice and mercy in our world.[46]

And yes, I do then mean to be saying that we ought to be lamenting much more often about many more things than we currently do. While this dissertation is a work on climate change and hope, lament as a theological practice should be reinvigorated as a response to many problems

---

multiple times and that humans have flourished in an isolatedly warm inter-glacial period suggests that while life in its current forms is threatened, most likely some species will survive, and evolution will continue. There is, of course, the chance that this is not the case. That means that some theologies may struggle less with these questions than others (see, for instance, James Gustafson's relativization of human importance in his *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective*, *Volume One: Theology and Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981)). The point I am making here is, however, that for most Christians, it is central to theology that one needs to care about human flourishing and survival, not just life more generally or creation more generally. Insofar as that survival is threatened, it raises theological questions.

[44] Namely, that industrialization that set up the systems in which we now live, and which started the process of extreme extraction of fossil fuels, is something we participate in but did not create. Moreover, those who started this process were not aware of the potential for climate changing effects, such that, while responsible, their responsibility is not clearly defined.

[45] I use the term punished here intentionally, because one *could* understand such punishment within the context of divine justice, judgment, and retribution. This position has roots in the Bible (e.g. Lamentations 5:7, "Our ancestors sinned; they are no more, and we bear their iniquities"). Of course, the questioning of this position is also present throughout the bible (for instance, Job's trials, or Ezekiel's "A child shall not suffer for the iniquity of a parent…the righteousness of the righteous shall be his own" (Ezekiel 18: 20)). This understanding of material divine judgment stretching further than those who have participated in the wrong is still present in contemporary theology. See, for instance, H.R. Niebuhr, "that will of God, does bring war and depression upon us when we bring it upon ourselves, for we live in the kind of world which visits our iniquities upon us and our children" ("The Only Way into the Kingdom," in *War as Crucifixion: Essays on Peace, Violence, and Just War*" (Chicago: Christian Century, 2002), 15). For Niebuhr, the (Godly ordered) structure of creation is such that when we violate that structure, we are harmed, judged by the structure we have ignored. This position is taken up in part by Richard Floyd, as he discusses climate change and Christianity. He writes, "If creation is God's primal covenant partner, God's 'first love,' the first creature to hear and respond to the divine word ('Let there be…'), and if the human creature has been doing violence to that covenant partner for centuries, is it beyond the faithful imagination to contemplate divine judgment, even divine wrath?" (*Down to Earth*, 102). He sees it as crucial to see divine judgment as part of a larger narrative of redemption, of the cross ending in resurrection (104). I do not hold his position, thus suggesting that it is reasonable to lament to God, asking why such punishment is taking place.

[46] See, for discussion of the essential element of "complaint" within lament, M. Elizabeth Lewis Hall, "Suffering in God's Presence," 226-227.

today. As Walter Brueggemann notes, "the absence of lament is the stifling of …the capacity to raise and legitimate questions of justice."[47] Lament with regards to climate change itself should extend beyond laments for our hopes and hoping, to laments for present and future goods lost and to current and future sufferings of humans and nonhumans. But for the purposes of this dissertation, I focus on important lament of hopes and hoping.

Both biblically and, consequently, in scholarship on it, lament before God often ends in or vacillates with praise or confidence in God. For instance, in *Lamentations*, the speaker moves from detailed articulations of the sorrows Jerusalem faces (lament as mourning), to the sins they have committed and the wrath they have endured (lament of sin), to clear questioning of God ("Look, O Lord, and consider! To whom have you done this?" 2.20) (lament to God), before then turning to confident praise in God ("The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end" 3.21-22), only to then move back to grief, acknowledgement of sin, and questioning. This vacillation is important in that it demonstrates the way in which lament to God is part of a faith, that the lamenter is one who takes God seriously, who has known and trusted in God.

In scholarship, this turn from lament to praise is also emphasized as important for understanding lament proper. Most famously, Walter Brueggemann and Claus Westermann argue that the turn to praise is the crisis overcome, as "lament resolved."[48] Lament becomes then a process, used as a step toward transformation.[49] Lament in such accounts becomes in principle functional, part of a process that ends in a reorientation, a renewed relation to God and the world.

---

[47] Walter Brueggemann, "The Costly Loss of Lament," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 36 (1986): 61-62.

[48] Brueggemann presents this position of Westermann's in support of it in "The Costly Loss of Lament," 57-58.

[49] See, for instance, Rebekka Klein, "The Phenomenology of Lament," in *Evoking Lament: A Theological Discussion*, eds. Eva Harasta and Brian Brock (London: T&T Clark, 2009): 22-23 and Hall, "Suffering in God's Presence," 230-231.

That said, I want to distance my account of lament here from accounts that focus on this movement from lament to praise. Emphasizing this move from lament to praise is popular among theology, pastoral and otherwise, and I have no doubt that lament does end in praise at times, the crisis experienced as resolved.[50] However, if lament is true lament, the possibility of its ending or of its resolution cannot be determined antecedently. The answer to the questioning of God's presence and God's justice is not predetermined, precisely because of the nature of the questioning, which is a questioning of the very faithfulness, the promises of God.[51]

When we face climate change and its threats to our agency and our contentful hopes, theological doubts are likely to be raised: where is God in this mess? Why has God left us to this tragedy? What of God's promises? These questions, so often submerged, should be given voice in lament. Such lament to God over our threatened hopes and hoping gives honest expression to the religious doubt and to theological concerns that are raised by our current situation. Lament can provide a space and a way of speaking about these concerns. As such, it can help overcome any practical denial that is in part fueled by the faith culture that demands of Christians that all must be well with one's soul and that demands a confidence that God will make a way out of no way. Allowing for lament to God allows Christians to truly face the problems of climate change *as*

[50] The crisis may be experienced as averted insofar as God's presence is experienced, such that one regains confidence in God. This may be in contrast with the experience of the crisis averted in the sense of regaining the threatened or lost this-worldly goods.

[51] For another alternative regarding how the crisis may be resolved in lament, see Matthew Boulton, "Forsaking God: A theological argument for Christian lamentation," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55: 1 (2002). Matthew Boulton sees the resulting praise as an eschatological act given as a divine gift to the lamenter, such that the lamenter can turn to praise the *coming* fulfillment of the promises of God, such that lament remains, fulfillment postponed. He sees lament itself as a disruption of the "God of glory," forsaking God by clinging to "God's promise" against current realities. I have a similar position below, see 3.b.ii.

problems for them, to not turn away into blithe eschatologism or repentant asceticism, both of which provide insufficient responses and so ultimately avoid the gravity of our current situation.[52]

2.c. Lament and Hope

An adequate account of lament of our hopes then includes the public mourning for our lost and threatened hopes/hoping, the recognition of our role in creating the threatening situation itself, and the theological demand to God for an account of our situation. By including these three aspects in lament, people can affirm the finite goods of hope that are threatened, they can recognize and repent of their own responsibility for these threats and losses, and they can remain theologically truthful and serious. Through developing and practicing these laments, we may be able to overcome (at least in part) our tendency to deny and turn our attention away from climate change. By lamenting our lost and threatened hopes, we sustain attention to the threats facing us. By lamenting our sin that has contributed to climate change and its harms, we sustain attention to the ways in which our lives must change in order to address the problems we face. And by addressing God and asking why we are being left to this unjust and tragic situation, we refuse simple answers to the problems we face. As I wrote above, then, it creates a) public attention to the problem, b) a vocabulary and grammar to discuss the problem, c) a recognition of the type of problem it is, given our complicity, and d) a theologically honest questioning of God. It allows us to see the threats as the sort of threats they are (ones in part created by our own hands and in part beyond our control or responsibility) and to acknowledge and grieve those threats.

In the introduction, I also claimed that lament provides us with a first (small) step toward overcoming paralysis, insofar as the lamenter refuses to simply acquiesce to that paralysis that can

[52] To recall, blithe eschatologism insufficiently attends to the way in which current life needs to be navigated amidst uncertainty and hostility. Repentant asceticism ignores the way in which peoples' hopes are good and the uncertainties of climate change pressure our capacity to respond well.

follow from facing climate change. As discussed in the previous chapter, when one faces the threats to our hopes and to our agency in climate change, one could simply give up one's agency in paralysis, finding no way to respond to what confronts us. The threats to our contentful hopes—in trivialization and moralization—combined with the threats to our capacity to determine possibility and uncertainty, may well result in helpless paralysis in response to climate change. But in light of these threats, lament does respond somewhat differently. While not yet a constructive, agential response to the problems facing us, the lamenter yet refuses to give up agency, even when she does not know *what* to do or *how* to hope. As Rebekka Klein describes, "to protect or defend themselves from mere resignation, human beings lament, and show by this that they are not settled into acceptance of their situation."[53] One refuses to simply give into the situation or to simply look away from it and instead protests—in one's grieving the losses and in one's demand to God, and one so remains active in asserting the goodness of that which is threatened and demanding a response, of ourselves and of God.

That said, lament alone does not solve the problem we are currently facing: it does not help us to navigate the uncertainties and threats we face in climate change, even as it does not simply acquiesce to those threats and give up. Moreover, lament on its own, if considered itself the 'end-point' or answer to our situation, can be problematic. For instance, lamenting as an answer on its own could end up with a kind of self-involved 'navel gazing.' One might, in lament, stay 'stuck' in narrowly attending to one's sorrows, berating oneself for one's sin, and accusing God. This would be particularly the case if one's lament focused exclusively on the self-God relationship. Such attention could—like the blithe eschatology or the repentant asceticism—ignore the need to respond creatively and concretely to the problems around one, and instead solely focus on internal

[53] Klein, "The Phenomenology of Lament," 21.

states and one's interpersonal relation to God. This is the primary reason why I emphasized the importance of public interpersonal lament, in the section on lamenting our sin. If lament 'in front of,' 'with,' and 'to' others is emphasized, there is less of a risk of this solely inward focus to lament.

That said, while lament need not be instrumentalized to the point of necessarily ending in praise to our creator, yet, it cannot stand alone as a response to climate change's threats to hope and hoping. In addition to overcoming practical denial for the sake of our hopes, we also need to more robustly overcome paralysis.

3. Overcoming Paralysis

To overcome paralysis requires responding to both the cognitive and evaluative pressures to hoping. In other words, one needs ways of living with a) the difficulty in discerning possibilities one can 'stand on,' given the opacity, totality, and flux of the future amidst a changing climate and b) the trivialization and moralization of one's hopes that can occur when one faces climate change. Overcoming paralysis must then have two aspects, given these two pressures: one must deal with content of hopes (evaluative pressures) and with the form of hoping (cognitive pressures), with what to hope for and how to hope for it.

For, as I argued in the previous chapter, paralysis can set in given these pressures to hope. If one does not turn away from climate change into practical denial, one can instead respond with a loss of agency, due to one's inability to so much as deal with the uncertainties and gravity of a climate-changing world. One's ability to discern possibility and stand on that for which one hopes can be undermined, leaving one helpless before a confusing, uncertain world. Similarly, given trivialization and moralization of one's valued hopes, one might simply lose confidence in the very content of one's hopes and one's values, resulting in a lack of hopes with respect to climate change

and, again, a consequent paralysis. Without hopes in response to a climate changing future, one will be unable to constructively engage that world and its uncertainties, and so will be unable to live into that future as a limited, yet successful human agent.

In order to respond to these stresses to hope and consequent paralysis, I will suggest that Christians a) vocationally reclaim their hopes and b) develop a form of courageous hope.[54] Through vocational reclamation, one responds constructively to the problems of trivialization and moralization in light of climate change and, as such, reclaims the contents of one's hopes. Similarly, through developing courageous hoping, one responds to the difficulties associated with the wild uncertainties of climate change, finding ways of hoping despite pressures to the form. I will suggest that developing vocational, courageous hoping is possible for Christians given a) a common *imago dei*, b) a freedom that can be found in justification, and c) the (personally experienced or not) presence of God amidst brokenness and forsakenness; or, in other words, the possibility of a hope formed in the light of the cross.

Before turning to unpack this vocational, courageous hope, however, I want to quickly note the continued importance of lament to our response to climate change. While it may be tempting to see my suggestions of response as a linear process: one moves from lament of one's hopes to vocational, courageous hope, I mean for this to ever be a dual-response, a dialectic between lament of our lost and threatened hopes and a reclamation of hope. This is because while lament cannot stand on its own as a successful response to climate change, neither can vocational, courageous hope; both must remain in order to avoid falling back into either practical denial and paralysis.

