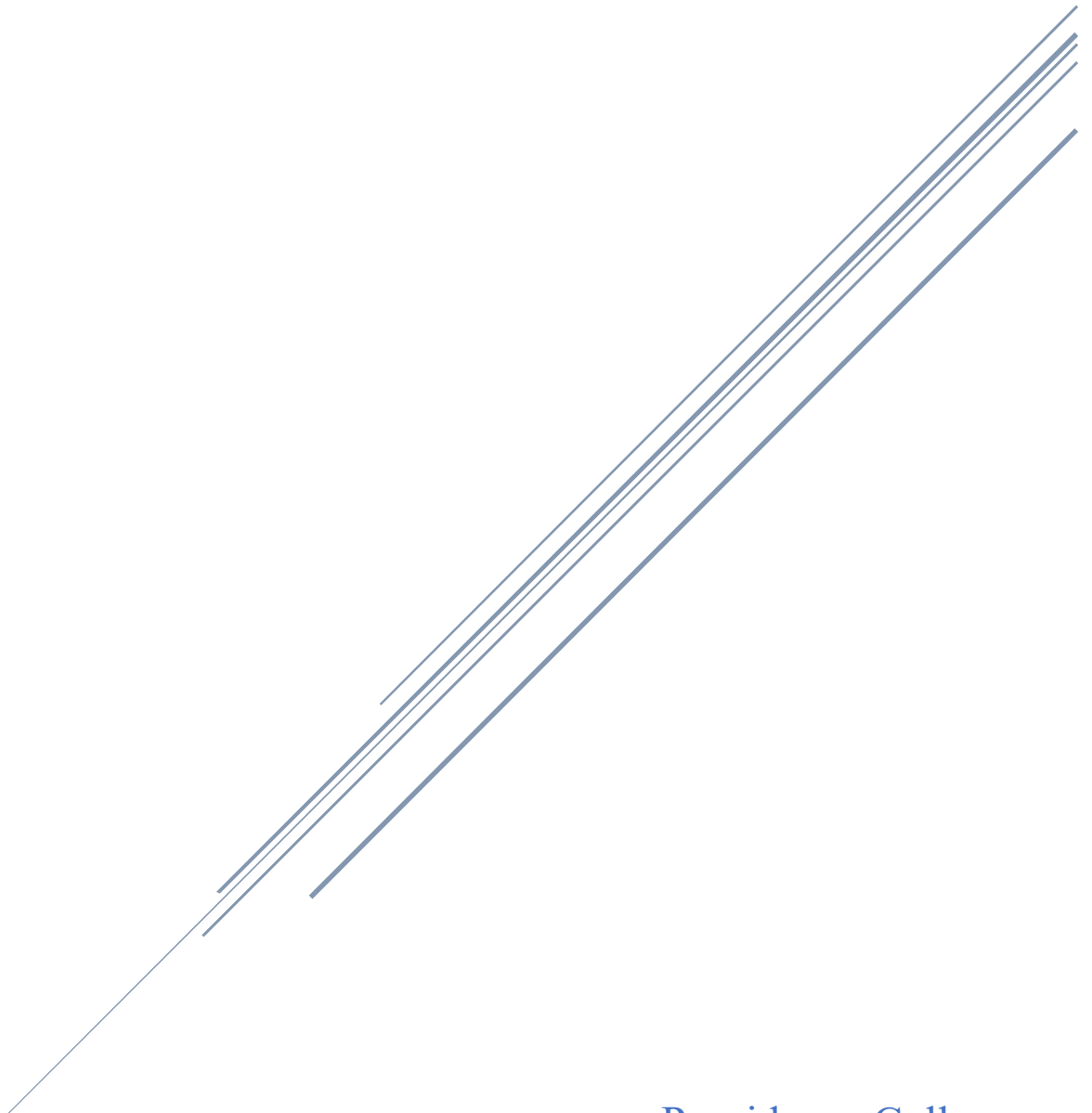


HOPE: THE CORE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Introduction

The past four years of my life have been dedicated to the discovery of what I call “the philosophy of service”; what is service? Do we, as a community, need it? How can we perform service? In the pursuit of answers to these questions, and several more like it, I have immersed myself into the examination of injustices in our world today by exposing myself to the knowledge and firsthand experiences of oppressive systems. In the beginning of my career, I confidently saw myself as a person who could and would bring about change; I saw the evils in this world as both temporary and conquerable. However, I soon became overwhelmed with the powers and adaptability that had contributed to the endurance of oppressive systems. My awareness of the evils that exists in our world and the near impossibility of overturning these systems of domination has grown as I continue to work in communities. While facing these overwhelming injustices, again and again, I have begun to question whether the hope that I had once believed could conquer all, was realistic given the conditions of our society. Yet, I know that hope does and *must* exist due to the sole fact that me and many others continue to fight.

The Case Against Hope

The prevalence of oppressive systems has left many people engaged in the fight for social justice feeling as though hope is not only unreasonable, but a detriment to any social progress. As black mothers mourn the violent loss of their sons, as women are continually silenced for speaking against their attackers and even as young activists are belittled for desperately trying to save the future of our planet how can we truly believe that hope could mend these evils? It is justly so that anyone who faces or even witnesses injustice such as these would begin to doubt their own sense of hope. In the presence of evil, a future of justice is often unimaginable. When such oppression comes upon us, is hope truly gone? Or do the clouds of despair, fear and anger only block our awareness of the hope within us that drives us toward justice?

There are many people who, despite the obstacles of repression and despair, dedicate their time and efforts to the pursuit of social justice and who share these concerns regarding the efficacy of hope. Roxane Gay, an active writer of feminist and womanist literature, explains these criticisms of hope in an editorial written for *The New York Times*. She expresses her perspective that hoping “allows us to leave what is possible in the hands of others”, granting many people a sense of comfortability in doing nothing (Gay). To hope is to “abdicate responsibility” and “allow ourselves to be complacent” to the “whims of fate” (Gay). For Gay, and many other social activists, hope is not enough and it is harmful to a social justice movement. It perpetuates systems of oppression by prompting a destructive form of optimistic fatalism.

