

## Hoping and Intending

Mason, Cathy

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# Hoping and Intending

**ABSTRACT:** *Hope powerfully influences our lives, deeply shaping our actions, as well as being essential for social and political change. Many accounts of hope, however, fail to do justice to its active role, ignoring the connection between hope and action that makes it a significant feature of our lives. In this essay, I propose a new account of hope in which hopes characteristically shape and figure in intentions. I argue that this account does justice to hope's distinctive manifestations in action, explains the rational constraints on hoping, and sheds light on the distinctions between hoping and wishing.*

**KEYWORDS:** hope, intention, wishing, planning

## Hoping and Intending

*Man's Search for Meaning*, Viktor Frankl's 1946 autobiographical account of life in concentration camps, vividly describes the extreme deprivations and suffering that the prisoners who were detained there endured. Despite this, Frankl maintains that the most terrible trial that the prisoners faced was the loss of *hope* itself. At the limit of hopelessness, Frankl describes prisoners who ceased to strive for anything or act at all, feeling that there was no possible future for them. Instead, they simply awaited their seemingly inevitable deaths:

The prisoner who had lost faith in the future—his future—was doomed. With his loss of belief in the future, he also lost his spiritual hold; he let himself decline and became subject to mental and physical decay. Usually this happened quite suddenly, in the form of a crisis, the symptoms of which were familiar to the experienced camp inmate. We all feared this moment—not for ourselves, which would have been pointless, but for our friends. Usually it began with the prisoner refusing one morning to get dressed and wash or to go out on the parade grounds. No entreaties, no blows, no threats had any effect. He just lay there, hardly moving. If this crisis was brought about by an illness, he refused to be taken to the sick-bay or to do anything to help himself. He simply gave up. There he remained, lying in his own excreta, and nothing bothered him any more. (Frankl 2013: 64)

In the passage just quoted, Frankl describes this case as loss of 'faith' or 'belief' in the future. However, he appears to use these terms interchangeably with 'hope', and this passage occurs in the midst of a general discussion of the role of hope in the prisoners' lives. Such loss of hope is truly tragic, Frankl suggests, because the prisoners who lost hope 'simply gave up', ceasing to act meaningfully any longer.

Frankl suggests that retaining hope was a challenge for the prisoners because hope involves looking towards the future in a way which life in the camps rendered increasingly difficult. He writes, ‘A man who could not see the end of his “provisional existence” was not able to aim at an ultimate goal in life. He ceased living for the future, in contrast to a man in normal life. Therefore the whole structure of his inner life changed; signs of decay set in. . . his existence has become provisional and in a certain sense he cannot live for the future or aim at a goal’ (Frankl 2013: 62).

The prisoners’ having hope, he suggests, was connected with their ability to ‘live for the future’; the prisoners with hope were able to set themselves goals and live in ways that were shaped by these goals. Their actions continued to be meaningful to them, and oriented toward some ultimate goal. Conversely, he understands loss of hope as entailing an utter lack of direction that suggests a form of ‘decay’.

Rebecca Solnit’s *Hope in the Dark* (2004) similarly presents hope as having a crucial connection to action, ascribing it the utmost importance in our specifically political lives. Solnit offers a meditation on many powerful yet little-noticed political changes and victories wrought by political activism, and she argues that such activism is essentially built on hope: “Hope just means another world might be possible, not promised, not guaranteed. Hope calls for action; action is impossible without hope.” (Solnit 2004: 4). In the book, Solnit describes many political protests and campaigns that were successful in bringing about their goals. They required significant personal sacrifices, and she suggests that such movements were essentially sustained by hope. She concludes that hope is essential for political progress.

This essay sheds light on why hope fulfils the role that Frankl and Solnit ascribe to it and illuminates how it shapes our action in the ways they describe. I offer an account of hope that does justice to the fact that hope deeply affects the shape that our lives take and that the loss of hope can be devastating.

## 1. Walker on Hope

Margaret Urban Walker’s influential account of hope in *Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations after Wrongdoing* (2006) emphasizes hope’s connection to agency. Like Frankl and Solnit, she takes as central hope’s potential to motivate and shape our actions (see, similarly, McGeer 2004). This, Walker suggests, is what is distinctive about hope, and it is in this respect that she believes hoping contrasts with mere wishing. She further emphasizes that hope can be manifested in diverse kinds of action, and from this she draws the conclusion that there can be no unified psychology of hope, no analysis in terms of psychological states that captures all paradigmatic instances of hope. Although I accept her observation that hope manifests in and has a distinctive connection to action, I resist her conclusion that there is no unified psychology of hope, for the objects of hope figure in intentions in diverse ways. I offer an account of hope in terms of psychological characterizing states that accounts for its connection to action. Rejecting Walker’s claim that hopeful actions all involve active striving for the

realization of the object of hope, I argue that the objects of hope figure in intentions in diverse ways.