[54] It is important to note at the beginning that, just as the problem of climate change is not wholly idiosyncratic, so too are these responses applicable to other problems we may face. For instance, responding to globalization and social acceleration may be helped via vocational, courageous hope, although I do not investigate that possibility here.

In this section, I will first examine the vocational reclamation of hopes against trivialization and moralization and then I will turn to discuss courageous hoping amidst the wild uncertainties of climate change. I will conclude this chapter by providing an exemplar for these ways of hoping, in the figure of Abraham.

3.a. Vocation and the Content of Hope

Part of the problem, as I have stated above, is that climate change relativizes and moralizes one's previously held hopes, making them seem trivial and impermissible. I will argue that Christians, grounded *both* in a recognition of a common imago dei that relates their idiosyncratic hopes to a common good *and* in a freedom found in justification, can respond to trivialization and moralization with a vocational reclaiming of their hopes. I will first discuss possible constructive responses to trivialization before turning to moralization.

3.a.i. Trivialization and Hoping

To recall from the last chapter, in trivialization, one's previously valued hopes are made to seem trivial by the gravity of climate change. One's desired values are dwarfed by the basic goods threatened; one asks, of one's own hopes, *this* is what I have staked my life on? For but one example, in light of the possibility of the human species itself being threatened with nonexistence, one's hope to be an exceptional flutist can come to seem trivial by comparison. Trivialization makes it difficult to hope, precisely because that which one values is relativized.

Certainly, the repentant ascetic will simply say one must 'replace' one's previously valued hopes (that have been trivialized) with properly valuable hopes for things like the continuation of the human species. These hopes should then organize and orient one's life in the proper way with respect to climate change. One should simply replace the hope to be a flutist—which has been trivialized by climate change—with the properly important hope for the continuation of the human

species.[55] Insofar as hopes organize one's relationship to the uncertain world by relating the possible to one's desired values, one's investment should be focused on these climate change hopes, with the other, now-trivial hopes fading from view.[56]

This position does hold power, as I have written above, insofar as there are hopes that should be properly trivialized (recall Robert Gifford's example of the hope for a bigger car, for instance). That said, I have argued that it is insufficient for Christians to simply name hopes like 'becoming an exceptional flutist' trivial,[57] given the intrinsic goodness of most human hopes, including something like flute-playing. Moreover, to advise simple 'replacement' does not adequately understand human valuation. This is because values are not simply chosen, easily replaceable things. While people are educated into their evaluations, there remains a facticity to evaluation that cannot easily be removed. One cannot simply *choose* to value X over Y; its root in desire and/or emotional vulnerability precludes such simple, outright transformation.[58] Suggesting a dedicated flutist give up that hope for the sake of orienting and organizing her life by the hope for continued human survival misses the very nature of what it is to value. We value and hope for that which we have picked out as important *to us* and that commitment is not easily given up, nor should it be. With the experience of trivialization, one then easily ends in paralysis rather than easy

[55] One could, of course, hold both hopes. They are not necessarily in competition with one another. However, the question here is whether all one's (previously) valued hopes, by which one organizes the uncertainties of the world and its future, can be 'pushed out' by more pressing concerns, by more basic goods that ought to be valued. Whether or not they are actually in competition, will they be viewed as such, because of their seeming triviality?

[56] This, of course, puts to one side the problem of determining possibility in light of wild uncertainties of climate change.

[57] Or, even worse, as we will see below in 3.a.ii., to treat it simply as immoral.

[58] Certainly, people's values do change over time and people do have the experience of giving up one value for another. This change is almost always rooted in a change in desire as well as evaluation, however. Consider a new parent who suddenly values the health and wellbeing of his child above his own; this may well transform his valuations and hopes, but it is not simply rooted in the experience of the trivialization of his own health and wellbeing, but in a change in desire—he now desires the health and wellbeing of his child *more* and organizes his life accordingly.

reformation, not able to simply transform her values on cue and no longer knowing *what* to hope for, given that which she has valued is now seemingly trivial.[59]

If strict changing of one's hopes is not the answer, nor is mere practical denial of the problem, can one respond to the problem of trivialization, such that one can again hope? If we can neither change our hopes nor simply continue on with the same hopes we had (in the same way we had them), what can we do? I argue that trivialization holds power only insofar as it disconnects one's own hopes from climate change. The experience of trivialization thrives on distinction: the seemingly-trivial hopes I have versus the properly important hopes I *should* have. In trivialization, people see the basic goods threatened in climate change as in competition with the goods they currently order their lives by: e.g. the hope for flute playing in competition with the hope for human survival. To recall Dellarobia from Chapter 4, one's hopes are considered "little," "meeting the bus on time…Getting the kids to eat supper, getting teeth brushed. No cavities the next time" and these hopes are in contrast with the grave possibilities of climate change and the potential "end of the world."[60]

If, however, trivialization thrives on disconnection and competition, then commonality and connection may be one way of combating it, in order to hope with respect to climate change. If one can connect one's already held hopes—one's already desired values—to the values and goods threatened by climate change, trivialization can be tempered. One needs to connect them in at least a couple different ways. First, one should make the connection between that which one has hoped for and its dependence upon goods threatened by climate change. So, the flute player should

[59] I discuss the ascetic here because she engages the problem of trivialization and moralization. Insofar as the blithe eschatologist does not see a problem for her hopes, she does not engage this problem in the same way. As such, I do not engage her here. The blithe eschatologist will be the main counterpoint in 'courageous hoping'.

[60] Kingsolver, *Flight Behavior*, 283.

emphasize to herself the way in which the meaningful practice of flute playing in fact deeply depends upon the stability of certain social systems, which in turn depends upon the avoidance of dramatic, society-destroying climate change. Hoping for flute playing should in fact nest within a hope for the continued survival of social systems and the human species. Coming to recognize this may overcome the disconnect between one's own desired values and the basic goods threatened in climate change.

That said, this connection alone does not combat the problem of trivialization because, while one's hope may be nested within a more general hope for survival, in being so nested, it may still be viewed as unimportant in light of that more general hope. One may still feel the threat of trivialization. In conjunction with seeing the dependencies of one's own values upon the goods threatened in climate change, one must also see the interrelationship between the values one hopes for and the goods threatened by climate change. Let us stay with the flute player example. Rather than seeing excellent flute playing as 'icing' on the foundation of human survival or social flourishing, one should consider the ways in which excellent flute playing is itself *part of* meaningful human, social survival. Flute playing is an art, an excellence that humans can achieve. It is a form of expression that can be a truth telling about the world and it is beautiful. These goods of flute playing are part of the human good, threatened by climate change. Rather than being trivial *in comparison with* the possibility of human survival *at all*, one can see flute playing itself as a part of (or at least as a way of expressing) what true human survival would look like.[61] Flute

[61] Of course, instruments go in and out of fashion. There are far fewer harpsichordists today than there were in 1650. But the general point with regards to music-making and artistic expression is, I believe, accurate. Additionally, for this person, flute-playing in particular *is* valued as part of the human good, which is itself threatened.

playing, then, would not be understood as merely nested within the hope for human survival, dependent upon the latter, but would nest within it as *itself* a component of that human survival.

If one can reframe, rather than replace, one's central hopes in these ways, then one's hope to become an excellent flute player need not be done away with for the sake of facing climate change, but instead can be reframed, transformed while remaining part of that which one values. One can hope to be an excellent flute player *in light of climate change's threats*. Similarly, Dellarobia can hope for meeting the bus on time, getting teeth brushed, no cavities the next time—in short, the mundane daily well-being of her children—as part of the human good threatened by climate change. Rather than little, these are, at their heart, important aspects of the human good. Rather than distancing oneself from climate change by seeing one's own life as trivial in light of it, one should existentially invest oneself.[62]

Of course, the *confidence* to hope in light of climate change is not determined alone by one's ability to see oneself as implicated in its threats. In fact, the ability to see oneself implicated most likely will lead to *less* confidence in one's hopes, given the recognition that the goods one hopes for are deeply threatened and given the wild uncertainties that attend our future. That is why this practice does not stand on its own, but, as we will see below in section 3b., needs to be developed in conjunction with courageous hopes.

Moreover, this practice, as I have described it here, is not a specifically Christian one. Connecting one's hopes to the basic goods threatened in climate change would be a practice that could help most people come to combat the trivialization of their hopes, without simple retreat into

[62] This is not to suggest that via 'connection,' one can undo all potential tragedy, moral failure, and potential loss. Even if one allows oneself to existentially invest in climate change and to see the connections between one's own hopes and the goods threatened in climate change, there may still exist conflicting goods that cannot be simultaneously affirmed, sought, or hoped for. In light of these conflicting goods, there may be moral failure as well as loss of important goods.

practical denial or unrealistically trying to transform one's whole existence. That said, I believe that there are particular Christian warrants for this practice.[63]

Namely, against the repentant's austerity, the Christian warrant for engaging in this practice of reframing one's hopes is grounded in our common, yet idiosyncratically expressed imago dei. As humans we simultaneously participate in a common imago dei that we share and that—if we look for it—we can see ourselves as connected to and nested within; there is a human good that we each can participate in hoping for. Yet, at the same time, that imago dei, *as imago dei*, is as David Kelsey describes it, varied, particular to oneself.[64] One is not called to simply replace one's own valued hopes with 'properly important hopes,' but is called to live out humanness in one's own particular configuration and with one's own particular values. As I wrote in Chapter 1, the goods of the world are teeming, just short of infinite, and in valuing we mark out some of those goods *as our own*, as particular and connected to our lives in meaningful ways. In light of this, facing climate change well means making the connections between one's own idiosyncratic way of being and those basic goods threatened. It will mean living out our *own* imago dei and relating our own imago dei to a broader, corporate human good.[65]

---

[63] I say practices here, recognizing that more work needs to be done to flesh out the contours and concrete make-up of these sort of practices. Given time and space constraints for this project, I will leave it for another project.

[64] I take from Kelsey the idea that there is no 'perfect' human ideal to which we should aspire, but instead a vast diversity of human persons, called to respond to God in their concrete diversity with different forms of life. See, for instance, "The features of the quotidian…make human persons too diverse to be subject to a single norm of human completeness that embraces every aspect of human personhood" (205). See as well his discussion of the practices into which we are born and find ourselves, and the vocational call to "be wise" in one's practices (193-199) and "the theocentric concept of human dignity proposed here justifies the ascription of absolute value to human beings on the grounds that God relates to them creatively and calls them to a certain vocation" (276). David Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology, Vol. 1* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

[65] As I mentioned at the beginning of this section, just as the problems facing us in climate change are not utterly idiosyncratic, so are these responses not unique, but can be seen to be important parts of a Christian life amidst global problems and uncertainties.

3.a.ii. Moralization and Hoping

Yet, one does not solely face the threat of trivialization in climate change's gravity. In addition, one faces the moralization of one's hopes. Previously permissible hopes suddenly become 'moralized,' seemingly impermissible given the systemic, grave nature of the problem. As with trivialization, this moralization stretches wide—one's valued desires now seem implicated in a system that is morally unjust. From one's hope to regularly visit far-flung family members (by airplane) to one's hopes to make money in one's retirement account (while invested in oil companies), these hopes that had seemed adiaphora now seem problematized in their relationship with the evils of perpetuation and participation in an economy of heavy carbon dioxide use.[66]

Unlike trivialization, however, responding to moralization cannot be a matter of connecting one's hopes to the basic goods threatened in climate change, because, in moralization, that which is valued is not simply seen to be *over*valued but to be bad, impermissible. Additionally, then, we need a way of hoping in light of and despite extensive complicity.

Again, the repentant ascetic would simply claim that this experience of moralization should provide motive for replacement of one's hopes with properly moral hopes. One should replace the now-impermissible hopes with the properly moral hopes for the true goods threatened by climate change. However, I argue this is insufficient as a Christian response, precisely because it misunderstands the nature of human sin.[67] We humans are not in a position to simply reform ourselves out of all hopes that have impermissible elements, because a) our own sinfulness is more

[66] As I emphasized in the last chapter, neither the problem of trivialization nor the problem of moralization are idiosyncratic to our climate change situation. As such, there are obvious comparisons to be made. Imagine a slaveholder's hopes or a capitalist's, for instance.