Although these attitudes of optimism and fatalism are extremely detrimental to any social movement, I argue that the hope which Gay refers to is a severely incomplete and misconceived interpretation of hope. Others, like Gay, who see hope as an impairment to social movements do not fully understand the foundation of hope and how it forms as the catalyst for any and all social movements. There are empowering and more productive qualities that exist within hope that must be identified if any justice is to be achieved. Only by recognizing and acting on hope can a community seek to overcome the evils that dominate it.

Redefining Hope

One of the main problems when interpreting hope is the number of contradictions that reside within its very definition. Jacques Derrida explains the concept of misdefinition in his work *Rogues* when attempting to analyze democracy. He comes to the conclusion that “we do not yet know what *democracy* will have meant nor what democracy is” (Derrida 9) It is these misunderstandings and the lacking of a concrete definition that has led to the deterioration of

democracy itself; it has been symbolically “tied to the machine, bound hand and foot” and torn apart by the conflicts that reside within it (Derrida 9). Although democracy is not the focus of this essay, his insight into how the lack of understanding in regard to a broad concept can tear apart the thing itself is helpful when applied to hope. What has happened to Derrida’s democracy is currently being done to hope; it is being mutilated because of its many facets are being used to divide and symbolically destroy it.

My fear is that hope will continue to be warped by mis-definition. Activists and any person in general who holds the narrow view of hope as a synonym for optimism continually degrades its actual nature. I have seen and continue to witness people in my work who embody hope through their resilience and actions yet degrade it in their words. What I fear is that hope will be criticized into nonexistence and those who defend it will be suppressed by their own community of activists. By continually refusing to recognize its place in the fight for progress, hope will cease to hold value in our society. The very engine of social justice will be lost. Through an examining the many ways in which hope inhabits a person, an experience and a community, we can begin to understand what role it must play in the achievement of social justice.