The starting point for Walker's discussion of hope is the observation that hope manifests in action. She notes that hope shapes the way we act, motivating us to act in distinctive ways: '[H]ope involves perception, feelings, and dispositions to feel, think, and act in some ways that move the one who hopes in the direction of having what is hoped for come about' (2006: 50); '[H]ope somehow engages, encourages or propels agency; it bends us toward "making it so"' (2006: 46). Hope, Walker suggests, has a distinctive motivating potential: it moves those who hope to act in the light of positive possibilities. She describes hope as shaping and guiding our actions: 'its nature is to engage our desire and agency' (2006: 45).

Taking hope's connection to action as the starting point for an account of hope makes sense given the examples with which I began. The hopeful prisoners Frankl describes acted in strikingly different ways to those who had lost hope: the hopeful prisoners persevered in their efforts for survival and meaningful existence, whereas the prisoners who gave up hope ceased acting at all. Similarly, Solnit describes the hopeful political campaigners as continuing to act despite long-lasting struggles. Only their hope for political change, she suggests, can explain why they were willing to make large personal sacrifices in order to persevere in campaigning. Walker takes hope's connection to action, which she terms its 'efficacy' (2006: 44), to be the feature of hope most warranting our attention. She thus places hope's motivating potential at the core of what characterizes it as a state. (Cheshire Calhoun [2018] also focuses her discussion on motivationally significant hopes, although she does not regard all hope as motivationally significant.).

In this connection to action, Walker suggests that hoping contrasts with wishing. She claims that unlike hoping, wishing is characteristically passive (see also Radford and Hinton 1970: 51–70). The boundary between hoping and wishing may be imprecise and ordinary language may not always sharply distinguish the two. However, Walker claims that they are characteristically different: '[W]hen we wish or long or fantasize, it can be entirely a spectator sport, while hope somehow engages, encourages, or propels agency; it bends us toward "making it so"' (2006: 46).

The prisoners Frankl describes presumably wished to be reunited with their loved ones, but only some of them had any hope that they would be. Their wish seemingly failed to affect their behavior at all, whereas having hope powerfully shaped their lives: the hopeful prisoners strove to survive and to build a meaningful existence. Of course, wishes are not entirely passive, and they also influence us in certain respects. For example, wishing that one had acted otherwise than one did might fill one with regret for the unrealized outcome, and this might shape one's actions. Importantly, however, wishes cannot be taken as reasons for action or intentions, whereas hopes can.

This distinctive connection to action leads Walker to reject the standard account of hope, a psychologically unified account in which hope is understood to be constituted by a certain combination of belief and desire. J. P. Day, for example, proposes a basic belief-desire account: 'hope involves (1) desiring [some state of affairs] and (2) estimating [its] probability' (1969: 89). R. S. Downie (1963) offers

a similar account. However, this kind of account has widely been found wanting. Walker argues that it cannot do justice to hope's motivational role: 'something is missing in Day's desire plus possibility account. What's missing is precisely the commonplace but protean and often powerful *efficacy* of hope' (2006: 47). Adrienne Martin claims that the model 'fall[s] short when it comes to explicating hope's sustaining power' (2014: 6). Calhoun similarly claims that it 'is not well equipped to explain the special motivational role practical hope plays in buoying us against setbacks or low odds of success' (2018: 69). The belief-desire model implies that hope's motivational role is fully explained by the constituent desire, but this seems inadequate to explain fully the ways in which hope can influence our action.

These philosophers are led to think that belief-desire accounts cannot explain hope's motivational role because the relevant belief and desire can also be found in many instances in which one *fails* to hope and to act hopefully. For example, Solnit's political campaigners might have desired change, and believed it to be possible, but they nonetheless could have despaired of it happening and thus given up on action. They might have regarded the desired outcomes as possible but simply too unlikely and thus given up hope. Or they might have desired change and believed it to be possible but regarded it as insufficiently valuable for protesting to be worth their time. Importantly, on the belief-desire account, hope is compatible not only with inaction but even with action that precludes the hoped-for outcome, which seems highly counterintuitive. If I claim to hope to win a competition but buy a ticket to return home before the final round (and cannot afford to buy a new ticket), there would seem to be something insincere or confused about my claim. The beliefs and desires involved in the belief-desire account alone thus seem inadequate to explain why the hopeful person characteristically acts in times when the hopeless person would not. Walker therefore argues that the account fails to capture the feature of hope that is of most moral significance.