[67] This insufficiency is in addition to the insufficiencies noted above regarding the ascetic's position (see section 1 of this chapter). Namely, that such a position is motivationally insufficient and does not recognize the ways in which people's hopes are ambiguous rather than simply 'bad.' Basically, the problem here with the repentant ascetic is that she is pelagian.

intransigent than that and b) the moral demand is beyond our (fallen) capacity to fulfill in this situation. The systemic nature of the problem of climate change means that much of our lives are bound up with evils perpetuated and exacerbated. We live in systems that further the problem, and our daily lives are bound up with those systems. Insofar as our hopes arise from and are dependent upon those systems, they are deeply complicit. And, by and large, they do so arise from these systems.[68]

Again, unlike trivialization, the experience of moralization should not be tempered through a reinterpretation of one's hopes to connect them more explicitly to the goods threatened in climate change. The problem of moralization runs deeper than that, to basic truths about our moral and existential situation: we are embedded in sinful systems not (entirely) of our own making and yet we are also in some way responsible for them and sullied by them. To reframe our hopes such that we believe them to not be moralized or, alternatively, to turn away from the problem of moralization altogether, would simply be to turn to practical denial. And so, the problem of paralysis continues to threaten. In light of the moralization of your hopes, what can you hope for that would still be properly *your* hopes, rooted in your desires and values? How might we respond?

For Christians, I suggest that this experience of moralized paralysis of one's hopes can be seen as itself an (aspect of the) experience of the Law and the response of the 'terrorized conscience.'[69] In moralization, we confront a demand of righteousness of our hopes beyond our capacity to fulfill and, in response to that moralization, we respond with terror, either becoming

[68] Not *all* of any given individual's hopes are complicit—for instance, one's explicitly moral hopes may well not be (the hope for the continuation of the human species, for instance). Moreover, some people may be able to extricate themselves, although this may always be an ideal rather than an accomplished fact. But for most, the hopes that are more closely related to one's own life and one's own projects are most likely entwined with systems that perpetuate and exacerbate suffering.

[69] See, for example, Martin Luther, *Lectures on Galatians 1535 Chapters 1-4,* ed. Jaroslav Pelikan, vol. 26 of *Luther's Works*, American Edition (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965), 4-5, 26-27.

paralytic—not knowing how to so much as respond—or turning to practical denial, thus avoiding the experience of the demand.[70] Consider one college student's description of her moral situation, "I feel like that guilt can be really overwhelming…It's like we can maybe cut down on this or that, but you're still going to eco-hell…."[71] The guilt is overwhelming, because the moral demand outstrips what one can accomplish, "cut[ting] down on this or that." The terror of (eco)hell awaits.

In this light, we can see that Christians in fact have particularly suitable resources to deal with this problem. Namely, Christianity specifically focuses on reconciling the sinner in order to overcome cycles of alienation and sinfulness. Renewed attention to justification can then respond to the problem faced in moralization. In other words, for Christians, I suggest we make use of a Lutheran understanding of sin and justification; one can see moralization as (potentially) a theological use of the Law[72] and that living 'justified' can be one way of hoping amidst complicity.

One can then see the repentant ascetic as living according to 'works righteousness,' because she believes she can accomplish her own moral perfection through the reformation of her hopes. In this quest for perfection, one is perpetually frustrated and one remains alienated from oneself and God—always striving to be and never actually being a whole human person, caught up in the striving itself, rather than attentive to the world around one or to God. Moreover, in moments of honesty, when the possibility of attaining such perfection is seen to be beyond one's

[70] See Willa Swenson-Lengyel, "Moral Paralysis and Practical Denial: Environmental Ethics in Light of Human Failure," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 37:2 (Fall 2017), especially 179-183, for further discussion of paralysis and denial and their relationship to a Lutheran account of works righteousness and the terrorized conscience.

[71] Norgaard, *Living in Denial*, 195.

[72] I say potentially here because it seems only possible, not necessary, that the experience of moralization can bring one to a place where one can accept justification. See, for further discussion, Swenson-Lengyel, "Moral Paralysis," 178.

capacity to fulfill, the terror of paralysis threatens—all hopes seem moralized and one's life seems entrenched in sin.[73]

That experience of moralization, however, can potentially bring one to a place where one recognizes that one cannot accomplish all that the Law requires, into which Jesus' saving work, that justifies one despite one's inability, can enter. In justification, one can be freed from this striving and this paralysis because one's relationship with God (and ultimately, with the self) has been made just, by Jesus' redeeming work.[74] In being named just, one can be freed from the paralysis that is rooted in the terror of moralization, because both the overwhelming guilt and the need for perfectly morally hopes are gone. In their place emerge thankfulness for that justification and freedom to hope and live with loving other-regard emerge.[75]

As such, living and hoping justified does not mean a simple re-ordaining of one's previously held hopes as again adiaphora. Rather, it is the opportunity to again hope as best one can, but oriented by love of God and love of neighbor. No longer must one be paralyzed in the striving for perfection (nor need one turn away to denial). Instead, one can hope lovingly in the here and now, with the resources available to one. Living in the systems we have been born in, we

[73] See Luther, "Galatians," 4-12.

[74] I do not have the space or time here to work out a theory of redemption. I think various theories of redemption could be compatible with this account of justification and its practical effects.

[75] One might question whether this too is a psychologically implausible account of transformation, similar to that demand of the repentant ascetic which I critiqued above (due to the ascetic's demand that we simply disavow all hopes driving denial). Of course, both myself and the ascetic could use the following theological argument: due to redemption, justification, and/or sanctification, we are now *able* by God's grace to transform in these ways. As such, further developing my account of redemption *alone* would not answer the criticism about plausibility. That said, in brief for now, I believe my account to be more psychologically and theologically responsible, for the following reasons: a) it admits of and includes as part of the life of faith moral failure, rather than demanding perfection, b) it acknowledges the accretion of intractable systemic sin, that one cannot easily extricate oneself from within, and c) it in fact *has* a psychological account of the human person—i.e. the experience of the terrorized conscience in the face of the Law and the experience of renewed relationship with God, through justification in Christ, and as such, tries to account for the subjective experience of sin and the experience of forgiveness and the freedom it can engender. Accounts like the repentant ascetic seem to focus less on such psychological experiences and more on moral demand.

must hope and live as best we can, trying to love, but not paralyzed by the complicity that plagues our lives.[76] Our hopes then can be properly moderated, recognizing our sinful complicity and yet still hoping for the goods we value as best we can.[77]

3.a.iii. Vocational Reclamation of Hopes

In this section on vocational hopes, I have argued that a) trivialization can be combated through existential involvement, where one connects one's idiosyncratically held hopes to the basic goods threatened in climate change, seeing how one's values in fact participate in and are vulnerable to those threatened goods and that b) moralization can be responded to through reflection on our state as justified actors and hopers, called to freely and lovingly hope, overcoming the paralysis associated with the need to hope in morally perfect ways. Combined, I want to suggest that this can be seen as a vocational reclamation of hopes.

By vocation, I mean that call to certain pursuits, certain ways of life, discerned in that particular meeting point between one's idiosyncratic desires, gifts, and values, and God's call to love the neighbor, made possible through the freedom given in justification. Against trivialization, we discern and affirm our idiosyncratic hopes – our desires, gifts, and values—and against moralization, we reflect on and affirm the freedom found in justification: in the opportunity for loving and good hopes, despite our complicity. Bringing these two together, we can see an answer to the pressures to our contentful hopes to be the vocational rendering of our hopes. The meeting of one's peculiar values with the call to love the neighbor.

---

[76] This does not, of course, entail simple acquiescence to those systems. They should be changed when possible, insofar as they are evil.

[77] Again, as with overcoming trivialization, the response suggested here—of hoping in light of justification—would most likely benefit from specific practices that a) encourage recognition of God's justification, b) reflect on love of God, and c) express love of neighbor. Given constraints to this project, these will need to be developed elsewhere.

For instance, the flutist's hopes, rendered vocationally in light of climate change, would be hopes for flute-playing excellence held explicitly in light of the threats of climate change to it, as part of the human good (thus no longer deemed trivial), and these hopes would be held for the sake of her neighbors' goods, as much as her own (thus no longer paralyzed by moralization). This might mean hopes focused on the joy listeners can get from hearing excellent flute playing, and consequent hope for the possibility of that joy continuing into the future, despite potential threats to social systems. Or, it might mean hopes for the continued art and joy of playing into a climate changing future, and consequently more mediate hopes like being a good teacher of many young students, as a way of rendering the continuation of the art a genuine possibility. Similarly, Dellarobia's hopes, vocationally rendered, would not necessarily change in substance (although they may), but in orientation. She would hope for her children's wellbeing, no longer as a 'little' hope, but as integral part of a hope for the wellbeing of humans into the future. She would also, hoping justified, orient those hopes toward concrete goods of others' children and how those goods too may be threatened by climate change.[78]

I have mainly presented this in individual terms—one is called to reorient and vocationally reclaim one's own hopes. There is an inescapably individual aspect of this: the existential nature of the response does demand that it is work that one must do for oneself; another cannot do it *for* you. That said, it is work that is also communal—just as in lament, in vocational reclamation,

[78] One could view my account of vocation here as a way of integrating value and duty. In other words, that which one desires and values is not simply at odds with that which one is obligated to do. The moral demand does not simply trump all other considerations in life. Rather, one is called to integrate the that demand with one's values in a way specific to your being-in-the-world. This is, of course, in contradistinction from the repentant ascetic, who sees proper human life as strictly adhering to specific moral contours.

together we can reflect on and connect our various goods to the threatened goods of climate change and together we can consider what it would look like to hope given our justification.[79]

Recall, however, that even with the vocational reclamation of hopes, lament must remain: over the threat of climate change, for its potential for undermining our hopes and hoping, for God's seeming absence in our suffering, and for the hopes lost due to climate change. Without this lament, one's hopes may easily fall back into motives for denial. For, one's hopes remain truthful in light of climate change only insofar as they remain overtly hoped for under the aspect of the threats we face. In turn, these threats remain before our eyes only insofar as we have a way of expressing them *as* threats and have a vocabulary and grammar to do so, which I have suggested lament is particularly suited for. The threats remain, and thus lament remains, even as we find ways of living and hoping amidst them.

Even with lament remaining, however, the vocational reclamation of hopes does not suffice as a response to climate change. This is because the uncertainties of climate change render problematic our capacities to both conceptualize possibility and stand on any given hope. Whether or not the content of our valued desires can be vocationally reclaimed, the question remains: will we have the ability or the courage to hope for those valued desires? Will we be able to see them as possible and stand on that possibility in hope? As such, we need to also investigate how we might hope courageously in light of climate change.

3.b. Courage and the Capacity of Hoping

In Chapter Two's section about "standing on" hopes, I emphasized the need for "something like courage" in order for us to move from holding a valued desire as possible and actually *hoping*

[79] Certainly, God may be working in persons, individually and communally, to effect such vocational reclamation.

for that valued desire. Here, I will suggest that Christians ought to develop ways of emphasizing this aspect of hoping and so learn to hope courageously. Through doing so, we may find ourselves able to hope for meaningful goods despite the wild uncertainties that accompany climate change. To make this argument, I will first focus on what it might mean to learn to hope while having less confidence in our understanding of uncertain possibility. Then, I will present a particular Christian warrant for so hoping despite less confidence in our understandings of uncertain possibility, that can undergird our move from paralysis to hope.

3.b.i. Learning to Hope on Less

So, how can we hope on less? First, it would behoove us to recall the argument from Chapter 4 regarding wild uncertainties. The future under conditions of climate change pressures our capacity to hope, because of its opacity, totality, and flux. Namely, it is opaque to us, insofar as we are unable to predict the contours of the future with much specificity; it presents as totally different, insofar as the basic systems altered via climate change in turn affect all aspects of life; and the world will continue to be in flux, as the extended atmospheric lifetime of the greenhouse gases ensure continued changes to the world's systems over the next several centuries. These characteristics pressure our capacity to predict uncertainty and possibility (and consequently hope) in three ways: 1) all three characteristics relativize our past experiences as grounds for prediction, and the problem of flux makes this relativizing ongoing rather than temporary; 2) all three make most probabilistic predictions of the future not possible; and 3) consequently concretely imagining human life (like one's own) and human goods under such opaque and total differences is difficult.[80]

[80] Jonathan Lear sees this last problem as particularly significant when thinking about how to live well through drastic cultural change. See *Radical Hope*. See, as well, below for further discussion of my account and its relationship to Lear's.