To begin, I will define hope based on analyses from previous academic works that span over a variety of diverse fields. From these characteristics, I will then identify and highlight the main components that would constitute an effective and necessary form hope in a social movement. By using multiple perspectives – theological, philosophical, psychological and sociological – we can begin to uncover the foundations and truth of hope that has been hidden and contoured by its critics. Following a comprehensive analysis of hope, I will identify how it has shaped social justice movements and how it ought to continue to shape those of today,

despite the present accusations against it. The conclusion of this thesis will argue that not only is hope necessary in a social movement, but it is inherent in any act of progressive justice. My desire for this essay is that it will inspire activists currently involved in the fight for social justice, or those questioning their own involvement, that hope is a form of empowerment.

Characteristics of Hope: Past, Present, and Future

To fully understand hope, we must focus on the essential characteristics which underline it in all of its forms. Alan Mittleman provides an explanation of these characteristics in his book, *Hope in a Democratic Age*, with a philosophical perspective. To begin, hope is such that it manifests itself both in the present and in the future; it is a present feeling that “intends the acquisition of a future good” (Mittleman 43). While living in the present moment, immersed in present desires, one looks ahead towards the future and imagines certain events that they may wish to occur. There is an essential relationship between hope and the future that assumes causality between the two. The rapport between the present and future that is implicit in hope, projects the idea that present actions can influence the future. This very link calls someone to presently take actions toward the progress of their desires. This link between the now and later, however, is not definite. There is no guarantee that an aspect of the present will alter or maintain the future.

Given that hope references the future, it follows that hope *must* account for a level of uncertainty. It is the nature of the physical world that what is to come cannot be absolutely certain. For those that seek to degrade hope’s role in social justice, this fact may be used to support their argument. What is the point of hoping if nothing could come of it? However, I argue that this only supports the notion of hope’s necessity in a social justice movement. “To hope is to resist the cold, reductive comfort of certainty”, so that one is not reduced to seeing

what they know the future to hold based on the current systems of oppression (Mittleman 67). Incertitude, rather than a burden, provides freedom. Uncertainty allows someone to believe beyond the borders of their present situation. The unpredictability of the future frees people to hope beyond what their present conditions dictate. It allows for imagination to formulate goals that can overcome a strict rationalism. There is absolutely no way for one to know, with exact certainty, that their wish shall be realized no matter the effort invested. Yet, there is also no way to know for sure that it will not be realized.

Hope exists in the present in relation to the future but it cannot exist in the past. To have “hoped” that something “had been done differently”, “hadn’t happened” or “hadn’t been said” is not an exercise hope itself, but of regret. This dismay or disappointment is rooted in an unrealized hope and a desire for something from the past to have been different in some manner. But a hope cannot be a past desire because its concern is directed towards the future. Hoping is a present experience that references the future. One may recognize their past hopes and reflect on whether they were fulfilled or not, however, this is not an authentic experience of hope itself, merely a reflection on the past.

The fact that hope cannot exist in the past does not mean that the past must be negated in hope. Hoping is “a way of living prospectively in and engaging purposefully with the past and present” such that hope is “a memory of the future” (Halpin 14-15). By reflecting on past experiences as well as one’s current surroundings, it’s possible to formulate new and realistic wishes for the future. Whereas the uncertainty of the future allows one to imagine new conditions and systems in a time to come, the past and present act as a reference to formulate these goals. In this way, the past plays an important role in the experience of hope. To experience hope is to presently desire a different state of affairs in the future based upon the conditions of

the present and past but without the restriction of certainty that would limit the future to merely an unaltered continuation of the present. Hope does not only exist in the past, present or future; it touches upon all aspects of time.

Characteristics of Hope: How It is Experienced

There has always been the question of what hope manifests itself in. People are able to feel hope, desire hope and reflect on hope, so what exactly *is* it? To begin the analysis, I've drawn on a number of outside sources as well as my own reflection to hopefully bring some clarity to our understanding of the concept of hope. From my research and reflections, I've determined that we can confine hope to three categories for our purpose of analysis: hope as a mental process, hope as an emotion and hope as a catalyst of action.