Some recent accounts of hope have built upon the belief-desire model, adding a third condition. Luc Bovens (1999) suggests that in addition to having the relevant belief and desire, one must engage in 'mental imaging' in order to count as hoping, an activity of vividly imagining the realization of the hoped-for state of affairs. Ariel Meirav (2009) suggests that in hope one recognizes that one does not have full control over the realization of the hoped-for state of affairs but that one views the external factor that controls whether the state of affairs is realized as good. However, these accounts seem unable to resolve the problems faced by the original belief-desire account. Neither seems to explain adequately hope's connection to action since the third conditions they identify are not closely connected to motivation. For example, one might vividly imagine the realization of a desired, possible state of affairs without hoping for its realization. The problem remains that desire need not be efficacious in the way we think hope is.

Walker thus makes two core claims that I take as core criteria for an adequate account of hope: (1) hope is intimately connected with action, and (2) in this respect, hoping differs from wishing. Having made these claims, Walker notes that

hope is manifested not in action alone: ‘When we are hoping for a certain state of affairs, our thoughts, imaginings, and feelings about the desired situation are stirred, and these can prompt actions, as well as spur further thoughts, imaginings, and feelings’ (2006: 50); ‘[T]here are patterns of ingredient perceptions, expressions, feelings, and dispositions to think, feel, and act that are part of the repertory of hopefulness’ (2006: 48). Walker notes that hope can involve a number of different states; she describes it as a ‘syndrome’ that can involve different combinations of perceptions, imagination, thoughts, and feelings as well as actions (Walker 2008: 48). The political campaigners’ hope that Solnit describes, for example, is manifested in their attending protests but also in their being alert to factors influencing the outcomes and their feeling a certain way toward the prospect of political change.

Walker thus suggests that the failure of the belief-desire account is not specific to its substantive conception of hope: she argues that no psychologically unified analysis will capture all paradigmatic instances of hope. By *psychologically unified analysis* I mean analysis in terms of core psychological states, which need not identify hope with a single psychological state. Instead, as noted above, she suggests that the plurality of hope’s manifestations is best captured by understanding it as a ‘syndrome’: ‘What is ‘added’ to the necessary desire and the perception or belief in possibility that seems characteristic of hope? . . . I don’t suggest that we try to detect a peculiar mental ingredient, but rather that we look at our concept of “hoping” as ascribing an emotional stance or “affective attitude”, a recognizable syndrome that is characterized by certain desires and perceptions, but also by certain forms of attention, expression, feeling, and activity’ (Walker 2006: 48). Walker thus takes the variety of the psychological states with which hope is connected to suggest that hope has no core characterizing psychological states; she claims that hope is psychologically disunified.

Walker does, however, suggest that there is *something* unifying the varied manifestations of hope. She claims that the activities at the core of the syndrome composing hope are oriented toward the realization of the object of hope. She argues that all hopeful agents *strive to realize* the object of their hope: ‘[H]ope involves perception, feelings, and dispositions to feel, think, and act in some ways that move the one who hopes in the direction of having what is hoped for come about . . . [H]ope clearly can dispose us in a variety of ways to seek out, plan for, strive for, take heart about, concentrate on, put renewed energy into getting the outcome we want’ (2006: 50). She thus denies that hope is characterized by particular psychological components. But she suggests that there is an overarching direction in which hope moves the hopeful agent: hopeful states are oriented toward the realization of the hoped-for state of affairs.

Walker’s identification of hope’s power to guide and shape action seems crucial to understanding hope, particularly to understanding its relation to wishing. However, as I show below, while this is a core constraint on an account of hope, ultimately it is compatible with psychologically unified accounts of hope.

## 2. Hoping, Planning, and Intentions: The Value-Intention Account

As Walker has noted, hope has a distinctive capacity to influence us. We are not always moved by the prospect of uncertain, desirable states of affairs: we can recognize that states of affairs are possible and desire their realization without them influencing our actions. However, when one hopes, the object of hope characteristically shapes what one does. For example, the prisoners Frankl describes who had hope acted in distinctive ways, continuing to strive to survive. It is not obvious that there is any single conception of hope underlying *every* popular usage of the term, but at least these central, paradigm instances of hope involve it shaping our lives. This is one reason to focus on motivationally significant hope. Another is that how we define hope is partly dependent on what it is that we want to capture. It is hope's capacity to influence us that makes hope such an important element in our lives, so there is good reason to focus an account of hope on this.

These thoughts can be used to draw out an initial characterization of hope:

Value-intention account: To hope that *x* obtains is to value *x*, to regard *x*'s being realized as uncertain, and as a result to shape one's intentions in accordance with *x*.

There are a wide variety of cases under the general umbrella of hope, but the nature of hope is best illuminated by understanding valuing, regarding the outcome as uncertain, and appropriately shaping one's intentions as forming the core of hope and thus characterizing the state as a whole. Although meeting these conditions is sufficient for hope and the account is therefore psychologically unified, it also accounts for the diverse manifestations of hope that Walker identifies.