These pressures to hoping are particularly problematic to those individuals, like myself, who are used to relative security and tame uncertainties guiding and organizing their lives. It is peculiarly acute for those of us for whom past experience has, in general, proved successful as a guide in hoping and expecting; for those of us for whom one's sense of the possible has been fairly accurate over time; and for those of us who have had stable social systems, within which models of human living have also remained relatively steady. These characteristics of privileged hopers have made them prone to paralysis and practical denial in the face of climate change.[81]

However, while these uncertainties pressure our capacity to hope, they are not inevitably completely undermining, because hope is not necessarily dependent upon probability estimation or past experience alone. To understand why this would be the case, let us recall my analysis of hope from Chapter 2. Hope obtains when one desires something one deems good, valuable, and not immoral; one considers it to be possible, but uncertain; and one deems its possibility and valuableness 'good enough to stand on;' such that one is emotionally vulnerable to it and engages in hope-related activities with respect to it. I argued there that these hopes arise out of one's conception of the world, that includes senses of what is possible and what is certain, themselves arising from various experiences and authorities one uses to make sense of one's world.

There, I further argued that what allows one to treat any given valued desire as 'good enough to stand on,' and thus what allows one to invest oneself in it, cannot itself be governed by a universal or general rule. Whether or not the other conditions obtain for hoping, one's ability to stand on the hope cannot simply be determined *by* the other conditions obtaining. Two people in the same situation with regard to a specific desired value (it is equally important to them and they consider it to be equally possible for both of them) may not have the same reaction: one may hope

[81] That said, this problem need not be identified solely as a 'privileged' problem. See Chapter 4.

and the other not. What allows one to hope and the other not cannot be determined by a rule, but instead will inevitably vary.[82]

This variability means that there is an inescapable existential, willful quality to hope: it is always the individual who does it, rather than an automatic response to certain conditions obtaining. That said, another way of thinking about this variability, when considering people's differences within a larger social and developmental context, is to consider that there are inevitably different *forms* of hoping or, in other words, hoping is open to different habituations.[83] Consider what I emphasized above regarding privileged hopers: that their modes of hoping are particularly susceptible to the threats of climate change. Belonging to different communities, being in varying locations, and having different experiences will all result in different ways of treating one's own values and the uncertain possibilities that confront one.

This means that while our particular (privileged) *form* of hoping is threatened by the wild uncertainties of climate change, hoping itself may be more resilient than we initially think. In other words, there can be other forms of hoping that do not rely in the same way upon the security and the stability we are currently used to. Human hoping does not have to have strong understandings of probabilities; human hoping need not be based solely in the past experiences of possibility one has had. Instead, given my definition, we need only value something, desire it, see it as (in some way) possible, and be able to 'stand on' that possibility and that value—saying, even so, I hope—in order to be hoping.

---

[82] In Chapter 1, I identified various factors that may contribute to these differences: psychological differences, religious differences, differences in one's practical ends, character differences. I emphasized there that while people give reasons for what allows them to hope, no one reason determines why every given individual does or does not hope.

[83] Some of which some people may deem virtuous. See Chapter 3, Section 2c. As a note, insofar as hope is a virtue, I believe that it cuts through the intellectual virtue and moral virtue distinction. Hope constitutively includes cognition, as well as volition.

This in turn suggests that we need to learn a new form of hoping, one where we can 'hope on less.' We need a form of hoping that allows us to hope on less with regards to uncertain possibilities: we need to learn to hope even when the uncertainties of climate change render probability determination unattainable, past experience less helpful, and the contours of future human life less clear. I argue, more particularly, that this new form of hope will need to have several concrete characteristics.

First, the form of hope we need to develop should particularly emphasize the valuableness of the desire as a ground for standing on the hope. As I just reintroduced, standing on a given hope is based on seeing that hope as valuableness and possibility as 'good enough' for oneself. I am suggesting that learning to focus more on valuableness, rather than possibility, may be one way of pushing back against wild uncertainty's pressure to one's capacity to hope. If the desire is *valuable* enough to be worth risking one's emotional vulnerability, time, and energy upon, might that desire still be worth hoping for even if the possibility of it obtaining is hard to decipher? I am suggesting that once vocationally reclaimed, one's valued desires are central enough, valuable enough, to be 'worth the risk' of hoping.

Second, when one does consider possibility, I suggest that one should try to stand on possibilities arising from authority, rather than experience, as ground for hoping. In other words, I wrote above that our senses of the possible and certain arise from experiences we have had, in conjunction with trusted authorities that tell us about the world. In order for hope to be successful in a changing world, we must ground it in possibilities *less* rooted in past experience, given that past experience's relativization. Instead, hopes must be rooted in that which is potentially to come,

as presented in broad strokes by the authority of the climate sciences, granting that these predictions are mostly non-probabilistic.[84]

Third, and lastly, in order to successfully take on these two preceding characteristics, this new form of hope needs to be particularly courageous, allowing one to stand on that which is valuable, but merely possible (rather than probable). With these characteristics, this form of hoping will then be able to 'meet up' with the contents of hope discussed in the previous section—one's vocationally reclaimed hopes, focused on the good of human being and loving the neighbor, can be courageously taken up despite the wild uncertainties of the future.[85]

That said, I have said nothing about what might allow for such a form of hope to develop. Alone, all I have presented are some aspirational qualities of our hope, to which one might simply reply, 'yes, but I am still having difficulty a) emphasizing valuableness over probability, b) emphasizing authority over experience, and so c) courageously hoping.' So, what would so allow us to transform our form of hope in this way? It is to this grounding I turn now.

3.b.ii. Lament, the Cross, and Hope

What would allow Christians to have the courage necessary and the discernment needed in order to hope courageously, despite the opacity, totality, and flux of the future under climate change? What will allow us to 'hope on less'? Here, I will suggest that for Christians, the grounding of such courageous hope may be found either in the experience of God's providence amidst lament and/or in the recognition that God is present even in forsakenness and absence, in the person of Jesus.

---

[84] Below, it will become clear that as a Christian, one should hope on the authority of God's hidden providence amidst forsakenness as well.

[85] Again, as with vocational hoping, my account of courageous hoping would benefit from a more detailed, concrete account of practices that would help one to develop this form of hoping, both individually and in communities. Given space and time constraints, this will need to wait for a later project.

Note again that this argument is in contradistinction from the blithe eschatologist who claims that confident hopes for the eschaton should provide the basis for the Christian agent today. As a reminder, in response to the problems facing us in climate change, the blithe eschatologist suggests confidence in the eschatological promises of God and a turn away from the uncertainties that plague us in climate change. I claimed above that this can end up looking a lot like practical denial, if such confident assurance allows one to keep living as if the world is not affected either by one's lifestyle or by rising greenhouse gas levels. Moreover, such a turn to eschatology does not sufficiently help us both to deal with the uncertainties that face us today or to have concrete historical hopes in response to those uncertainties, because the eschaton is that which precisely overcomes the limits and problems facing us today.

Over the course of this chapter, I have suggested instead that Christians should immerse themselves in the problems and uncertainties facing us in climate change and respond with lament over these threats and losses facing us. Here, I want to suggest that out of this experience of immersion and lament, there are two possible (related) Christian responses that are both theologically warranted and practically possible, and that could ground a courageous form of hope. These are, as I wrote above, a response grounded in an experience of God's presence in lament and/or a recognition of God's presence in the midst of forsakenness.

First, let us examine what it might mean to experience God's presence within lament and how that might ground courageous hope. I emphasized in the section on lament that such lament to God often ends in praise. Traditionally, this 'end in praise' is considered to be rooted in the 'end of crisis.' While this crisis could be understood as material (the threats we are facing in climate change averted), likely it often is mean to be understood as a crisis of God's absence, such that the praise is an answer to God's renewed presence in one's life, whether the material threats are

obviously resolved or not. I had said in that earlier section that such an end in praise cannot be determined prior to the lament itself; that lament itself demands we not script the conclusion. That said, the prevalence of such ending in praise, the long tradition of renewed experience of God's presence while in the depths of lament, does suggest that such a response of praise may well happen.

Consider, for instance, Paul Tillich's description of revelation itself. First, he emphasizes that an "abyss" can confront one in one's life, of one's potential non-being. This abyss shocks one with the possibility of nothingness, with one's own utter unnecessariness, with one's own finitude. However, Tillich points to this experience as one side of a two-sided coin: that from within that threat, a grounding can come, an experience of some-'thing' "conquering non-being," or, in other words, a revelation of God's presence despite the threat of non-being. Only with this experience of abyss can one have the experience of God's presence. They go together. As he writes, "Without the 'I am undone' of Isaiah in his vocational vision, God cannot be experienced (Isa. 6:5). Without the 'dark night of the soul,' the mystic cannot experience the mystery of the ground."[86] I am suggesting that something similar may occur in lament over the threats to our hopes and the absence of God. God may emerge from the midst of that lament and from forsakenness may come presence.

This is not a blithe eschatological response, insofar as, with Tillich, I am suggesting that the 'I am undone' is a necessary component of the mystery of God's presence, at least in situations where lament is called for. One encounters God not (solely) in triumphant assurance of fulfillment, but in broken abandonment. It is only in facing the realities of the world that one finds the reality

[86] Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Vol. 1*, 110.

of God.[87] As such, this response does not encourage turning away from the uncertainties of the world and the threats found therein. Instead, facing them in all their threats and losses, one may find God present amidst them. In other words, one may have a renewed hope for God's providence working amongst and with these uncertainties and possibilities, and despite these threats and losses.

As such, this (potential) experience of God's presence amidst and through lament may then give one the courage to stand on the merely possible and that which is evaluatively important. One may feel able to a) emphasize the valuableness of their hopes as grounds to hope, over probability and b) emphasize possibility arising from authority rather than past experience, such that one can c) courageously hope. Why? With a renewed experience of God *with us and guiding us* while the threats and uncertainties face us, the opacity, totality, and flux of our future may no longer seem to completely undermine the potential for possibility.[88] One can perhaps see, amidst the broad-strokes possibilities suggested by the climate sciences, the simultaneous possibility of God too yet working. The possibilities rooted in authority may be unclear, wild, but may no longer be utterly unbounded. Instead, they may still be ultimately ordered to some real good by God. Thus, despite the future being radically different from our past experience and difficult to predict, with God's

[87] For a different account of how to hope amidst tragedy, Albert Nolan, in a book for popular audience entitled *Hope in an Age of Despair* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009), writes, "We recognize the darkness and apparent hopelessness of the present situation and put all our trust in God. Then, gradually, as our eyes adjust to the darkness of despair, we begin to see the emerging shapes or outlines of God's great and mysterious work" (10). Rather than lament to God, we trust God, and through that trust, learn to see anew God's presence amidst tragedy. He believes that to get out of despair demands "a positive attitude of gratefulness" (30), whereas I suggest that despair needs to be faced head on in order to be appropriately addressed.

[88] See, for a similar position, Brueggemann, *Reality, Grief, Hope*, where he writes, "In the midst of near-despair, the prophetic task is to articulate hope, the prospect of fresh historical possibility assured by God's good governance of the future" (119). He is particularly interested in the role of the prophet in creating the conditions for people to so experience God as *with us*, which I take to be an important investigation, although not one I have space to in engage here.

providence again experienced, one may feel courageous enough to hope for those good human values vocationally reclaimed, even without confidence in probability.

However, because I want to say adamantly that lament does not necessarily end in such an experience of God's presence (many people do not end their laments in praise), I also want to argue that this (hopefully) is not the only ground for courage. Additionally, then, I want to suggest that the *experience* of God's presence need not be a basis for courage amidst lament. Instead, as Christians, even without that experience, we can look to Jesus' life to see and know of God's presence within forsakenness. God is not (at least solely) a God of triumphant eschaton or even a God of comforting presence, but is a God that overcomes alienation by making such alienation itself known, intimate to, internal to God.

