Chapter 7

HOPE AS RHETORIC: CULTURAL NARRATIVES OF WISHING AND COPING

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ABSTRACT

The present chapter rests on two primary assumptions, namely, that hope is both a rhetorical device and a creative emotional experience. Rhetoric is the "art of persuasion," a type of narrative designed to convince, not merely to inform or entertain. Analogously, it can be said that hope is the art of self-persuasion. Like any art, hope must be creative if it is to be effective. This means that an episode of hope can be evaluated in terms of novelty (whether it reveals new approaches or solutions to a problem) and authenticity (whether it reflects a person's own values and interests). Cultures differ in the relative importance accorded to novelty and authenticity when evaluating the creativity of a response, with Western cultures focusing on novelty and Eastern cultures on authenticity. Corresponding differences exist between East and West in the rhetoric of hope. To highlight these differences, we distinguish between three versions of hope. Two versions depend on whether emphasis is placed on wishing (the desired outcome) or coping (actions taken to achieve the outcome). Authenticity-focused (Eastern) cultures emphasize wishing whereas novelty-focused (Western) cultures emphasize coping. Regardless of culture, a third, more elaborate version of hope involves an element of faith, that is, a belief system that helps reconcile the tension that often exists between wishing and coping. Cultural differences in hope have practical as well as theoretical implications, which we explore briefly.

INTRODUCTION

In the words of the poet, Emily Dickinson, "hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul," there to sing a tune without words (Linscott, 1959, p. 79). Other variations on this theme are that a person may overcome obstacles "on the wings of hope" or, even more broadly, that hope is "uplifting." Such epigrammatic phrases convey, in highly condensed form, much longer and complex stories we tell ourselves about hope and its potential benefits. In this chapter, we explore some of those stories and the ways they vary across cultures. Our purpose, however, is not to tell stories. As human beings, the way we think, feel, and act is influenced by the stories we tell ourselves. An analysis of the narratives of hope is, therefore, necessary to the understanding of hope as a human experience.

Central to our thesis is the proposition that hope, at its functional best, is a creative emotional response. Novelty and authenticity are two criteria for evaluating a response as creative (Arnheim, 1966; Averill, 2004); they are also important themes in narratives of hope. Novelty is outward-looking, responsive to situational constraints and possibilities; authenticity is inward-looking, sensitive to one's own self and desires. Thus, narratives of hope in which novelty predominates tend to emphasize *coping* (actions taken to effect a change in circumstances), whereas narratives in which authenticity predominates tend to emphasize *wishing* (deeply held desires that reflect the self more than circumstances).

The relative emphasis placed on novelty and authenticity is also a distinguishing feature among cultures (Sundararajan, 2002a). We therefore propose that narratives of hope vary along a cultural divide anchored on one side by a novelty focus (more common among Western cultures), and on the other side by an authenticity focus (more common among Eastern cultures). Stated differently, coping will be a dominant theme in Western narratives of hope, and wishing, a dominant theme in Eastern narratives.

A gap often exists between wishing and coping. In more complex narratives of hope, regardless of culture, that gap is bridged by a belief system we call faith. Through faith (whether secular or religious), the impossible is made to seem possible, and the meaningless, meaningful. But faith should not be unbridled, lest it lead to "false hope"; culturally based rules help determine the permissible in both wishing and coping.

The theoretical rationale for the above tenets is explained in the section that immediately follows. In subsequent sections, we provide supporting evidence through textual analyses of Western (primarily European and American) and Eastern (primarily Chinese) sources. We also present data comparing representative episodes of hope in the United States and Korea. Finally, we discuss the implications of our analyses for theory and research on emotion, in general, and for the application of hope in a culturally sensitive manner in practical (e.g., health) settings.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

What David Krell (1996) said about "artistic creation" applies *mutatis mutandis* to hope, namely, that "man conjures his gods and his truths, allowing himself to be powerfully seduced to life" (p. 36). We base this observation on two assumptions: (a) hope, like art, can be a creative emotional experience; and (b) hope also allows a person to be "seduced to life."

Hope is a Creative Emotional Experience

Not all theorists agree that hope is an emotion, no less that emotions can be experienced creatively. The assumption that hope is, or at its best can be, a creative emotional experience therefore requires brief justification.