The value-intention account takes hope to be a primarily propositional state: the paradigmatic case of hope is hope *that* some state of affairs obtains. In ordinary language, hope seems to take various possible complements. We can hope that something will happen, hope for something and hope to do something. In all of these, the hope is aimed at an end and can be understood in terms of hope *that* the end will be realized. We can also take hope *from* something. Taking hope from something simply indicates that we come to hope *that* something will be the case (or are affirmed in having such hope) in response to someone's action, some event, or some state of affairs.

'Hope' can also be used as a more general term without a complement, as in 'Don't give up hope' or 'I'm feeling hopeful'. These less obviously involve 'hopes that'. However, these kinds of statements depend on a conversational context to have meaning, and such contexts provide an appropriate 'hope that' complement. If I say that I am feeling hopeful in a conversation about a competition I have entered, for instance, then although the hope is not phrased in terms of a propositional complement, there is an implicit one: I am hoping that I do well in the competition. Absent the necessary context, the question 'what are you hoping for?' seems appropriate. Hopes in general thus seem to be best understood as hopes *that* their objects will be realized.

There are three conditions stipulated in the value-intention account. The first condition is that hopes aim at states of affairs whose realization is valued by the one hoping. This seems straightforward. One can of course hope for something that fails to *actually* be valuable (think of Jeanette's mother's hope for evil to fall upon her many 'enemies' in Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* [1985]). But hoping for something one does not value seems impossible. As I understand it, valuing a state of affairs is more reflectively stable than simple desiring. Desires can, for example, be unendorsed, but one cannot wholly fail to endorse what one values. It thus seems possible to desire outcomes that one does not value, such as akratically desiring another slice of cake but not valuing that possibility. The opposite is also true: one can value an outcome without actively currently desiring it. Similarly, no hope can be fully unendorsed; a 'hope' one did not endorse would simply be an urge or impulse.

The second condition of the value-intention account is that the realization of the object of hope must be regarded as uncertain. One can rationally *desire* something that one knows to be certain or impossible, but one cannot rationally *hope* for such things. Hope does not combine with knowledge in felicitous ways; consider the oddness of saying 'I know she can't make it, but I hope she comes'. If one regards an outcome as certain to happen or as impossible, it calls for expectation or outright belief rather than hope. 'Regarding' emphasizes that the hopeful agent need not have any positive belief about the possibility of the hoped-for state of affairs. This is consistent with Claudia Blöser's observation (2019: 209) that hope is compatible with simply suspending belief about the possibility of the outcome. Regarding X's realization as uncertain rules out only outright belief about the realization of the outcome. Further, I cannot coherently hope for things that I know are within my power to realize: the state of affairs must be something whose realization I regard as uncertain even assuming that I take the appropriate steps to secure it. If I claimed to hope to sit with my arms crossed for thirty seconds, it would (in normal circumstances) sound extremely confused. Although my doing so may be a mere possibility, it is a possibility that is within my power to realize. Hopes, by contrast, take as their objects things whose realization is uncertain regardless of how one acts. This is why hopes typically involve a feeling of tension.

The kind of uncertainty required in order to hope is epistemic; the object of hope must be uncertain given what the agent knows or believes. The fact that whether the object will be realized is already fixed by external factors thus need not render hope irrational as long as one is unaware of these factors (or of the fact that they determine the outcome). One can thus rationally hope for things such as good weather tomorrow even though meteorological conditions today may already fix that it will rain.

The third condition of the value-intention account of hope is that hoped-for states of affairs shape one's intentions. This captures Walker's insight: hope has a distinctive motivational role and affects how we act. Both the fact that we act and the particular things we do are influenced by the object of hope through its affecting one's intentions.

In spelling out how intentions figure in this account of hope, I work with Michael Bratman's (1987) prominent account of intentions as practical attitudes that play a



planning role. On his account, intentions are ‘conduct-controlling pro-attitudes, ones which we are disposed to retain without reconsideration, and which play a significant role as inputs to [means-end] reasoning’ (Bratman 1987: 20). Intentions, on Bratman’s account, have two core features: they are *controlling* and *stable*. That intentions are inherently controlling means that it is their role to guide action and that (all things being equal) possessing an intention will lead the agent to perform the action intended. This action guidance occurs, on his account, because intentions are kinds of plans that we form. According to Bratman, intentions are also stable; they are relatively resistant to reconsideration. They have this stability because not every new piece of information is sufficient to motivate reconsideration of an intention. Overall, he suggests that intentions are valuable because they enable us to manage effectively the decisions involved in attaining goals. They do this by ruling out possibilities incompatible with the plan from consideration and by making salient features of one’s situation that are relevant to the intention.