In other words, the claims from above about finding God amidst lament can be even further radicalized. It is not merely that one may subjectively *find* God present in lament and have a consequent renewed hope in God's providence; one may not. And yet, I suggest that we can try to find courage not solely in the felt presence of God; instead, we can build a courageous hope *amidst* forsakenness, uncertainty, and threats. Christians can do this on the grounds that God has taken such forsakenness into God's very self in the person of Jesus as the Christ. God's presence may not always feel *like* presence, like grounding, and that presence may only be awaited, hoped for itself. As Pamela McCarroll writes, "We cannot look to the cross and easily see any sign of hope worth waiting for. However, it is when we are at the end of such 'easy hope' that we are called to wait…Hidden beneath the suffering of the cross is the presence of God. We wait upon such

revealing."[89] Even in God's absence and our lament, there can be grounds for hope. Amidst God's absence and our lament, we can turn to Jesus' presence with us in our forsakenness. [90]

This is, then, not a triumphant or confident hope for a coming reign of God. Instead, it is a quiet courage grounded in a claim that even death, even the very end of the human story, can be incorporated into God. Like the presence of God experienced with and through lament, it too is consequently a courage that can ground hopes for human good, despite the wild uncertainties of the future. It is a hope that God is here and will be here, even when our losses and our threatened-

[89] Pamela McCarroll, *Waiting at the Foot of the Cross: Toward a theology of hope for today* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014), 199. McCarroll develops an account of hope that comes out of a theology of the cross and, as such, my account shares some elements with her own. However, while I emphasize the need to give up 'precise probabilities' to favor evaluation and authority, in order to hope courageously, she has the more radical suggestion of giving up all "outcome orientation" in one's hopes, and to see hope properly "as waiting" (9). This is tied to a critique of our current culture that I find fairly uncharitable and overly caricatured (see 1-23). I do not think that she properly recognizes hope's intrinsic tie to human agency, and so she condemns far too brusquely the use of hope in one's projects and goals. Moreover, she elides outcome-oriented hope with hope that is essentially "mastery" and "will to power" (97). That said, I think her emphasis on the importance of overcoming a theology of glory to make proper sense of Christian hope is important. Moreover, aspects of her account of hope are worthwhile to engage, insofar as she is trying to suggest we need to develop a form of hope that focuses less on our own abilities to accomplish goals, especially given the climate crisis.

[90] My argument here is close to Matthew Boulton's. Boulton claims that lament is a true negation of God (of Glory), a judgment of the lack of God's presence, justice, and promise in times of need. He claims that in lament, one is effectively choosing God's promise over the God one experiences now (in absence), and one is saying No! to one's current situation. Boulton then suggests that the praise that often ends such laments in the Bible is not *solely* the subjective experience of God's renewed presence, but is *also* eschatological pronouncement. For instance, in Psalm 22, the speaker "vows" to praise, which is a shift already from the lament—a response to some change in relation to God—and yet this is also a promise to praise *when God has delivered*, an eschatological postponement. Boulton wants to suggest that the vow to praise itself *is* divine deliverance, made possible by God, but it is also a not-yet, and as such, it is not in opposition to the lament, but is all of a piece. As Andre LaCocque and Paul Ricoeur put it, "Praise remains plea until the end" (Boulton, 65, quoted). God makes Godself know within and amidst threat, rather than in clear deliverance. Boulton further argues that Jesus' taking up of Psalm 22 in his death suggests that we are to read the Passion in a similar light: "the paradigmatic site of divine hiddenness and revelation, absence and presence, corresponds to Good Friday's cross; and likewise, the psalmist's eschatological mode of praise…also illumines the shape and character of Easter's 'hallelujah'…into an eschatological act" (74). With Boulton, I want to affirm that lament is a true negation of God, a questioning of God's basic trustworthiness, and that praise is not necessarily simply an overcoming of the lament, or an unambiguous renewed experience of God. I however, am less interested in the eschatological element. Rather than suggesting that we eschatologically render our praise of God, I turn to providence and to the possibility of hidden presence and hidden working amidst forsakenness. I do this because of my worries about eschatology sketched above in section 1.

ness feels like the end of the story. All we may experience is the cross; and yet we can know that the cross is not ultimately forsaken, not ultimately outside the providence of God.[91]

As such, this courage is not dependent upon any subjective confidence in God's presence. Similarly, it is not dependent upon one's capacity to believe any particular eschatological claims.[92] Instead, it is hope against hope: clinging to one's vocationally reclaimed hopes and the possibility that they may yet come about, given God's providence; yet, one does so despite that providence's darkness and seeming absence. It is therefore a true hope against hope, especially for those of us not yet fully courageous in our hoping, for those of us who are still privileged hopers inclined to practical denial and paralysis. It is a hope grounded not on estimations of possibility that we have inherent confidence in; we do not have such confidence—the wild uncertainties of the future have stripped us of that. And yet, we can ground our courage in Jesus' own simultaneous forsakenness and beloved-ness, despite that lack of confidence.

In either form—courage grounded in the experienced presence of God coming out of lament or courage arising from clinging to God's hidden presence amidst forsakenness—this courage is not built on a turning away from threats and uncertainties to confident expectation.[93] It

---

[91] I am relatively agnostic about what gives one the power to so cling to the hidden providence of God, through meditation on the cross. Most would name this power to so cling as itself a divine gift (see, for example, Boulton, 69) and that is fine. However, I am always a bit wary of coming down on this question, insofar as such positions allow for the possibility of claiming that those who are not able to so cling are not loved by God or are not worthy of God's presence.

[92] Christian eschatology, as Ernst Conradie helpfully explains, responds to three human predicaments: of sin, of finitude in time (mortality), and finitude in space (limitations of knowledge and power) (Conradie, *Hope for the Earth: Vistas on a new century* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005), 19). My point here is that, insofar as any given Christian may struggle to believe in the overcoming of finitude in time or space in a new creation, he may struggle with traditional Christian eschatological claims. I am suggesting that by turning to providence and possible (partial) fulfillment in history, one avoids having to endorse or stake his hopes on eschatological content.

[93] Jonathan Lear too has an account of courage and hope in light of drastic change, although we differ in our account of the problem courage deals with. *Radical Hope* tackles the question of how one lives well through cultural devastation. He asks the question, how might one live a meaningful, ethical life when the cultural context that gave one's life meaning is undermined? Using as an example the devastation of the Crow nation at the hands of United States' western expansion and imperialism, he investigates how one might come to still live *as Crow* despite the fact that the cultural context that gave meaning to "living as Crow" was lost. He suggests that Plenty Coup, their leader

is instead found by dwelling amidst and living with the threats we face. It is a courage grounded in a hope for God's (hidden) providence here, in this world.[94]

4. Conclusion: Vocational, Courageous Hope and Climate Change

In this dissertation, I argued that there is a widespread tendency to remain inactive in response to climate change because of pressures to our agency, and more particularly, pressures to our capacity to make meaningful sense of the uncertainties of our world via hoping. In order to explicate this claim, in Chapters 2 and 3, I unpacked the contours of human hoping, in order to both clarify hope's makeup and to show how it undergirds human agency. In Chapter 4, I argued that hope is pressured due to characteristics of climate change predictions: a) the opacity, totality, and flux of the future, combined with b) the gravity and breadth of the predictions on offer. Namely, it becomes challenging to understand *what* to hope for, given evaluative pressures and *how* to hope, given cognitive pressures. These pressures to hope tend to result either in paralytic

---

at the time, was able to live well because he lived with "radical hope," or hope that "is directed toward a future goodness that transcends the current ability to understand what it is" (103). This form of hope comes out of a virtue of courage that is "thinned out" of its thick cultural content to the simple ability to "face up to reality," and, in times of extreme cultural change, "the reality a courageous person has to face up to is that one has to face up to reality in new ways" (119) and the ability to be a good risk taker in light of that new reality (123). The risks at times of cultural devastation include "loss of concepts" or basic forms for understanding one's own life and action (123), such that radical hope is a form of courage that, as written above, hopes for goods not yet conceptually understandable.

Both Byron Williston and Alan Thompson take up Lear's account of radical hope and apply it to climate change, suggesting in slightly different ways that we need to hope radically to flourish in the future, despite not knowing what that will look like, as our consumerist, oil-based culture is undone by climate change. See Williston, "Climate Change and Radical Hope" and Thompson, "Radical Hope for Living Well in a Warmer World."

My account of the relationship between courage and hope is slightly different. I argue here that the courage we need is due to the extreme continued uncertainty of our future, more than loss of cultural concepts. In fact, I am suggesting that one *can* retain one's meaningful values through vocational reclamation of one's hopes, such that one need not entirely 'thin out' one's account of virtue and value. If we are able to vocationally reclaim the content of our hopes, the problem that courage and hope deals with is that of deep uncertainty—the difficulty of knowing what is *possible*.

[94] I know that I have not discussed at great length the second relationship between hope and morality, namely, the importance of contentful moral hopes to sustain us when faced with skepticism, fallibility, evil, and failure. This is primarily because I do not see climate change as pressuring this relationship to any great or necessary extent. That said, I do believe that one's courageous hope grounded in a commitment to God's (hidden) providence may allow one to better sustain one's moral hopes, despite the threats of skepticism, fallibility, evil, and failure.

inactivity in response to climate change *or* in practical denial (the tendency to turn away from the problem of climate change in order to retain one's bearings and one's hopes). I concluded the fourth chapter suggesting that finding ways to hope in response to climate change, in order to overcome this paralysis and practical denial is an important part of dealing with climate change inaction.

In this chapter, I suggested that for Christians, lament of our threatened and lost hopes and hoping can help us to face climate change's uncertainty, gravity, and systemic nature. Through such lament, we may be able to respond to the practical denial that threatens inattention to the problem. I then suggested that we can learn to vocationally reclaim our contentful hopes in order to push back at the trivialization and moralization of our hopes. One can connect one's valued hopes to the goods threatened in climate change. Moreover, one can recognize in justification that one is freed to hope as best one can, with love of God and neighbor orienting one, together combining to form vocationally reoriented hopes in light of climate change. Combined with this vocational reclamation, I have argued that one can claim these hopes courageously, despite wild uncertainties, through clinging to the possibility of God's providence guiding us, even amidst forsakenness and loss.

Through these, I suggest that we can push back at the paralysis that threatens our hopes and our agency in climate change. We can avoid the paralysis that comes from not knowing *what* to hope for, given trivialization and moralization. And, we can avoid the paralysis that comes from not knowing *how* to hope, given the wild uncertainties of our future. Instead, we face the changed and changing future with courage that the good is in some way possible and that *our* good is an important part of that wider good.

In so doing, we will again be able to map our lives according to hopes for the future. We will be able to orient our lives and values in meaningful relation to the uncertainties that surround us. Consequently, we will not be undone by those uncertainties, and will be in a position to act and live well in explicit response to climate change. Recall, however, that there are limits to this claim. Hoping is an important *precondition* to the possibility of good action. In order to act, we must be able to relate ourselves to the uncertainties around us and hope plays a crucial role in that relating. Neither action nor good action, however, is necessitated by our hopes. Appropriate action does not ineluctably follow from good hope. As such, while threats to our hopes and pressure to our ability to hope do make sense of inaction in response to climate change, learning again to hope anew does not itself ensure that we have 'fixed' the problem of inaction. It is a crucial step in the path toward appropriate response, but will require further ethical and pragmatic reflection.

Additionally, it is important to remember that lament remains an important part of adequate response to climate change, even in the midst of vocational and courageous hoping. When we focus on vocational hopes, lament remains, precisely because these hopes are reclaimed *as* they are threatened. They are urgent and central because they have been made tenuous. In that tenuousness, lament still serves an important purpose. It keeps their *threatened* goodness before our eyes, as well as our sinful contribution to their threatenedness. Lamenting our threatened hopes keeps us honest about the character of the goods we hope for today, helping to prevent the return to comfortable practical denial. Similarly, when we focus on courage and hope, lament must also remain. Lament remains because the providence of God that so grounds our courage, that takes the cross into God's own self, is not a providence of triumph, of clear and obvious goods obtained and evils vanquished. Our renewed courage to hope is not one that *overcomes* lament, but rather sits with it. The providence that grounds the courage is at best hidden, and our world continues to

be crucified. As such, the lament to God for that crucifixion and that hiddenness will remain.[95] Even as we affirm that God is present in forsakenness, we lament the forsakenness itself and ask still of God, why? Thus, lament and courageous, vocational hope remain twinned, dual responses to the threats that face our hopes in climate change.

[95] The lament to God is therefore authorized by a commitment to God's providence and presence amidst forsakenness, asking of God what God's providence is in light of threats and losses and asking why forsakenness remains.

EPILOGUE

To conclude, I want to briefly suggest Abraham as a potential exemplar for us to consider when developing practices of lament and vocational, courageous hoping.[96] Abraham, of course, is traditionally considered the "father of faith," given Paul's characterization (that "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," Romans 4:3, cf. Genesis 15:6). Such a reading of Abraham characterizes him as one with complete, assured faith in God and God's promise, even during the most extreme of negations.[97] However, if one returns to Genesis, one sees not a life marked by easy trust and simple faith, but instead one can see that Abraham's life is marked by doubts, lament, uncertainties, and threats. Yet, amidst and with these laments and uncertainties, he is vocationally driven and a courageous hoper. I will, therefore, outline briefly five aspects of Abraham's story that both prove analogous to our current situation and may help us to envision how to live with lament and in courageous, vocational hope.