Of the hundreds of emotions recognized in everyday English (Averill, 1975; Fehr & Russell, 1984; Johnson-Laird & Oatley, 1989), hope is rated among the upper third in terms of prototypicality. Hence, the conception of hope as an emotion might seem trivially obvious to an English-speaking audience. When we turn to Eastern cultures, however, we will see that the conception of hope as an emotion is not universal; or, perhaps it would be more accurate to say, the concept of emotion has a different connotation within Eastern cultures. But before getting to that, it is worth exploring briefly the concept of emotion implicit in most contemporary psychological theories.

Emotions have often been depicted as irrational, stereotypic responses that interfere with "higher" thought processes. Although this view has a long and distinguished history within the Western intellectual tradition (cf. Plato), we believe it is mistaken. Paraphrasing Krell's (1996) picturesque terminology, we maintain that in emotion as in art people conjure their gods and their truths. To posit a relation between emotion and art is, of course, nothing new. It is well known that emotions can aid, and also hinder, artistic productions. But we mean more than that when we say that in emotion people conjure their gods and truths. Emotions, we maintain, can be creative responses in their own right (Averill, 1999; Averill & Nunley, 1992; Sundararajan, 2000b, in press).

Not all emotional responses are creative, of course, any more than are all works of art. As explained in detail elsewhere (e.g., Averill, 2002, 2004), for a response to be considered creative, it should meet some variable combination of three criteria: novelty, authenticity, and effectiveness. Succinctly put, a creative response should be out of the ordinary (novelty); it should represent a person's own vision (authenticity); and it should be of value (effective in meeting some challenge, whether aesthetic, intellectual, or practical). Of these three criteria, the first two, novelty and authenticity, are the most important for our purposes, because the relative emphasis placed on each reflects an important cultural divide. (The criterion of effectiveness is constant across cultures, no matter how differently "effectiveness" may be defined.)

When judging the creativity of a response, Eastern cultures tend to emphasize authenticity; Western cultures, novelty (Averill, Chon, & Haan, 2001). Or, to put the matter differently, Eastern cultures show an intrapersonal orientation that privileges self-cultivation and the artist's expression of a personal vision (authenticity), whereas Western cultures value actions that change the world, such as innovations that break with the tradition (novelty). Extending this distinction beyond the realm of creativity, we can speak of authenticity-focused and novelty-focused cultures (Sundararajan, 2002a). This distinction is related to, but more fundamental than, the familiar distinction between collectivist (authenticity-focused) and individualistic (novelty-focused) cultures. Authenticity-focus versus novelty-focus refers to two directions of cognitive attention, inward toward the self versus outward toward the world. These orientations help shape the nature and content of our emotional experiences, as discussed, for example, by Marcel and colleagues (Lambie & Marcel, 2002).

In the analyses that follow, we suggest that conceptions of hope also fall along the authenticity/novelty cultural divide. Specifically, in authenticity-focused cultures, hope's attention is directed inward, capitalizing on self-cultivation as the rational basis for its optimism; in novelty-focused cultures, by contrast, hope's attention is directed outward toward the world, encouraging direct action on an uncertain environment.

Hope is a Narrative with Rhetorical Force

The second assumption we make is that hope is a story we tell ourselves and others. It is not, however, a straightforward reporting of facts, as might be found in a documentary. Hope has a rhetorical quality that makes its message difficult to resist. Hope is not unique in this respect. Emotions, like rhetoric, are acts of persuasion, calls to action in situations where knowledge is incomplete or interests conflict (Averill, 2001; Sarbin, 1995).

Two aspects of any story can be distinguished, namely, its thematic composition and narrative structure. The former consists of the minimal elements that make up the "plot"; the latter "thickens" the plot. Consider, for example, a Shakespearean play. The thematic elements can often be described quite simply by reference to only a few dominant features. The narrative structure, by contrast, is how the elements inter-relate; that is, how they are interwoven and elaborated upon to captivate and hold the audience's attention.

An emotion, too, has both thematic elements and a narrative structure. Too often, theorists have taken the thematic elements to be the most important feature of any emotion, assigning the narrative structure to a secondary, even superficial role. We take the opposite view. The thematic composition is necessary if the emotion is to be the kind of emotion it is (e.g., hope as opposed to anger); however, it is the narrative structure that constitutes the dynamics of the emotion and gives it rhetorical force.