As established before, hope is a present desire for a certain event, object or experience to come about in the future. The act of hoping, therefore, "requires cognition" (Mittleman 44). It calls for a certain level of mental process in the imagining of a potential future state that includes an analysis of the present and past states of things as references. To complete this task requires in-depth thought regarding multiple facets of life. Attempting to formulate a rational goal "implicitly involves adopting a critical reflective attitude towards a prevailing circumstance" (Halpin 15). The analytical aspect of hope that occupies one's mind is what grounds hope to reality, and avoids the utopian ideals that may sometimes deter the productivity of social movement.

The danger that hope faces is the possibility of becoming a utopian ideal. It is this very danger that Roxane Gay references in her critique of hope. The goal of hope is not "to lie to oneself, to delude oneself with false hope" (Mittleman 67). We understand, because we are rational beings, that it is "foolish to hope unreasonably" (Eagleton 48). Although hopes may be

difficult to realize, Terry Eagleton argues that we must only keep them from becoming insurmountable or absolutely impossible to realize. We must use reason to confine our desires and to keep them from falling within the realm of the “impossible, so that a hope is not invalidated by the gross improbability of it ever coming to pass” (Eagleton 48). It is the cognitive action of hope that protects one from falling into an unrealistic passion. Yet, one danger of the cognitive characteristic of hope is that it may limit our ambitions to achieve those things that have not been nor are currently being experienced. It is the emotive manifestation of hope that balances this risk.

The mental manifestation of hope is not the only way in which it manifests itself. For many people who seek to define hope, it is often classified as an emotion; something one *feels*. For Gay and other activists who critique hope, it is the purely emotive aspect which they warn against. This emotional hope is identified by Halpin as an “absolute hope” (Halpin 16). The absolute hope, or what I have named the emotive hope, is one that is purely guided by sentiment and “sets no condition or limit” to imaginative desires (Halpin 16). Clearly, hope solely as a manifestation of emotion poses a serious problem for social movements. An unrealistic desire for the future can foster impossible goals that would be detrimental to the progress of a movement. However, we know that this is not hope’s only manifestation.

Despite this seemingly harmful effect, the passionate emotions connected to hope allows and motivates one to think beyond the confines produced by the cognitive manifestation of hope. In her definition, Diana Fritz Cates describes “the emotion of hope” as being “a body resonant or felt mode of tending toward a future possibility that we regard as desirable” though “not easily attained or guaranteed” (Cates 24-25). Therefore, as an emotion, hope allows us to desire more than what lies within the present or the past. It is the felt passions that generate the most

meaningful hopes. Without emotion, hope and the future itself would not hold any impact, and no person would be driven to actualize these hopes

The presence of hope in emotion does not mean that the difficulties and obstacles which lie in the way of achieving the goals of hope are negated. In fact, they are recognized by the emotions as well as rationalizations. Hope allows one to reflect on oneself and their own wants to devise a vision of a future which aligns with desires as well as with the prevailing conditions in which one exists. Both the cognitive and emotive aspects of hope act together as a sort of check-and-balance system to formulate an effective hope; one that means to better the future through logical means given the reflections on the present and past. This balanced form of hope is named the “ultimate hope” by Halpin (Halpin 18). The ultimate or effective hope “is an aimed hope... that lives in awareness of the world’s limitations and remains vulnerable to evidence that counts against it” but nevertheless upholds “a prospect of a better life” (Halpin 20,18). The ultimate hope uses both the emotive and the rational manifestations of hope in a balanced way such that the hope is not manipulated into a utopian fantasy nor a restricted goal.

Beyond feeling and reflecting on hope, the third and final essential manifestation of hope is action. One can identify a goal through both their feelings of desire and rational process, but this hope only holds a possibility of becoming realized through effort. The very process of hoping integrates an “awareness that one will have to do something in the future” and the “motion of the will” that urges us to act upon this awareness (Mittleman 42-43, Cates 24). It is when we “face real situations” of systematic oppression and then act on behalf of those victims of injustice that “hope takes flesh” (Lennan 90). The act of hope is only truly realized when it becomes physically realized in our world. Hope that exists without motivation or progress is a superficial, unrealized and inauthentic hope; not the effective hope which we will continue to

focus on throughout this essay. Hope cannot “consist in crossing one’s arms and waiting”; hope’s very nature requires action (Friere 42).