First, I want to suggest that we can see ourselves as in a similar position to Abraham at the beginning of his story: he is to go from his country and all he knows into a *new* land: "Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you'" (Genesis 12:1). This new land, like our future, is unknown to Abraham, different from what he has lived. And we, like Abraham, *can* choose to go into that unknown

[96] Recognizing both that this is a Christian reading of the story and that Abraham is not the perfect exemplar, although I argue here that he is a fruitful person to look to.

[97] "Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become 'the father of many nations,' according to what was said, 'So numerous shall your descendants be.' He did not weaken in faith when he considered his body…or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced" (Romans 4: 18-21). This is, of course, written in the context of a controversy over circumcision in the church, and Paul here is arguing that the circumcision of Abraham is not what makes him the father of faith. Theologically, this becomes important in the Reformation in arguments about works righteousness and justification by grace through faith. Here, however, I am more interested in the characterization of the life of faith as "fully convinced," with "no distrust," no "wavering," in response to God's promises, and whether this a) is accurate of the story of Abraham and b) more importantly, whether such an account is helpful for thinking about living in hope amidst a changing climate.

knowingly and with true responsiveness: "So Abram went, as the Lord had told him" (Genesis 12:4). This possible response of willingly going into the new land is, of course, in contrast with what we *have* been doing. More like Jonah than like Abraham, we have been "fleeing" from confronting climate change by turning into practical denial. And, like Jonah, in practical denial, we still face threats despite our attempt at denial of the problem—just as Jonah's ship still sinks, despite his denial of the demand, so too do our waters rise. The future is not clear for any of us—for Abraham or ourselves—and yet we should go courageously and knowingly.

Second, Abraham sees going into this new land in a vocational light. He goes in response to God's promise: "I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing" (Gen 12:2-3). He is called by God to a new life in a new land with a new promise—a new hope—to organize his life. Analogously, we are called to live in explicit response to climate change—not hiding from it in practical denial. We are called to reframe our hope for the human good yet to come, held as possible given God's providence.[98] Yet, both our vocation and Abraham's are not only in *contrast* or *competition* with other vocations we have, but rather a reframing. Abraham continues to be husband to Sarah, to be uncle to Lot, and to shepherd, even as these activities and their associated hopes take on new characteristics in a new land. His life, although drastically changed, is still his own; he remains idiosyncratically himself.

Third, throughout the story, we see Abraham doubting amidst uncertainty, even given his faith in God. For instance, consider Abraham's reaction after the *fifth time* God makes the promise that Abraham will be the father of nations who will rule: "then Abraham fell on his face and

[98] It is undoubtedly the case that this is both analogous and dis-analogous to Abraham. Where Abraham has been given an explicit promise of blessing, we seem to face only threats and a hidden God. That said, as I argue above, I believe hopes rooted in that meeting between our desired values and God's call to love can be seen as vocational, in response to climate change.

laughed, and said to himself, 'Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?'" (Genesis 17:17). God repeats God's promise to Abraham throughout Abraham's entire life; the promise is not simply believed—a one and done experience—but doubted, unclear, hidden. And, that hiddenness is itself manifest in Abraham's entire life. Even Abraham's story—as active as God is in it—is not one where God's providence is clear and expect-able. Abraham's life is spent as an alien in different lands; the majority of his story is spent wandering between and in different lands, facing various hardships and threats to his and his family's wellbeing. His life is as much a life marked by hope as it is by faith; more a creative response to uncertainty, doubt, and threat, than a life of simple assured confidence.

Fourth, whatever Abraham's faithfulness, it was not an unquestioning faithfulness, unwilling to demand accounting from God. Instead, Abraham uses lament as an appropriate response to the hidden justice of God and to goods threatened and lost. Recall Abraham's questioning of God regarding Sodom, "'Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will you then sweep away the place and not forgive it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ... Far be that from you! Shall not he Judge of all the earth do what is just?'" (Genesis 18: 23, 25). Similarly, he laments the seeming absence of his hope, the very hope promised of God: "Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'you have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir'" (Genesis 15: 2-3). Despite the courage he exhibits in going out into a new land, despite the vocational call that orients his life, and despite his creative responses to uncertainty, the questioning lament remains—for the injustice of the world and the hiddenness of God within it.

And so, Abraham laments and also shows us a life of hope, oriented vocationally around a future good and courageously meeting the uncertainties and threats of a new land. He shows us a hard life, a life of wandering, of uncertainties and threats, and of doubt. But, he also shows us *his* life, a life marked by pursuits that are his own, relationships he maintains, and values he keeps.

But the fifth aspect of Abraham's story that may be helpful for us to keep in mind is the following: while he shows us a life of one trying to live responsively to God's call, *he too makes mistakes*, even when acting in light of good hopes. Consider, for instance, the two times he pretends Sarah is his sister, because he believes doing so will preserve his life. Both times, it is a mistake, an odd choice with severe ramifications. Yet, it is rooted in his good hope for his own preservation so that his progeny might come. The fact of the good hope does not alone mean that his actions and choices are unambiguous.

Abraham may be the best guide we can find, as courageous facer of the new, as vocationally driven, as hoper amidst uncertainty and doubt, as lamenter, and as confused, mistaken wanderer. We too then, are called to this life of uncertain, lamenting, hopeful wandering, rather than denial and avoidance. We are called to try to discern where to go and how, knowing that missteps in a new land is inevitable; we do not know the terrain and we will make mistakes. We are called to recognize that we are justified, but not (completely) sanctified—that our hopes will mislead us at times, even as they ground and orient our lives in response to climate change. We are called to try to orient our lives by hopes, grounded in the providence of God, even as we know that providence is not straightforward, just as God's promises to Abraham are not straightforwardly fulfilled.

In so orienting our lives vocationally and courageously, and in continuing practices of lament, we may be able to live again in hope, despite the pressures of climate change. And it is

through such hope-full living that we have the possibility of being able to sustain our agency in a climate changing world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Robert. "Moral Faith." *The Journal of Philosophy* 92:2 (1995): 75-95.

American Civil Liberties Union. "Felony Disenfranchisement Laws Map." Accessed April 11, 2018, https://www.aclu.org/issues/voting-rights/voter-restoration/felony-disenfranchisement-laws-map.

Amin, Ash. "Surviving the Turbulent Future." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 31 (2013): 140-156.

Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. New York: Bezinger Brothers, 1948.

Ballard, Timothy, and Stephen Lewandowsky. "When, Not If: The inescapability of an uncertain climate future." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 373 (2015): 1-10. http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2014.0464.

Bauckham, Richard. "Ecological Hope in Crisis." *Anvil* 29:1 (Sept. 2013): 43-54.

Bauer, Jonas. "Enquiring into the Absence of Lament." In *Evoking Lament: A Theological Discussion*, edited by Eva Harasta and Brian Brock, 25-43. London: T&T Clark, 2009.

Bellamy, Rob, and Mike Hulme. "Beyond the Tipping Point: Understanding Perceptions of Abrupt Climate Change and their Implications." *Weather, Climate, and Society* 3 (2011): 48-60.

Bentley, R. Alexander, and Michael O'Brien. "Collective Behaviour, Uncertainty, and Environmental Change." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 373: 1-12. http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2014.0461

Bloch, Ernst. *The Principle of Hope*. Translated by Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice, Paul Knight. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986.

Boff, Leonardo. *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. Translated by Phillip Berryman. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.

Booma-Prediger, Steven. *For the Beauty of the Earth: A Christian Vision for Creation Care.* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001.

Boulton, Matthew. "Forsaking God: A theological argument for Christian lamentation." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 55: 1 (2002): 58-78.

Bovens, Luc. "The Value of Hope." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 59:3 (1999): 667-681.

Bowlin, John. *Contingency and Fortune in Aquinas's Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Bradley, Richard, and Katie Steel. "Making Climate Decisions." *Philosophy Compass* 10/11 (2015): 799-810.

Brueggemann, Walter. *Reality, Grief, Hope: Three urgent prophetic tasks.* Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.

Brueggemann, Walter. "Necessary Conditions of a Good Loud Lament." *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 25 (2003): 19-49.

Brueggemann, Walter. "The Costly Loss of Lament." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 36 (1986): 57-71.

Brulle, Robert, Jason Carmichael, and J. Craig Jenkins. "Shifting Public Opinion on Climate Change: An empirical assessment of factors influencing concern over climate change in the U.S., 2002–2010" *Climatic Change* 114:2 (2012): 169-188.

California State. "California Climate Change Legislation." Accessed April 4, 2018, http://www.climatechange.ca.gov/state/legislation.html.

Capstick, Stuart. "Public Understanding of Climate Change as a Social Dilemma." *Sustainability* 5:8 (2013): 3484-3501.

Carle, Jill. "Top Global Threat: Americans, Europeans, Middle Easterners Focus on ISIS as Greatest Danger." *Pew Research Center*, July 2015, http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/Pew-Research-Center-Global-Threats-Report-FINAL-July-14-2015.pdf.

Carley, M., and I. Christie. *Managing Sustainable Development*. London: Earthscan, 2000.

Center for Sustainable Systems. *U.S. Environmental Footprint Factsheet*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, accessed July 1, 2017, http://css.umich.edu/sites/default/files/U.S._Environmental_Footprint_Factsheet_CSS08-08_0.pdf.

Chalier, Catherine. "The Keenness of Hope." Translated by Peter Hanly. *Levinas Studies* 5 (2010):117-131.

Clémençon, Raymond. "Two Sides of the Paris Climate Agreement: Dismal Failure or Historic Breakthrough." *Journal of Environment and Development* 25:1 (2016): 3-24.

Cohen, Stanley. *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011.

Conradie, Ernst. *Hope for the Earth: Vistas on a new century*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005.

Day, J.P. *Hope: A Philosophical Inquiry*. Helsinki: Societas Philosophica Fennica, 1991.

Day, J.P. "More about Hope and Fear." *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 1 (1998): 121-123.

de la Torre, Miguel. *Latina/o Social Ethics: Moving beyond Eurocentric Moral Thinking.* Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010.

Delgado, Sharon. *Love in a Time of Climate Change: Honoring Creation, Establishing Justice.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017.

Department of Defense. "Response to Congressional Inquiry on National Security Implications of Climate-Related Risks and a Changing Climate," July 2015. http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/150724-congressional-report-on-national-implications-of-climate-change.pdf?source=govdelivery.

Desilver, Drew. "Perceptions and Realities of Recycling Vary Widely from Place to Place." *Pew Research Center*, October 7, 2016, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/10/07/perceptions-and-realities-of-recycling-vary-widely-from-place-to-place/.

Doan, Michael. "Climate Change and Complacency." *Hypatia* 29:3 (2014): 634-650.

Doherty, Thomas, and Susan Clayton. "The Psychological Impacts of Climate Change." *American Psychologist* 66:4 (2011): 265-276.

Downie, R.S. "Hope." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 24:2 (December 1963): 248-251.

Drahos, Peter. "Trading in Public Hope." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 592:1 (2004): 18-38.

Earth Science Communications Team. "Proxy (Indirect Measurements)" figure. NASA, California Institute of Technology, accessed March 23, 2018. http://climate.nasa.gov/vital-signs/carbon-dioxide/.

Earth System Research Laboratory Global Monitoring Division. "Trends in Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide: Last Five Years." National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, accessed March 23, 2018. http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/global.html.

Earth System Research Laboratory Global Monitoring Division. "Trends in Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide: Full Mauna Loa CO_2 record." National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, accessed March 23, 2018. http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/full.html.

Earth System Research Laboratory Global Monitoring Division. "Trends in Atmospheric Carbon Dioxide: Annual Mean Growth Rate for Mauna Loa, Hawaii." National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, accessed March 23, 2018. http://www.esrl.noaa.gov/gmd/ccgg/trends/gr.html.

Elliot, David. *Hope and Christian Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Ellis, Neville, and Ashlee Cunsolo. "Hope and Mourning in the Anthropocene: Understanding Ecological Grief." *The Conversation,* April 4, 2018. http://theconversation.com/hope-and-mourning-in-the-anthropocene-understanding-ecological-grief-88630

Emerson, Sarah. "The Climate Change Deniers in Congress," *Motherboard*, April 28, 2017, https://motherboard.vice.com/en_us/article/pg5zqg/a-guide-to-the-climate-change-deniers-in-congress.

Environmental Protection Agency. "Climate Change Indicators." Accessed March 27, 2018. https://www3.epa.gov/climatechange/science/indicators/ghg/.

Epictetus. *Enchiridion*. Translated by George Long. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991.

Erickson, Richard, Robin Post, and Albert Paige. "Hope as a Psychiatric Variable." *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 31:2 (1975): 324-330.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006.