The inclusion of intentions in the value-intention account of hope thus explains how hope motivates, shapes and sustains action. Hope manifests in and shapes action because intentions are a conduct-controlling state. The stability of intentions also explains hope’s capacity to *sustain* action: once one hopes for a state of affairs, it will take a significant amount of new evidence to reconsider the concomitant action (though intentions *can* be overturned, and one can give up hope). This connection with intention is suggested by Frankl’s initial description of the hopeful prisoners. The prisoners with hope, he claims, were *able to aim for goals*. Having goals suggests that the hopeful prisoners had plans for their futures, plans that they formed and were acting on in accordance with intentions.

Finally, the hopeful person does not merely happen to treat the object of their hope as a live possibility but does so *as a result* of regarding it as possible and valuing it. The stipulation that the hopeful person treats the object of hope as a live possibility ‘as a result’ of seeing it as uncertain and valuable allows the account to distinguish between wishful and hopeful actions. Wishful thinking is thinking that is unresponsive to evidence about how things are, and wishful action is action that is similarly unresponsive to evidence. Hopeful action, by contrast, can be responsive to evidence. Hoping is not simply wishful: in hoping, one shapes one’s intentions in accordance with the fact that one regards something as a valuable live possibility. Adoption of the attitude of hope is explained by reference to the fact that the subject believes certain outcomes to be possible and values those outcomes.

In *Man’s Search for Meaning* Frankl describes his attempts to combat the sense of hopelessness that life in the concentration camps induced in many prisoners. His strategies in doing so make sense in the light of the value-intention account. He writes, ‘Any attempt at fighting the camp’s psychopathological influence on the prisoner . . . had to aim at giving him inner strength by pointing out to him a future goal to which he could look forward’ (Frankl 2013: 63).

In order to encourage the hopes of those around him, Frankl drew their attention to future events they might yet look toward. This was plausibly a way of encouraging them to shape their intentions in the light of those events. Although Frankl is not

offering a philosophical account of hope, this description of his method of raising his fellow prisoners' hopes is explained by the value-intention account.

Hope that *x* obtains, then, characteristically involves valuing *x*, regarding *x* as possible but uncertain, and shaping one's intentions in accordance with *x*. Such conditions are sufficient for hope. This account clearly explains why Walker takes planning and striving to be manifestations of hope. It also explains the direction that hope can give us: possessing an intention will, all else being equal, lead to one acting in accordance with it. Can it explain the other manifestations of hope that Walker mentions?

### 3. Hope's Heterogeneous Manifestations

Walker identifies a number of heterogeneous states as manifesting hope. She writes, 'hope involves perceptions, feelings, and dispositions to feel, think, and act in some ways that move the one who hopes in the direction of having what is hoped for come about' (2006: 50). She mentions hope involving 'thoughts, feelings, and actions' (Walker 2006: 62). These other states she describes as manifesting hope fall into two broad categories: (1) hope manifests in *epistemic* states such as perception, attention, and concentration; and (2) it manifests in *affective* states such as feelings and emotions. The value-intention account sheds light on both of these.

Firstly, hope manifests in epistemic states such as perception, attention, and concentration. We can understand why hope involves these epistemic states by considering the role of values and intentions in our mental lives. We generally attend to and concentrate on those things that we value more closely than we do to those things to which we are indifferent. (Martin notes that in a survey of undergraduates, a student stated that the most frequent manifestation of their hope regarding an election was that they '[r]ead all media coverage religiously, and sent on relevant articles to friends and family' [2011: 159].) Moreover, what we *intend* guides what we attend to and notice. In Bratman's terms, intentions provide a framework to determine which options are relevant and admissible: which information is deemed relevant and thereby worth attending to is (at least partly) determined by one's intentions. Bratman writes, 'Frequently the stability of my plans will be connected with underlying tendencies to *attend* to certain sorts of things and not others—to see certain features of my environment as *salient*' (1987: 66).

That is, on Bratman's account, intentions are associated with tendencies to attend to and notice information relevant to the realization of the intention, and to see relevant information as salient. Hope's effects on perception, attention, and concentration therefore result from valuing the object of hope and the possession of intentions shaped by the hope.

What about hopeful affective states? We ordinarily associate hope with a distinctive emotional profile: a feeling of tension when we do not know if the hoped-for end will be realized, disappointment if it is not realized, and relief or happiness if it is. Both valuing and intending contribute to hope's emotional profile. Valuing the object of hope is likely to entail experiencing negative emotions if the object does not come about, and conversely, positive emotions if

the valued end is realized. But avoiding hoping for something is commonly thought of as a way of avoiding emotional vulnerability. Were hope's connection to emotion wholly a matter of valuing the object, this would not explain this commonplace thought, since one would presumably value the object whether or not one hopes for it.