Even through the psychological perspective is hope as a function of the mind, passions and the will. Psychologist Edward Stevens’ work with recovering drug addicts displayed that when one has a “sense of successful determination in meeting goals” along with “plans to meet [these] goals” then a hope becomes greater than a mere desire (Stevens 1). The link between the consciousness and the body expressed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty strengthens this scientific claim. The body is not just the carrier of the mind, but “consciousness is being toward the thing through the intermediary of the body” (Merleau Ponty 140). Therefore, the only way in which the inner reasons or emotions of hope could be manifested in the physical world is through the worldly experience of the body. An authentic hope goes beyond the cognitive and the emotive. It moves to be realized in the physical world, calling those who hope to turn their internal desire for justice into action. It is when hope becomes fully realized, that it serves a fundamental purpose in social movements.

Characteristics of Hope: Relationships to and Within Other Phenomenon

Now that we have defined and characterized the essential aspects of hope, we may continue to examine its forms and relationships with other concepts with greater specificity. In doing so, we may begin to see how hope fits into the requirements of a social movement.

To begin, I will discuss the concept of hope as a communal attitude. Although hope is often seen as an individual and internalized emotion or mental process, it can also be a “recognition of our interdependence with each other and our call to act in solidarity with one another” (Lennan 89). Therefore, a shared hope amongst a community of people has the ability to form the foundation of solidarity. Hope not only *can* exist in a communal environment, but

“hope is... a search which can be carried out only in communion with others” (Friere 42). When we hope, when we share goals for the future and actively work together in order to achieve these goals, a social movement begins. It is the solidarity and unity that is fostered by a shared hope that strengthens this movement. Members can hold each other accountable and empower one another to do their best to help in realizing their hopes for justice. When hope is shared by a community, then the desire of the individual can be transformed into the action of the many.

Another aspect of hope that I would like to examine is the relationship between hope and despair. In many cases, hope has the connotation of being much like optimism. However, as we have determined above, hope is not merely an unbridled sentiment of passive positivity. Hope includes a cognitive function that motivates the will toward the achievement of this desire. Given this quality, we can see how hope and misery can, and often do, exist simultaneously. In fact, “the perception of evil is inherent in hope” (28 Cates). Hoping for a different future is a recognition of a present injustice partnered with the desire for a more just future. Although hope can be characterized by a feeling of optimism, it does not require such an emotion for its existence. What *is* necessary is the cognizant desire for a better state of affairs than that which presently stands along with the movement of the will towards the realization of these goals.

Hope is not a negation of the despair and anger. Hope is the resistance to the systems that cause such oppressions; “as long as I fight, I am moved by hope” (Friere 42). Those who participate in social justice movements can and often do feel pessimistic when facing a multitude of unyielding obstacles, but this does not mean that they are without hope. “Choosing to fight evil and injustice is not a denial of evil, but a refusal to grant finality to evil” (Lennan 87). Hope can, and often does, coexist with intense despair. It is not a sense of positivity or joy in the face

of adversity that symbolizes hope, it is the resistance of oppression along with the anger and sadness that signifies it. The opposite of hope, then, is not pessimism nor realism, but fatalism.

We will begin by understanding and analyzing fatalism so that we may better our understanding of its antonym: hope. Fatalism can be likened to an attitude of “docility” regarding one’s oppression (Friere 35). It is the acceptance of one’s position in the world and a lack of desire or goals to alter this condition. Fatalism can also be explained as a “surrendering to suffering” and an existence in an unjust society without any resistance or action towards change (Lennan 87). If we understand hope as a desire for a future that is characterized as different from the present, then we see how hope and fatalism are in direct contrast with one another. Fatalism gives no thought for the future because those who truly adhere to a fatalistic attitude have given up any control over it, whereas those who hope dare to hold on to a claim of the future. Those who hope name their future in projecting their desires onto it and acting through the medium of their physical body so that these hopes may become actualized. Fatalism is an abandonment of self-agency. Hope is a *declaration* of self-agency.