The narrative structure of hope interweaves three thematic elements, namely, (a) a wish for an outcome, the occurrence of which is uncertain; (b) coping responses undertaken to achieve the outcome, in spite of the uncertainty; and (c) a belief system we will call faith. (We use the term "faith" to refer to any belief system that makes a desired outcome seem possible even when empirical evidence or logical argument might suggest otherwise.) When these three elements are integrated into a narrative structure, the result is a positive outlook, an emergent feeling of hopefulness.

Based on the above distinctions, we differentiate three types of hope narratives: wish-based, coping-based, and faith-based. In the wish-based version, the quality of one's desire is primary; accordingly, wish-based narratives of hope have an idealistic slant (i.e., wishing envisions what might be rather than what is). In the coping-based version, action tendencies are primary; accordingly, coping-based narratives have a realistic slant (i.e., successful coping depends on an accurate assessment of the situation). In terms of the cultural divide discussed earlier, wish-based hope is more common among authenticity-focused (Eastern) cultures, whereas coping-based hope is more common in novelty-focused (Western) cultures. We will have much more to say about these cultural differences below.

The role of faith in narratives of hope is more complex than that of wishing and coping and hence requires further explication. For this purpose, we draw on a framework developed by Fauconnier (2001; see also, Turner, 1996).

Faith-based Hope as a Conceptual Blend

Working from the perspective of cognitive science, Fauconnier (2001) was concerned with how two (or more) concepts combine to form new mental structures. Let A and B stand for the original concepts or "input spaces." For A and B to combine, Fauconnier postulated two additional mental spaces, a "generic space" and a "blended space." The elements that A and B have in common are projected into a generic space. A creative synthesis of A and B, based on their common as well as their unique properties, is then selectively projected into a fourth or blended space.

Fauconnier (2001) used the following excerpt from a sailing magazine, *Latitude*, to illustrate the framework. The excerpt concerns a boat "race" between a clipper and a catamaran that occurred in 1993:

> As we [the magazine, *Latitude*] went to press, Rich Wilson and Bill Biewenga were barely maintaining a 4.5 day lead over the ghost of the clipper *Northern Light*, whose record run from San Francisco to Boston they're trying to beat. In 1853, the clipper made the passage in 76 days, 8 hours (Quoted by Fauconnier, 2001, p. 257).

Fauconnier's analysis is as follows:

> There are two distinct events in this story, the run by the clipper in 1853 and the run by the catamaran in 1993 on (approximately) the same course. In the magazine quote, the two runs are merged into a single event, a race between the catamaran and the clipper's 'ghost.' … the two distinct events correspond to two input mental spaces … (p. 257).

The mapping of the inputs onto each other is made possible by "the schematic frame (shared by the two events) of a boat sailing from San Francisco to Boston. This frame appears in a third space that we call the generic space" (p. 257). Blending consists of selective projection from the two input spaces into yet a fourth space, the "blended space." Conceptual blending gives rise to emergent qualities that are not found in the original input spaces. For instance, the relation of the two ships is construed as a "virtual" race in which the clipper, *Northern Light*, becomes a "ghost ship."

With some modifications and extensions, we can apply the framework developed by Fauconnier to an analysis of hope, as illustrated in Figure 1. Corresponding to the two input spaces (the two ships in Fauconnier's example), we have Wishing and Coping. The features that these inputs have in common, for example, goal-block in the present coupled with possible but unconfirmed goal-attainment in the future, are projected into the generic space, depicted at the bottom of Figure 1. Selected features unique to wishing and coping, together with the shared features in the generic space, are combined and projected into the blended space, depicted at the top of Figure 1.
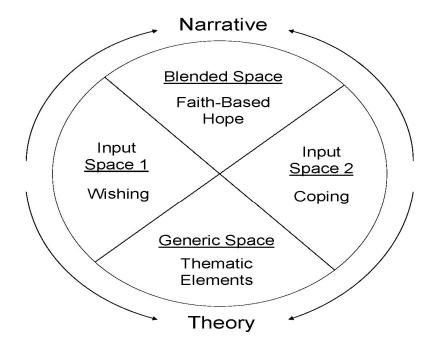
Figure 1. An adaptation and extension of Fauconnier's (2001) model of conceptual blending to an analysis of hope. Wishing and coping are represented as "input spaces," the common thematic elements of which are abstracted and projected into a "generic space." The most complete versions of hope, which we call faith-based, are located in the "blended space," which selectively incorporates unique and often conflicting aspects of wishing and coping as well as their common thematic elements. Looked at from the "outside," the generic space corresponds to a theoretical reconstruction of hope, whereas the blended space corresponds to a narrative reconstruction.