Feng, Kuishuang, Steven J. Davis, Laixiang Sun, and Klaus Kubacek. "Drivers of the US CO_2 Emissions 1997-2013." *Nature Communications* 6:7714 (2015): 1-8. https://doi-org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1038/ncomms8714.

Fiala, Andrew. "Nero's Fiddle: On Hope, Despair, and the Ecological Crisis." *Ethics and the Environment* 15:1 (2010): 51-68.

Fishman, Stephen, and Lucille McCarthy. *John Dewey and the Philosophy and Practice of Hope*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007.

Floyd, Richard. *Down to Earth: Christian Hope and Climate Change.* Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015.

Foley, A.M. "Uncertainty in Regional Climate Modelling: A Review." *Progress in Physical Geography* 34:5 (2010): 647-670.

Foster, John. *After Sustainability: Denial, Hope, Retrieval.* London: Routledge, 2015.

Frankfurt, Henry. "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibility." *The Journal of Philosophy* 66:23 (1969): 829-839.

Frankfurt, Henry. “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person.” *The Journal of Philosophy* 68:1 (1971): 5-20

Fredericks, Sarah. “Online Confessions of Eco-Guilt.” *Journal of the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture* 8:1 (2014): 64-84.

Freeman, Mark, Gernot Wagner, and Richard Zeckhauser. “Climate Sensitivity Uncertainty: When is good news bad?” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 373:1-15. http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2015.0092.

Frigg, Roman, Erica Thompson, and Charlotte Werndl. “Philosophy of Climate Science Part I: Observing Climate Change.” *Philosophy Compass* 10:2 (2015): 953-964.

Frigg, Roman, Erica Thompson, and Charlotte Werndl. “Philosophy of Climate Science Part II: Modelling Climate Change.” *Philosophy Compass* 10/12 (2015): 965-977.

Funk, Cary, and Brian Kennedy. “The Politics of Climate Change.” Pew Research Center, October, 2016, http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/14/2016/10/14080900/PS_2016.10.04_Politics-of-Climate_FINAL.pdf.

Gardiner, Stephen. *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Gebara, Ivone. *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation.* Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999.

Gifford, Robert. “The Dragons of Inaction: Psychological Barriers that limit climate change mitigation and adaptation.” *American Psychologist* 66:4 (2011): 290-302.

Gifford, Robert. “Dragons, Mules, and Honeybees: Barriers, Carriers, and Unwitting Enablers of Climate Change Action.” *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 69:4 (2013): 41-48.

Gifford, Robert, and Louise A. Comeau. "Message framing influences perceived climate change competence, engagement, and behavioral intentions." *Global Environmental Change* 21: 4 (2011): 1301-1307.

Godfrey, Joseph. *A Philosophy of Human Hope.* Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987.

Gravlee, G. Scott. “Aristotle on Hope.” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 38:4 (Oct. 2000): 461-477.

Griffiths, A. Philip. “Certain Hope.” *Religious Studies,* 26:4 (1990): 453-461.

Gupta, Joyeeta. “A History of International Climate Change Policy.” *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews Series Climate Change* 1:5 (2010): 636-653.

Gustafson, James. *Ethics from a Theocentric Perspective*, *Volume One: Theology and Ethics.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Hajnal, Zoltan, Nazita Lajevardi, and Lindsay Nielson. "Voter Identification Laws and the Suppression of Minority Votes," *The Journal of Politics* 79:2 (April 2017): 363-379.

Hall, M. Elizabeth Lewis. "Suffering in God's Presence: The Role of Lament in Transformation." *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 9:2 (2016): 219-232.

Hansson, Sven Ove. "Science Denial as a Form of Pseudoscience." *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 63 (2017): 39-47.

Hodson, Martin. "Losing Hope? The Environmental Crisis Today." *Anvil* 29:1 (2013): 7-23.

Huntington, Henry, and Shari Fox, "The Changing Arctic: Indigenous Perspectives." In *The Arctic Climate Impact Assessment Report*, edited by Carolyn Symon, 61-98. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Hurley, Lawrence, and Valerie Volcovici. "U.S. Supreme Court Blocks Obama's Clean Power Plan." *Scientific American*, Feb. 9, 2016. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/u-s-supreme-court-blocks-obama-s-clean-power-plan/.

Incropera, Frank. *Climate Change: A wicked problem*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. "Summary for Policymakers." In *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, edited by C.B. Field, V.R. Barros, D.J. Dokken, K.J Mach, M.D. Mastrandrea, T.E. Bilir, M. Chatterjee *et al*, 1-32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. "Summary for Policymakers." In *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, edited by T.F. Stocker, D. Qin, G.-K. Plattner, M. Tignor, S.K. Allen, J. Boschung, A. Nauels *et al*, 1-27. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Irfan, Umair. "What Rolling Back the Clean Power Plan Means for the US Climate Fight." *Vox*, December 29, 2017. https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2017/10/10/16450288/epa-rollback-of-the-clean-power-plan-scott-pruitt.

Jamieson, Dale. *Reason in a Dark Time: Why the Struggle Against Climate Change Failed and What it Means.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Jenkins, Willis. *The Future of Ethics*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013.

Johnson, Dominic, and Simon Levin. "The Tragedy of Cognition: psychological biases and environmental inaction," *Current Science* 97:11 (2009): 1593-1603.

Jonas, Hans. *Imperative of Responsibility.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Jones-Smith, Elsie. *Theories of Counseling and Psychotherapy: An Integrative Approach.* Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2016.

Kane, Robert. "The Dual Regress of Free Will and the Role of Alternate Possibilities." *Noûs* 34:14 (2000): 57-79.

Kant, Immanuel. *Practical Philosophy*. Translated and edited by Mary J. Gregory. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Kelsey, David. *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology, Vol. 1*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009.

Kingsolver, Barbara. *Flight Behavior*. New York: Harper Collins, 2012.

Klein, Rebekka. "The Phenomenology of Lament." In *Evoking Lament: A Theological Discussion*, edited by Eva Harasta and Brian Brock, 14-24. London: T&T Clark, 2009.

Kohak, Erazim. *The Embers and the Stars.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984.

Kretz, Lisa. "Climate Change: Bridging the Theory-Action Gap," *Ethics and the Environment* 17:2 (2012): 9-27.

Kretz, Lisa. "Hope in Environmental Philosophy." *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 26 (2013): 925-944.

"Lament, n." *OED Online*. March 2018. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/105284?rskey=a0WH8r&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed April 4, 2018).

Lear, Jonathan. *Radical Hope*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Leiserowitz, Anthony, Nicholas Smith, and Jennifer Marlon. *American's Knowledge of Climate Change*. New Haven, CT: Yale Project on Climate Communications, 2010, http://environment.yale.edu/climate/files/ClimateChangeKnowledge2010.pdf.

Leiserowitz, Anthony, Edward Maibach, Connie Roser-Renouf, Geoff Feinberg, and Seth Rosenthal. *Americans' Actions to Limit Global Warming, November 2013*. New Haven, CT: Yale Project on Climate Change Communication, 2014,

http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Behavior-November-2013.pdf.

Leiserowitz, Anthony, Edward Maibach, Connie Roser-Renouf, Geoff Feinberg, and Seth Rosenthal. *Climate Change in the American Christian Mind: March, 2015*. New Haven: Yale Project on Climate Change Communication, 2015, http://environment.yale.edu/climate-communication-OFF/files/Global-Warming-CCAM-March-2015.pdf.

Leiserowitz, Anthony, Edward Maibach, Connie Roser-Renouf, Geoff Feinberg, and Seth Rosenthal. *Climate Change in the American Mind: October, 2015*. New Haven: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, 2015, http://environment.yale.edu/climate-communication-OFF/files/Climate-Change-American-Mind-October-2015.pdf.

Leiserowitz, Anthony, Edward Maibach, Connie Roser-Renouf, Geoff Feinberg, and Seth Rosenthal. *Climate Change in the American Mind: March, 2016*. New Haven, CT: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, 2016, http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Climate-Change-American-Mind-March-2016-FINAL.pdf.

Leiserowitz, Anthony, Edward Maibach, Connie Roser-Renouf, Seth Rosenthal, and Matthew Cutler. *Politics and Global Warming, May 2017*. New Haven, CT: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, 2017, http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Global-Warming-Policy-Politics-May-2017.pdf.

Leiserowitz, Anthony, Edward Maibach, Connie Roser-Renouf, Seth Rosenthal, Matthew Cutler, John Kotcher. *Climate Change in the American Mind: October 2017*. New Haven, CT: Yale Program on Climate Communications, 2017, http://climatecommunication.yale.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Climate-Change-American-Mind-October-2017.pdf.

Leuschner, Anna. "Uncertainties, Plurality, and Robustness in Climate Research and Modeling: On the reliability of climate prognoses." *Journal for General Philosophy of Science* 46 (2015): 367-381.

Lewandowsky, Stephan, Timothy Ballard, and Richard D. Pancost. "Uncertainty as knowledge." *Philosophical Transactions A of the Royal Society* 373 (2015). https://doi-org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1098/rsta.2014.0462.

Lewis, David. "Dispositional Theories of Value II." In "Dispositional Theories of Value," by Michael Smith, David Lewis, and Mark Johnson. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 63 (1989): 89-174.

Lorenz, Edward. "The Butterfly Effect." In *The Chaos Avant-Garde: Memories of the Early Days of Chaos Theory*, edited by Ralph Abraham and Yoshisuke Ueda, 91-94. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2000.

Lorenzoni, Irene, Mavis Jones, and John R. Turnpenny. "Climate Change, Human Genetics, and Post-Normality in the UK." *Futures* 39 (2007): 65-82.

Lorenzoni, Irene, Sophie Nicholson-Cole, and Lorraine Whitmarsh. "Barriers perceived to engaging with climate change among the UK public and their policy implications." *Global Environmental Change* 17 (2007): 445-459.

Ludwig, Donald. "The Era of Management is Over" *Ecosystems* 4:8 (2001): 758-764.

Lueck, Michelle. "Hope for a Cause as Cause for Hope: The Need for Hope in Environmental Sociology." *American Sociologist* 38 (2007): 250-261.

Luther, Martin. *Lectures on Galatians 1535 Chapters 1-4*. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan, vol. 26 of *Luther's Works*, American Edition (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1965).

MacQuarrie, John. *Christian Hope*. New York: Seabury, 1978.

Majumdar Sarmistha Rina, and Corliss Lentz. "Individuals' Attitudes Toward Public Transit in a Rural Transit District." *Public Works Management and Policy* 17:1 (2012): 83-102.

Mandolfo, Carleen. "Psalm 88 and the Holocaust: Lament in Search of a Divine Response." *Biblical Interpretation* 15 (2007): 151-170.

Marcel, Gabriel. *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope*. Translated by E. Craufurd. Chicago, Henry Regnery Company, 1951.

Marshall, Ellen Ott. *Though the Fig Tree Does not Blossom: Toward a Responsible Theology of Christian Hope*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006.

Martin, Adrienne. "Hopes and Dreams." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 83:1 (July 2011): 148-173.

Martin, Adrienne. *How We Hope*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014.

McCaffrey, Mark, and Susan Buhr. "Clarifying Climate Confusion: Addressing Systemic Holes, Cognitive Gaps, and Misconceptions Through Climate Literacy." *Physical Geography* 29:6 (2008): 512-528.

McCarroll, Pamela. *Waiting at the Foot of the Cross: Toward a theology of hope for today*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014.

McFague, Sallie. *Blessed are the Consumers Climate Change and the Practice of Restraint*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013.

McGeer, Victoria. “The Art of Good Hope.” *American Academy of Political and Social Science* 592 (March 2004): 100-127.

McGregor, Sue. “Conceptualizing Immoral and Unethical Consumption Using Neutralization Theory.” *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal* 36:3 (2008): 261-276.

McKinley, Andrew. “Hope in a Hopeless Age: Environmentalism’s Crisis.” *Environmentalist* 28 (2008): 319-326.

Meirav, Ariel. “The Nature of Hope.” *Ratio* 22:2 (June 2009): 216-233.

Miceli, Maria, and Cristiano Castelfranchi. “Hope: The power of wish and possibility.” *Theory Psychology* Vol. 20:2 (2010): 251-276.

Midgley, Mary. *Beast and Man.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1978.

Miret, Santiago. “Desertification: The Forgotten Side of Climate Change.” Berkley Energy and Resources Collaborative, September 30, 2013. http://berc.berkeley.edu/desertification-the-forgotten-side-of-climate-change/.

Moltmann, Jürgen. *The Ethics of Hope*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012.