Hope's distinctive affective aspect is thus also partially explained by the involvement of intentions in hope. These distinctive affective phenomena arise when the valued object shapes one's intentions because intentions involve a kind of commitment to the end in question, a commitment to making it the case. Intending thus often brings about a sense of emotional investment in the intended end. This investment or commitment plausibly increases one's emotional vulnerability to the hoped-for end. As such, if a hope fails to be realized it is likely to be more deeply disappointing than if something one valued but did not hope for were to fail to come about.

The value-intention account of hope thus explains not only hope's connection to action, but also its connection to characteristic epistemic and affective states. Although this account is psychologically unified, then, it explains hope's connection to the various states and activities that Walker identifies as manifestations of hope.

#### 4. Intentions and Ends

Hope, as I have suggested, is importantly connected with action, and this connection is elucidated by the fact that hoping involves shaping one's intentions in certain ways. There are variety of ways in which the object of hope can figure in intentions. But a worry arises from that diversity of the ways in which an object of hope can shape our intentions. The worry is that the value-intention account over-generates instances of hope. However, the account captures a distinctive and interesting phenomenon, and that the phenomenon it captures coheres with our everyday conception of hope.

Walker suggests that given the connection between hope and action, the activities at the core of hope are best understood as unified in virtue of having a certain 'direction'. She claims that the activities at the core of hope are all oriented toward the realization of the object of hope: they 'move the one who hopes in the direction of having what is hoped for come about' (Walker 2006: 50). However, there is reason to be skeptical about this claim. As Martin points out, such an account fails to capture many everyday hopes. Martin notes that hopes for ends we cannot influence are ubiquitous, and offers three examples: 'the hope for good weather for one's picnic tomorrow, the hope that a long-lost relative is flourishing, or the hope that Hitler was miserable when he died' (2014: 66). Many important hopes are of such a kind: for example, the prisoners Frankl describes could not bring it about that they were freed but they nonetheless hoped for freedom. Martin also suggests a second class of cases that Walker's account is unable to cover: cases where one hopes but is simply not motivated to influence an outcome that is within one's power to influence. Here she gives as an example her hope for who is chosen as the Republican Party's candidate, despite doing nothing to influence it.

Some instances of the first kind of example Martin discusses—hopes for ends we cannot influence—do seem like core cases of hoping. The capacity of such hopes to shape our lives importantly gives reason to want to capture them in the basic characterization of hope. It seems important to understand the prisoners Frankl describes as hopeful, for example, because this sheds light on how they act. They can be accommodated by the value-intention account of hope because hoped-for ends shape one's intentions in a variety of different ways. This account can thus avoid the conclusion that hope centrally involves striving for the realization of the object of hope. However, we need not strain the account to cover all the examples Martin provides. In particular, the latter kinds of hope Martin mentions, hopes where one is not motivated to influence the outcome in question, are rightly ruled out by the account.

Directly pursuing a hoped-for end is one way in which we can shape our intentions in accordance with an object of hope: when we hope, we frequently form *instrumental* plans aiming at the realization of the end in question. Solnit's hopeful campaigners form such instrumental intentions; their actions are intended to bring about the outcomes that they hope for. Hoping for ends whose realization is to some extent dependent upon oneself will generally involve intentions to act in order to help bring about the end in question. This is the kind of activity that Walker views as central to hope. However, the objects of hope can shape our plans without figuring in them as ends. The object of hope can figure in plans that are conditional, and it can also function as an overarching constraint on intentions, ruling out certain intentions and rationalizing others.

The objects of hope can figure in plans that are *conditional*: in hoping, we sometimes form intentions that are conditional on the realization of a hoped-for state of affairs. For instance, in Martin's example of hoping for good weather tomorrow, one might make picnic plans that are dependent upon the weather being pleasant, or just intend to enjoy being in the sun. Here, the object of hope shapes one's intentions by opening an area of possibilities (possibilities where the object of hope is realized) for which plans are appropriate, which one can do by forming conditional plans.

Our intentions can also be shaped by the objects of hope in less direct ways, where the objects of hope function as an *overarching constraint* on the intentions that we form. That is, hoping can rule out certain courses of action and rationalize others, making an area of possibilities appropriate to plan for. Hoped-for states of affairs can function as an overarching constraint on one's intentions by ruling out actions that will prevent the realization of the hoped-for end, but also by rendering less salient actions that one would only pursue given the non-realization of the end. For example, in Martin's second case, hoping that a long-lost relative is flourishing might rule out sharing unflattering anecdotes about them.

For the prisoners Frankl describes who smoked the last of their cigarettes rather than keeping them to trade for food and who simply lay awaiting death, the hope for survival had ceased to have this organizing role in their intentions. They no longer hoped to survive, and thus no longer ruled out acting in ways that were incompatible with survival. As such, they no longer formed plans: as Frankl puts it, they were no longer aiming at goals at all.