Fauconnier's framework was designed to clarify the cognitive processes involved when concepts are combined on an individual or intrapsychic level; or, in our case, the cognitive processes involved in the act of hoping. However, we can also use the framework to illustrate another point, namely, the difference between approaches to understanding of hope as a social or cultural phenomenon. These two approaches are illustrated by the outer rings in Figure 1, pointing to *narrative* and *theory*. The generic space, as described above, involves the abstraction of common elements, or what Fauconnier calls "the schematic frame." In the scientific domain, this corresponds to a theoretical understanding, which emphasizes simplicity and generality. By contrast, Fauconnier's blended space, which combines unique as well a common features, is better approached through narrative reconstruction.

In the field of emotion, most researchers stop at the equivalent of the generic space by focusing on some common denominators of hope. For example, Lazarus (1991) identified the

"core relational theme" of hope as "fearing the worst but yearning for better" (p. 282). This exemplifies a theory approach. In this chapter, we take a different approach. Our focus is on the blended space of faith-based hope and also, for reasons that will be explained shortly, on the two input spaces of wishing and coping. Since the blended space is where Lazarus' core relational theme is enacted into drama, we adopt a more phenomenologically attuned approach to hope as narrative.

It is in narrative, rather than theory, that hope achieves rhetorical force, and that most fully in the blended space of faith-based hope. Lest there be misunderstanding, it is perhaps worth reiterating that by "faith" we are not referring to any particular creed, religious or secular. Central to our analysis of faith-based hope is the notion of cognitive complexity. It is the cognitive structure, rather than the presence or absence of a creed, that serves as our yardstick. A scenario involving a positive outlook qualifies as a narrative of faith-based hope, if (a) it cannot be explained by the logic of wishing or coping alone; and (b) it entails a paradoxical combination of opposites, such as a juxtaposition of the acknowledgment of dire straits, on the one hand, and a counterfactual belief that things can be otherwise, on the other.

Due to its selective projection and creative synthesis, the blended space of faith-based hope has emergent qualities that are not found in the original input spaces of wishing and coping, nor in the more abstract generic space of shared features. Two emergent qualities of the blended space are of particular importance: contradiction and its resolution. In the blended space of faith-based hope, the inherent tension between coping (which capitalizes on realistic appraisals) and wishing (which has an idealistic bent) is amplified to the point of contradiction; resolution of the contradiction is made possible at a higher level of integration by faith. This "contradiction" can be phrased in various terms, but we follow Kierkegaard's formulation (1941/1954) and consider it in terms of the conflict in appraisal between "necessity," which says that things cannot be otherwise, and "possibility," which claims that things could be otherwise. The blended space of faith-based hope is where necessity and possibility enter into a dialectic relationship.

Faith-based hope is usually spawned in situations where the possibility of achieving a goal is slight. In order to hope in seemingly hopeless situations, one needs a belief system that can resolve multiple contradictions between a stark realism that sees no way around the goal block (necessity), on the one hand, and a rebellious spirit that insists that things could be otherwise (possibility), on the other. For Kierkegaard (1941/1954), the ability to resolve contradictions between necessity and possibility is the hallmark of a healthy personality, and faith is an element in that ability. He used the following analogy to illustrate his point: "A draft is indifferently cold and warm, disparate qualities undialectically combined; but a healthy body resolves this contradiction and does not notice the draft. So it is also with faith" (p. 173).

Kierkegaard's formulation is consistent with another variant of faith-based hope, Viktor Frankl's "tragic optimism," according to which the human potential "at its best always allows for: (1) turning suffering into human achievement; (2) deriving from guilt the opportunity to change oneself for the better; and (3) deriving from life's transitoriness and incentive to take responsible action" (1984, p. 162). Note again the paradoxical combination of opposites—a positive outlook in juxtaposition with the negative experience of tragedies. The centrality of faith in Frankl's system is underlined by Wong and McDonald (2001), who point out that in tragic optimism, "Faith represents a flickering light at the end of the tunnel, the only positive expectation in an otherwise dark situation" (p. 14). We would change this metaphor only

slightly: Faith is not the flickering light, but the lamp that supports the light so that it can remain flickering under conditions of adversity.