Hope as Essential to Life

Now that we understand the relationship between hope and despair as well as hope and fatalism, we can understand in greater depth how hope plays a necessary role in social movements, and in life itself. With the developed foundation, we refute the argument that hope is detrimental to a social movement because our understanding of an effective hope can, and very often does, exist alongside despair. To continue, we can argue that any act of resistance is essentially founded upon the principles of hope. Therefore, any action of a social movement that challenges systems of oppression are examples of hope. We can, therefore conclude that hope is the necessary catalyst of social movements or, for that matter, any movement towards justice.

Yet, this is only one component of hope. It is also necessary for the realization of one's own humanity.

To subscribe to fatalism is to consent to dehumanization. By not moving to reclaim one's humanity, by not resisting oppression, one is essentially saying "no" to life" (Lennan 88). To hold a fatalistic view is to sanction one's own oppression and elimination of achieving self-agency; to never realize their humanity. When one adheres to a fatalistic attitude, they give up whatever control of the future they hold. Hope, however, is a certain reclamation of the future. By desiring a different state of affairs in the future, and by acting in ways that may result in the actualization of this goal, one maintains power over themselves and their future. When they hope, one holds on to self-agency even in the face of oppression and despair.

Hoping itself is an act of resistance to fatalism and to the oppressor. By desiring a potential future in which injustice is overthrown, or in the very least challenged, one rejects fatalism and claims control over themselves and their ability to alter the future based on their interaction with the world. To turn away from fatalism, and to act upon the world is to declare one's own humanity. Not only is hope a necessary *part* of a social movement, but to hoping *is in itself* a resistance of injustice and a dedication to freedom. Whether or not it is recognized, hope empowers people to realize their own humanity.

Defining Social Justice Movements

Now that we have a better understanding of how hope manifests itself in human experience, I will continue to examine the character of social movements so that we may see how the two must exist in relation to the each other. Based on my previous experiences of studying and participating in events and organizations concerned with social justice, I've composed a definition that should clarify what a social movement is. In defining a social

movement separately from hope, the parallelism and the relationship of one another will become clearly evident.

A social movement is defined as a communal dedication to social justice. Any member of a social movement must hold a desire for progress and a willingness to act on this desire. These movements take on the forms of marches, consciousness raising, lobbying, acting as an advocate and overall proposing a challenge against the dominating authority of the oppressor. It is not enough to feel empathy for oppressed people, nor to wish that society wasn't organized in a dominating structure. One must act against the oppressor or against the systems that perpetuate injustice to claim to be a member of a social justice movement. The fight to overturn an oppressive system is what indicates social justice.

In this very definition of a social movement hope is evident. If hope is something that embodies and utilizes the emotions, the rationality and the will of a person or community to achieve a certain goal, then the parallelism between hope and the fight for social justice is impossible to ignore. To forge a path of progress, action, passion, and strategy are necessary. Hope is the drive that allows people to resist and defy the oppressive systems while continuing forward as a collective movement. A social movement, therefore, acts as the physical embodiment of hope. Because people strive for justice and equality through actions, this proves the existence of hope within a social movement. If one participates in a social justice movement, yet does not claim to have hope, they are not without hope. They are only not recognizing the true definition of hope and are unable to see the way in which their actions disprove their own statement. Anyone who acts on a desire for social change must have hope. With this relationship established, I will now go on to identify this very form of hope within one of the most well-known social justice movements of United States history.