The objects of hope can also figure in plans as an overarching constraint by *rationalizing* certain possible courses of action: hoping can involve making plans that only make sense in the light of the hoped-for state of affairs. That is, hope can involve forming plans that depend on the realization of the hoped-for possibility in order to be reasonable. For example, Frankl describes a fellow prisoner who felt as if life could hold nothing more for him and contemplated suicide. He dissuaded the man from suicide by raising the possibility that he might yet see his child again. For this man striving to live made sense in the light of the possibility of seeing his child: the plan to strive for survival was attractive in the light of the possibility of the hoped-for meeting. The object of hope can thus figure in one's intentions in indirect ways as an overarching rationale for particular intentions.

The value-intention account therefore covers many instances of hope that do not eventuate in attempts to bring about the object of hope. This is because the objects of hope figure in intentions in different ways. As such, though hope importantly shapes our actions, though there is no single direction in which it moves us.

Some putative cases of hoping that Martin mentions are nonetheless ruled out by this account. Firstly, it rules out cases in which the agent knows that they could influence the realization of a possible state of affairs but is *entirely unmoved* to do so. Such agents' intentions are not shaped in accordance with the object of hope at all. However, it seems right that these are not hopes: if one is entirely unmotivated to bring about an end that one recognizes is within one's power to realize, then there is no important sense in which one hopes for it. If Martin lacked all motivation to affect who is chosen as the Republican Party candidate, then there is no reason to regard her as hoping that a particular candidate be elected.

The value-intention account also rules out cases such as 'the hope that Hitler was miserable when he died', insofar as such an agent's intentions are not shaped by that possibility. However, it seems right to think that this is not a case that need be accounted for in characterizing hope, since it lacks the central features of hope. The more limited the shaping of one's intentions, the less likely we are to think of such instances as hope, and the more they instead look like instances of mere wishing. It seems, for example, as the *hope* that Hitler was miserable when he died is identical to the *wish* that Hitler was miserable when he died, and indeed is better thought of as such, for it fits comfortably within the paradigm of wishing.

This account of hope captures an important and distinctive phenomenon. It captures and explains the distinctive ways in which hopeful people act, and it sheds light on the distinctive epistemic and affective manifestations of hope. However, the value-intention account of hope puts no qualifier on the kind of object that we can hope for. This might give rise to a worry opposite to that discussed above: Is the account too permissive? Does it count too much as hope?

Intentions involving uncertain, valued outcomes are ubiquitous given that so many of the things we value are beyond our power to realize. On the value-intention account hopes therefore proliferate, becoming nearly constant features of our lives. For example, if I go to a shop that occasionally has delicious ice cream with the intention of buying some if it is there, this account implies that I hope that there will be ice cream. Yet it seems right that this should count as a

case of hope, even if it is very ordinary and trivial: it is natural to describe me as going in the hope of buying ice cream. Some hopes are profound, but many are commonplace. There is nothing problematic about the existence of trivial hopes. At any one time, it is likely that one hopes for many things: trivial hopes for short queues and tasty dinners, as well as profound hopes for loved ones' well-being and the realization of important future goals. Not all hopes are deep and character involving, and the loss of some hopes can simply result in an alteration of our plans rather than our being crushed.

Hopes can cover both trivial and profound cases because we can value both deeply significant and trivial things. However, these differ notably not only in strength but also in the kind of value we assign them: I instrumentally value ice cream, whereas other goods may well be constitutive of the ends I value. Although the value-intention account classifies both as proper cases of hope, it does not thereby entail that hopes are uniformly significant.

## 5. Hoping and Wishing

The value-intention account can thus accommodate hope's varied connections to action. The second claim about hope that I take from Walker is that hoping differs from wishing, particularly regarding its connection to action. The inclusion of intentions in the account serves to vindicate this claim. Hoping and wishing differ because hoping involves shaping one's intentions in accordance with something one regards as a possible but uncertain and valuable state of affairs, whereas wishing entails only valuing or desiring a state of affairs. The object of hope can shape our intentions in increasingly minimal ways, and, therefore, some hopes will be close to wishes. But there are nonetheless two important differences between hoping and wishing: (1) there are different rational constraints on each; and (2) hoping and wishing have different emotional profiles.