Moltmann, Jürgen. *God in Creation: An Ecological Doctrine of Creation.* London: SCM Press, 1985.

Moltmann, Jürgen. *Theology of Hope*. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

Morgan, M. Granger. “Certainty, Uncertainty, and Climate Change.” *Climate Change* 108 (2011): 707-721.

Morton, Thomas, Anna Rabinovich, Dan Marshall, and Pamela Bertschneider. “The Future that May (or May Not) Come: How framing changes responses to uncertainty in climate change communications.” *Global Environmental Change* 21:1 (2011): 103-109.

Moser, Susan and Lisa Dilling. “Making Climate Hot: Communicating the Urgency and Challenge of Global Climate Change.” *Environment* (Dec. 2004): 32-46.

Moser, Susan, and Lisa Dilling. “Communicating Climate Change: Closing the Science-Action Gap.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Climate Change and Society*, edited by John Dryzek, Richard Norgaard, and David Schlosberg, 161-174. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Muyskens, James. *The Sufficiency of Hope*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979.

National Geographic. “Sea Level Rise,” accessed March 27, 2018, http://ocean.nationalgeographic.com/ocean/critical-issues-sea-level-rise/.

Niebuhr, H. Richard. “The Only Way into the Kingdom.” In *War as Crucifixion: Essays on Peace, Violence, and Just War*,” 15-16. Chicago: Christian Century, 2002.

Nerlich, Brigitte, and Rusi Jaspal. “Images of Extreme Weather: Symbolizing Human Responses to Climate Change.” *Science as Culture* 23:2 (2014): 253-276.

The New Oxford Annotated Bible: With the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, *New Revised Standard Version*. Michael D. Coogan, editor. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

Newport, Frank. “Americans’ Global Warming Concerns Continue to Drop,” *Gallup Polling*, March 11, 2010, http://www.gallup.com/poll/126560/Americans-Global-Warming-Concerns-Continue-Drop.aspx.

Nolan, Albert. *Hope in an Age of Despair.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2009.

Norgaard, Kari Marie. “Cognitive and Behavioral Challenges in Responding to Climate Change.” *The Policy Research Working Paper Series* 4940 (2009).

Norgaard, Kari Marie. *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions, and Everyday Life*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011.

O’Brien, Kevin. *The Violence of Climate Change.* Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017.

Opotow, Susan, and Leah Weiss. “New Ways of Thinking about Environmentalism: Denial and the Process of Moral Exclusion in Environmental Conflict.” *Journal of Social Issues* 56:3 (2000): 475-490.

Oreskes, Naomi. “The Fact of Uncertainty, the Uncertainty of Facts, and the Cultural Resonance of Doubt.” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 373 (2015): 1-21. http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2014.0455.

Oreskes, Naomi, and Erik Conway. *Merchants of Doubt: How a handful of scientists obscured the truth on issues from tobacco smoke to global warming*. New York: Bloomsbury Books, 2010.

Pahl, Sabine, Stephen Sheppard, Christina Boomsma, and Christopher Groves. “Perceptions of Time in Relation to Climate Change.” *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* 5:3 (2014): 375-388.

Pannenberg, Wolfhart. *Theology and the Kingdom of God*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press 1969.

Peters, Ted. *Anticipating Omega*. Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2006.

Pettit, Philip. “Hope and its Place in the Mind.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 592 (March, 2004): 152-165.

Phelan, Liam. “Managing Climate Risk: Extreme weather events and the future of insurance in a climate-changed world.” *Australasian Journal of Environmental Management* 18:4 (2011): 223-232.

Pieper, Joseph. *On Hope*. San Francisco: *Ignatius Press*, 1977.

Plumer, Brad, A.J. Chavar, and Susan Archer. “Trump Will Withdraw U.S. From Paris Climate Agreement.” *The New York Times*, June 1, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/01/climate/trump-paris-climate-agreement.html.

Polkinghorne, John, and Michael Welker. *The End of the World and the Ends of Gods.* Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, 2000.

Quinn, Michael Sean. “Hoping.” *Southwest Journal of Philosophy* Winter 7:1 (1976): 53-65.

Randall, Rosemary. “Loss and Climate Change: The Cost of Parallel Narratives.” *Ecopsychology* 1:3 (2009): 118-129.

Rockström, Johan, Will Steffen, Kevin Noone, Åsa Persson, F. Stuart Chapin III, Eric Lambin, Timothy M. Lenton *et al*. "Planetary boundaries: exploring the safe operating space for humanity." *Ecology and society* 14, no. 2 (2009). http://www.jstor.org/stable/26268316.

Rosenfeld, Jordan. “Facing Down ‘Environmental Grief.’” *Scientific American*, July 21, 2016. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/facing-down-environmental-grief/.

Roser-Renouf, Connie, Lucy Atkinson, Edward Maibach, and Anthony Leiserowitz. “The Consumer as Climate Activist.” *International Journal of Communication* 10 (2016): 4759-4783.

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Gaia and God.* San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994.

Santmire, Paul. *Before Nature: A Christian Spirituality.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014.

Scheffler, Samuel. *Death and the Afterlife.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Scheffler, Samuel. “Valuing.” In *Reasons and Recognition: Essays on the Philosophy of T.M. Scanlon*, edited by R. Jay Wallace, Rahul Kumar, and Samuel Freeman, 23-42. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Schrank, Beate, Giovanni Stanghellini, and Mike Slade. “Hope in Psychiatry: A review of the literature.” *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* 118:6 (2008): 421-433.

Schwartz, Matthew. "Ecosystem Shift: How Global Climate Change is Reshaping the Biosphere." *Science in the News Blog*, June 30, 2014. http://sitn.hms.harvard.edu/flash/2014/ecosystem-shift-how-global-climate-change-is-reshaping-the-biosphere/.

Schweiker, William, and David Clairmont. *Religious Ethics: Meaning and Method*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, forthcoming.

Shade, Patrick. *Habits of Hope: A Pragmatic Theory*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000.

Shammin, Md Rumi. "The Role of US Households in Global Carbon Emissions." In *Greenhouse Gases: Emission, Measurement and Management*, edited by Guoxiang Liu (Rijeka, Croatia: Intech, 2012), 171-186, https://www.intechopen.com/books/greenhouse-gases-emission-measurement-and-management.

Shapiro, Ari. "India's Big Battle: Development Vs. Pollution." *All Things Considered*, May 13, 2016, https://www.npr.org/2016/05/13/477930821/indias-big-battle-development-vs-pollution.

Skrimshire, Steven. "Approaching the Tipping Point: Climate Risks, Faith, and Political Action." *European Journal of Science and Theology* 4:2: 9-22.

Smith, Nicholas. "Analysing Hope." *Critical Horizons: A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory* 9:1 (May 2008): 5-23.

Snyder, C.R. *The Psychology of Hope.* New York: The Free Press/Simon & Schuster, 1994.

Snyder, C.R., Cheri Harris, John R. Anderson, Sharon A. Holleran, Lori M. Irving, Sandra T. Sigmon, Lauren Yoshinobu, June Gibb, Charyle Langelle, and Pat Harney. "The Will and The Ways: Development and Validation of an Individual-Differences Measure of Hope," *Journal of Personal and Social Psychology* 60:4 (April 1991): 570-585.

Snyder, C.R., Jennifer S. Cheavens, and Scott T. Michael. "Hope Theory: History and Elaborated Model." In *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hope*, edited by Jaklin Elliot, 101-118. Hauppage, NY: Nova Science, 2005.

Spence, Alexa, Wouter Poortinga, and Nick Pidgeon. "The Psychological Distance of Climate Change." *Risk Analysis* 32:6 (2012): 957-952.

Stainforth, D.A., M.R. Allen, E.R. Tredger, and L.A. Smith. "Confidence, Uncertainty, and Decision-Support Relevance in Climate Predictions" *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A* 365 (2007): 2145-2161.

Steinbock, Anthony J. "Time, Otherness, and Possibility in the Experience of Hope." In *Issues in Interpretation*, edited by Pol Vandevelde, 271-289. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2006.

Steinbock, Anthony J. "The Phenomenology of Despair." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* Vol. 15:3 (2007): 435-451.

Stevenson, Kathryn, and Nils Peterson. "Motivating Action through Fostering Climate Change Hope and Concern and Avoiding Despair among Adolescents." *Sustainability* 8:6 (2016). https://doi-org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.3390/su8010006.

Stokes, Bruce, Richard Wike, and Jill Carle. "Global Concern about Climate Change, Broad Support for Limiting Emissions," *Pew Research Center*, November 5, 2015, http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/11/Pew-Research-Center-Climate-Change-Report-FINAL-November-5-2015.pdf.

Stotland, Ezra. *The Psychology of Hope*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1969.

Sutherland, Stewart. "Hope." *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 25 (1989): 193-206.

Swenson-Lengyel, Willa. "Beyond Eschatology: Environmental Pessimism and the Future of Human Hoping." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 45.3 (2017): 413-436.

Swenson-Lengyel, Willa. "Moral Paralysis and Practical Denial: Environmental Ethics in Light of Human Failure." *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 37:2 (Fall 2017): 171-190.

Thompson, Allen. "Radical Hope for Living Well in a Warmer World." *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 23 (2010): 43-59.

Threadgold, Steven. "'I reckon my life will be easy, but my kids will be buggered': Ambivalence in young people's positive perceptions of individual futures and their visions of environmental collapse." *Journal of Youth Studies* 15:1 (2012): 17-32.

Tillich, Paul. *Systematic Theology: Three volumes in one*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Townes, Emilie. "Meditations on Love and Violence." In *Love and Christian Ethics*, edited by Fred Simmons and Brian Sorrells, 303-312. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016.

Union of Concerned Scientists. *Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change: A Target for U.S. Emissions Reductions*. Cambridge, MA: Union of Concerned Scientists, 2007, http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/legacy/assets/documents/global_warming/emissions-target-fact-sheet.pdf.

Union of Concerned Scientists. “Debunking Misinformation About Stolen Climate Emails in the “Climategate” Manufactured Controversy.” Cambridge, MA: Union of Concerned Scientists, accessed April 10, 2018, http://www.ucsusa.org/global_warming/solutions/fight-misinformation/debunking-misinformation-stolen-emails-climategate.html#.WZMXzYqQyRs.

United Nations Environment Programme. *The Emissions Gap Report 2015*. Nairobi: United Nations Environment Programme, 2015, https://uneplive.unep.org/media/docs/theme/13/EGR_2015_301115_lores.pdf.

United States Energy Information Administration. *Drivers of Household Energy Consumption, 1980-2009*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Energy, February 2015. https://www.eia.gov/analysis/studies/buildings/households/pdf/drivers_hhec.pdf.

Van de Velde, Liesbeth, Wim Verbeke, Michael Popp, and Guido Van Huylenbroeck. “The importance of message framing for providing information about sustainability and environmental aspects of energy.” *Energy Policy* 38 (2010): 5541-5549.

Vess, Matthew, and Jamie Arndt. “The nature of death and the death of nature: the impact of mortality salience on environmental concern.” *Journal of Research in Personality* 42:5 (2008): 1376-1380.

Walker, Brian, Stephen Carpenter, John Anderies, Nick Abel, Graeme Cumming, Marco Janssen, Louis Lebel, Jon Norberg, Garry D. Peterson, and Rusty Pritchard. "Resilience management in social-ecological systems: a working hypothesis for a participatory approach." *Conservation Ecology* 6:1 (2002), http://www.jstor.org/stable/26271859.

Walker, Margaret Urban. *Moral Repair.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Watts, Frasier. “Subjective and Objective Hope: Propositional and Attitudinal Aspects of Eschatology.” In *The End of the World and the Ends of God*, edited by John Polkinghorne and Michael Welker, 47-60. Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press Int., 2000.

Weatherhead, E., S. Gearheard, and R.G. Barry. “Changes in Weather Persistence: Insight from Inuit Knowledge.” *Global Environmental Change* 20:3 (2010): 523-528.

Wheatley, J.M.O. “Wishing and Hoping.” *Analysis* 18 (1958): 121-131.

White, Lynn. “The Historic Roots of our Ecologic Crisis.” *Science* 155: 3767 (1967): 1203-1207.

Willox, Ashlee Cunsolo. “Climate Change as the Work of Mourning.” *Ethics and the Environment* 17:2 (2012): 137-164.

Wildman, Wesley. *Fidelity with Plausibility: Modest Christologies in the Twentieth Century.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998.

Williston, Byron. “Climate Change and Radical Hope,” *Ethics and the Environment* 17:2 (2012): 165-186.

Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *Lament for a Son*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987.