Examples of Hope in Previous Social Justice Movements

The Civil Rights movement of the 1960's served as one of the greatest examples of how hope plays an essential role in social justice movements. This movement was comprised of a number of organizations all working towards the same goal of justice for Black communities. One of these goals was to expose the inequality of segregated interstate travel and busses. The Supreme court had decided in *Boynton v. Virginia* in 1960 that segregation on busses and in bus terminals was unconstitutional, yet, certain states continued to enforce the separation of black and white people in both these settings (History). Members of the organization called the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) decided to expose these injustices by riding on desegregated busses on a route that took them throughout the Jim Crow South (History). In doing so, the organizers forced the hand of the federal government to enforce the laws that guaranteed their freedoms while also exposing the systematic forms of racism that governed southern states. Those who rode on the busses, both black and white, men and women, faced physical and mental beatings that were meant to halt their efforts. Yet, they persisted.

Another instance of strategic social action the Civil Right movement were the Greensboro lunch counter sit-ins. This 1960 protest was also the work of CORE, however, their target was a bit different than that of the Freedom Riders (History). The students who participated in the sit-ins wanted to show the inequality of black people being denied service at lunch counters while being allowed, and even encouraged to pay for products. Therefore, black people were allowed to give their money, but they would not be served alongside the white patrons. To protest this injustice, a group of students would enter the establishment and sit at the lunch counter. They would not order anything or ask to be served; they would simply sit. Of course, this drew a lot of attention, especially from the media. However, because there was no resistance,

the police were unable to make arrests. The students would continue this for a few days until white patrons began to take offence to their actions. On February 1st, 1960 a group of four black students went to sit at the lunch counter. When a group of white males asked for them to leave, they refused to give up their seats resulting in a violent outbreak. The white patrons beat the black students who did not reciprocate their violence. When police came, they arrested the students. Although this protest ended in violence, the media attention brought a greater awareness to the systematic injustices that Black people living in the south face.

The Freedom riders and the students who participated in the lunch counter sit-ins focused on different aspect of the oppression of black citizens in the United States, however, they both exemplify the necessity of hope in their organized efforts. The theme of hope is most evident in the famous speech given by the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. on 1963 at the March on Washington. King begins his speech by speaking to the urgency of the movement' "now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood" (King). In this quote, we see how hope is at the very foundation of the efforts towards racial equality. King implies that the road to equality will require action to "lift" their fellow Americans from the unjust society in which they live. This speaks to the motion of the will caused by hope. That one's hope, or in King's case: dream, will move someone to act against systems of oppression. Another characteristic of hope that King touches upon in this quote is the communal aspect that we had touched on earlier. King emphasizes the goal of "brotherhood" and states that this "lifting" from oppression must be done for "our" nation. Therefore, according to King, a hope that promotes action within a community of people is what is necessary to conquer injustice.

Another important component that I want to draw from this historic speech is the direct address of hope. He states that with “our hope... we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood” (King). This may seem like a repetition of the quote I have already expanded upon, however, what I want to emphasize is that hope is named as a necessary component of success for the social movement. This identification of hope as the foundation of the movement encourages those involved to look ahead to the future and feel and think of what a society of justice could be. From there, the activated will push them to act towards this. To emphasize hope is not to negate despair, but rather, to continually push people to move forward and to resist even when experiencing despair. The recognition of hope is a form of self-empowerment as it declares ownership over one’s own future. It is this affirmation of self-agency that allows those to continually push forward, even in the face of adversity and prevent the burn-out that so many participants of social movement experience.

Continuing Hope in Future Social Justice Movements

Looking Back on the Civil Rights Movement, it is clear how hope, and the recognition of hope, played an essential role in ensuring the successes of the movement. But one major component that must be pointed out when analyzing the role of hope in the Civil Rights Movement, is that hope was directly addressed and credited for the participants’ perseverance in the face of adversity. Hope was not only evident in reflections on the actions and strategies of the civil rights movement, but it was clearly identified by the movement’s leaders. For the social movements of today, my recommendation is this: address the necessity of hope rather than degrade it.