Because hopes, unlike wishes, are characteristically motivating states, there are rational constraints that apply to hopes but not to wishes. As earlier noted, both hopes and wishes are aimed at states of affairs that are less than certain. However, hope cannot be directed toward *any* outcome that is less than certain. One cannot hope for ends that one knows to be impossible: one could not, for example, *hope* to meet someone one knew to be dead, or hope to witness the first shot fired in World War I. This is not true of wishing. To wish that one could meet a figure from the past says little more than that one would regard meeting them as a good thing, whereas hoping to do so would call for criticism. The value-intention account explains why this is: one cannot hope for impossible things because hoping characteristically involves one's intentions being guided by that possibility. As such, hoping inherits the rational constraints on intentions. Shaping one's intentions in accordance with a state of affairs is appropriate (and indeed coherent) only if the state is possible. Hoping thus involves belief that the object of hope is possible, whereas wishing need not.

Moreover, hopes need not be aimed at states of affairs that are outright impossible in order to be defective. Hopes that require inconsistent things of us also seem to be ruled out rationally. For example, it would be irrational to hope that one can picnic

in the sun tomorrow afternoon while also hoping to watch a film at the cinema then. Both might be possibilities, but hoping for *both* things would be irrational. This constraint falls out of the rational demands on intentions, which are inherited by hopes. Bratman (1987) argues that there are strong consistency requirements on intentions; he claims that it must be possible for all of one's intentions to be successfully executed, and that this must be possible given one's beliefs. He suggests that such a constraint is necessary if intentions are to successfully fulfil their conduct-controlling role: 'their [consistency demands] satisfaction is normally required for plans to serve well their role in coordinating and controlling conduct' (Bratman 1987: 33). As such, hopes that involve incompatible intentions are thereby defective. However, wishes for states of affairs requiring incompatible things seem to be rationally acceptable. Again, this is explained by the thought that hopes, but not wishes, involve intentions.

In particular, this account explains why some hopes for incompatible states of affairs are rationally ruled out, whilst others are rationally acceptable. I cannot hope to get each of two jobs if the hope involves forming plans for the future that are incompatible. But it seems that I can hope to get each of two jobs if I form merely conditional plans, plans that are conditional on different circumstances.

Secondly, hoping, unlike wishing, can make us particularly vulnerable to disappointment. Hoping generally involves a sense of emotional investment in the hoped-for end and an underlying sense of tension, whereas wishing need involve no such investment and tension. This contrast is brought out in the characteristic responses to unfulfilled hopes and wishes. Unfulfilled wishes might well cause no distress, and at most tend to cause frustration. Unfulfilled hopes, on the other hand, often have a more significant impact upon us. We tend to feel a deeper kind of investment in a hope than in a wish, and to respond with disappointment if hopes fail to be realized. This is well explained by the involvement of intentions in hopes but not wishes.

There are therefore important characteristic differences between hoping and wishing. The distinction is not sharp, but hope is distinctive and interesting in ways that merit our attention that the contrast with wishing brings out. At one end of the spectrum of activity (hope) and passivity (wishing), think of 'making a wish'. In making a wish, one simply attends to the wished-for possibility. There is no analogue of this for hope. The characteristic passivity of wishing can be further highlighted in contrast to hope's characteristic activity when we consider what we would *expect* of wishful and hopeful agents. For example, if I express a wish that I were a better tennis player, this is consistent with doing nothing to improve my playing. On the other hand, if I express a hope to be a better tennis player, it makes sense to ask what I am doing to pursue this end. One might doubt that I truly hope to be a better player if I am doing nothing to improve my playing, whereas the wish that I were a better player does not seem to be cast into doubt in this way. I can passively wish that something were the case without acting in any distinctive way, whereas hopes are far more closely linked with action. The value-intention account explains these differences.



## Conclusion

Frankl emphasizes the centrality of hope to human existence and its high value in our lives: he regards the loss of all hope as a devastating loss for individuals to suffer. Solnit similarly suggests that the loss of hope is a devastating loss for political communities. The value-intention account sheds some light on these features: hope is central to human life because there are large swaths of our existence that we are unable to control and yet where acting in the light of positive possibilities is crucially important. Frankl observes that the prisoners' complete uncertainty over their future and powerlessness to influence it closed off the possibility of hope. This is explained by the connection between hoping and intending: the hopeless prisoners were those whose agential capacities have been undermined, whose ability to form intentions about the future has been impaired by their inability to influence their own life.

There are therefore significant advantages to the value-intention account of hope. Firstly, it fits well with our pre-theoretical intuitions about hope: it accommodates many intuitive instances of hope that extant theories struggle to account for. It also sheds light on the heterogeneous states associated with hope, as intentions are importantly interlinked with epistemic and affective states and with actions. It enables hoping to be distinguished from wishing in a way that sheds light on both states, explaining why wishing can be rational where hope is not and casting light on their differing affective profiles. Finally, and most importantly, it captures a distinctive and interesting phenomenon that is ubiquitous in our everyday lives.

CATHY MASON 

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

[cathymason@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cathymason@hotmail.co.uk)

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