The multiple cognitive spaces embedded in faith-based hope suggests that it is the most complex and fully developed version of hope. There is, however, a downside to complexity. Complex structures are not as stable as simpler ones. Thus, faith-based hope tends to decompose into simpler, more stable partial structures, in which either the wishing or coping element dominates. We will provide a detailed example of faith-based hope shortly (drawing on Kierkegaard's exegesis of the story of Abraham); following that, however, much of our analysis will focus on partial structures: narratives of wishing and coping. This is because faith-based hope tends to decompose predictably along the novelty versus authenticity cultural divide mentioned earlier. Specifically, in novelty-focused cultures, hope decomposes into narratives of coping; and in authenticity-focused cultures, into narratives of wishing. When the future is threatening, persons steeped in the Western tradition are likely to assess the situation and ask, "What can I do to bring about the desired end?" Faced with a similar situation, persons steeped in the Eastern tradition are likely to turn inward and re-evaluate their own wish/desire. Thus, it is said that Confucius has only one question to ask in time of adversity: "Have I done anything wrong to warrant misfortune?" If the answer is no, he finds his peace within and is no longer concerned with loss or gain (Sundararajan, 2002a).

As these last observations suggest, when we speak of wish-based and coping-based versions of hope as "simpler" or "incomplete" versions of faith-based hope, we are not making a value judgment. Complex structures are not necessarily better than simple ones. Sundararajan (in press) has demonstrated how in Chinese poetics "protonarratives"—simple structures that do not qualify as well formed narratives—can be emotionally creative. Indeed, we could discuss wish-based, coping-based, and faith-based hope, each as complete and sufficient in its own right. But that way of proceeding would mask structural relations between the three versions, relations we wish to highlight.

RULES OF HOPE

Not just any narrative involving a desired but uncertain future will count as hope. Between the actual experience of hope and broad cultural orientations, such as the authenticity-focus and novelty-focus divide discussed earlier, there exists an intermediate level of social constraints and affordances. We call these the "rules" of hope, the most salient of which are listed below. These rules were identified, based on descriptions by American university students of typical episodes of hope, as well as on maxims and folk sayings within the Western tradition (Averill, Catlin, & Chon, 1990). However, they are couched in sufficiently broad terms as to be applicable universally, even though they may be instantiated differently in different cultures.

Prudential Rules

Hope involves an uncertain future, but the relation is curvilinear, not linear. If there is little or no chance of obtaining a goal, hope may be dismissed as vain or foolish; conversely, if success is a near certainty, hope may be dismissed as mere affectation. In the words of Lynch (1965) hope is, or should be, "realistic imagination."

Action Rules

When hoping, people are expected to do whatever is necessary to bring about the desired outcome, for example, by working harder, thinking more creatively, or taking risks. Even "relying on faith" is an active response, a form of "secondary control" (Rothbaum, Weisz, & Snyder, 1982). By contrast, denial and related coping mechanisms (e.g., "putting the issue out of mind") may help sustain hope in the near term, but the hope is likely to prove "false."

Moralistic Rules

Hope is subject to moral as well as prudential constraints. A person might desire an outcome (e.g., the death of a rich relative) for which he should not hope—at least, not if he wants to be considered of good ("virtuous") character.

Priority Rules

Hope takes precedence over other kinds of wants and desires. If the desired outcome is sufficiently important (e.g., recovery from a potentially fatal illness), prudential and moralistic may rules be set aside, in a "hope against all hope." Conversely, the person who hopes for trivial events risks being viewed as superficial.

As noted, these broad classes of rules may be instantiated differently in different cultures. To adumbrate briefly, coping-based versions of hope, characteristic of Western cultures, emphasize prudential and action rules, whereas wish-based versions of hope, characteristic of Eastern cultures, emphasize moralistic and priority rules.