The necessity of hope is clear especially today. The COVID-19 virus that had been observed from a distance for many months has now made its way to the United States, altering

the very structure of our society. It is in this time, when thousands have lost their jobs, thousands have been admitted to hospitals and millions are left living in constant fear that we do begin to wonder how and if we can feel any hope. Yet, hope clearly exists. We see hope in the dedication of medical workers who are testing and treating those who have contracted the virus. We see hope in the sewing-enthusiasts who are making masks during a shortage of medical supplies. And we even see it in the people who are staying home, isolating and resting. As a community, we are working to save lives in our occupations, our efforts and our choices. Even as we stay home, missing friends and family, we are fighting for a common goal: the restoration and protection of our society. As we stay quarantined in our homes, we may not be able to recognize our own hope, yet we are embodying it. By reclaiming it, we may be able to find a sense of empowerment.

Through the redefining of hope and its analysis in the context of previous social movements, we have seen how hope plays an integral part in all social movements even despite a lack of recognition. To hope is to be moved to action by emotive and reasonable components to achieve a certain goal. Therefore, any social justice movement *must* incorporate hope, and is an embodiment of hope. Yet, we have also seen how hope goes beyond just the context of social movements. To hope, is to reclaim one's own agency over their place in the future. Therefore, hoping has a certain empowering aspect that I believe is necessary for any person who wishes to resist or challenge the systems of oppression that dominate a society.

To hope is to resist the pressures of the dominating power. The goal of the oppressor is to install fatalistic attitudes, yet, hope is the mode in which one can resist these efforts. This is power. To claim self-agency despite despair, despite failures and despite the obstacles to come *is* empowering. And it is this facet of hope that I believe deserves recognition by all those who take

part in social movements. It is not enough to exemplify hope without knowledge of doing so. To maintain perseverance without burning out, we must recognize our power in daring to hope. To recognize hope is to recognize one's own power.

I believe that hope is the foundation that can unite communities in the fight against injustice. By not recognizing its existence and diminishing its meaning to idealistic optimism, we fail to recognize a certain empowerment that resides in all who resist oppression. Once the social justice movements of today begin to address hope directly, we can begin to identify the power within ourselves to hold and defend agency over our own futures. It is not enough to see hope in a social movement; we must declare it.

Conclusion

Hope must formulate the foundation of any social movement based on both of their definitions and based on the example of the Civil Rights movement that we analyzed previously. However, because of the versatility of hope, there are many ways in which it manifests itself in individuals or communities. Some ways are absolutely necessary for a social movement and for life itself, however, other forms of hope can serve as a detriment to social progress. For any individual or group hoping to combat oppressive systems, hope is necessary. But what form of hope?

The activists who criticize hope as promoting false optimism refer not to hope in general but the specific form of hope which inhabits the purely emotive aspect of the individual. I cannot argue against the fact that believing in a utopian-like future without the development of any goals or any motion towards these goals would be beneficial for a social movement. This would lead to the negation or unrealistic altercation of the reality concerning the past and present systems of domination which stand in the way of progress towards justice. However, I can say

that the emotional aspect is only merely one small manifestation of hope. It is when hope is fully and completely realized in all its components that it serves as the necessary foundation for any and all social movements, whether it is recognized or not.

As I explained before, there is also a cognitive and active aspect of hope that check the emotive component. Feelings can help in imagining possibilities for a future, but the reason that is integral to human nature takes into account the reality of the past and present to help tame wild and unrealistic desires. The development of realistic goals to achieve a better future must then move the will towards action; to realize these goals. This is exactly the process that any individual or group must experience in order to even begin the fight against oppression.

This hope must also be shared in a group setting. The emotional and mental procedure must be individual; however, the physical realization of the developed goals can be communal. Social movement organizations must often act on shared goals as a unified group in order to be influential or effective. Therefore, shared emotions and shared reasons amongst a group of activists strengthens the likelihood that these goals for the future are acted on as members can hold each other accountable and strengthen their community. If a social movement embodies all of these characteristics (the emotive, the cognitive, the active and the communal) then it exemplifies hope.

The very nature of social movements is founded upon hope. They resist the concept of fatalism by declaring a form of empowering self-agency over their place in the future. So long as a community of dedicated activists continue to resist oppression and challenge dominating authorities, then they have hope. Activists a social movement organization by default of their very nature exemplify hope.

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