A NOTE ON METHOD

A distinction is sometimes made between indigenous or cultural psychology and cross-cultural research. As described by Adamopoulos and Lonner (2001), indigenous psychology attempts to understand behavior within its cultural context; direct comparisons between cultures are not a major concern. The methods used in indigenous psychology are diverse, including case studies, semiotics, and phenomenological analyses (see also, Sundararajan, 1995, 1997, 1998). Cross-cultural psychology, by contrast, is explicitly concerned with similarities and differences between cultures, with the aim of reaching generalizations that

apply universally. The methods used in cross-cultural research are better established and tend to be more quantitative than those typical of indigenous psychology.

In this chapter, we employ both methods. First, we explore the nature of hope in Western and Eastern cultures, using historical and textual analyses, case studies, and surveys. Our goal is to understand narratives of hope within their cultural context. We believe, however, that within-cultural understanding also requires cross-cultural comparisons. We therefore summarize the results of two studies that contrast experiences of hope in the United States and Venezuela, and in the United States and Korea. Finally, we explore the theoretical and practical implications of our findings, expanding on some of the themes raised in these introductory comments.

NARRATIVES OF HOPE IN WESTERN CULTURES

The Biblical story of Abraham, as retold by Kierkegaard (1941/1954), provides an introduction to faith-based hope within the Western tradition. We choose Kierkegaard's version not as the canonical interpretation of the biblical story, but rather as a template to reveal the cognitive structure of faith-based hope. More specifically, in his exegesis of the biblical story, Kierkegaard develops his argument in a systematic fashion consistent with Fauconnier's model of conceptual blending: First one horn of a dilemma is presented, then the other; and only after both poles are pushed to their limits is faith introduced to provide a resolution at a higher level of integration. This approach shows how the "blended space" is not a seamless garment but rather a composite of simpler structures (the "input spaces"), albeit with emergent properties of its own. Likewise challenging the mantra that "in faith all is possible," Kierkegaard shows that faith is no facile solution to life, but is rather a paradoxical combination of opposites such as "necessity" and "possibility," realism and idealism. The exact terms used by Kierkegaard are immaterial, nor are those in any other faith-based hope narratives that we shall encounter later in our analysis. As explained earlier, our definition of faith is structural rather than ideological. In this respect, Kierkegaard provides an excellent starting point for further analysis. As he develops his arguments, he reveals (like a Russian box) the hidden structural complexities of hope. In the following exposition of Kierkegaard, therefore, it is well to remind ourselves not to focus on the content, but rather on the structural movement of his arguments so as better to traverse with this original thinker the multiple mental spaces of faith-based hope.

The epicenter of Kierkegaard's exegesis concerns Abraham's attempt to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, in compliance with God's command, only to find that a ram is substituted at the last minute. Abraham was "great by reason of his hope whose form is madness," writes Kierkegaard (p. 31). The description of Abraham's hope as "madness" suggests that we are dealing with a phenomenon for which there is not sufficient rational basis, or behavior for which "something else" besides common sense is needed as explanation. This attribution of "something else" above and beyond reason and logic is often made in reference to emotions (passions) and also to creativity. In the case of Abraham, it is both—the hope of Abraham is emotion at its most creative. A closer examination of the "blended space" of this biblical story will make this point clear.

Two "emergent qualities" of the blended space of hope play an important role in the story of Abraham: *polarization* and *integration of terms* derived from the input spaces of wishing and coping. At one extreme is the radicalization of coping. The reality principle in coping, or what is referred to by Kierkegaard as "necessity," is now grappling with acceptance of impossibility, because, as Kierkegaard puts it, "humanly speaking no possibility exists" (p. 171). And again: "The believer perceives and understands, humanly speaking, [that] his destruction (in what has befallen him and in what he has ventured) [is unavoidable] … ." (p. 172). At the other end of the polarization is the radicalization of wishing into a defiant spirit, or as Kierkegaard puts it, in terms of a faith that "fights madly for possibility" (pp. 171-172). The dialectic interplay of necessity and possibility is a constant refrain throughout Kierkegaard's exegesis of Abraham: "even at the instant when the knife glittered he believed … that God would not require Isaac" to be sacrificed (p. 46). And again: "for God all things are possible. … [The] decisive affirmation comes only when a man is brought to the utmost extremity, so that humanly speaking no possibility exists. Then the question is whether he will believe that for God all things are possible—that is to say, whether he will believe" (p. 171).

This combination of opposites, so characteristic of the "magic synthesis" of creative thinking (Arieti, 1976), is what warrants the attribution of "absurdity" with regard to Abraham's hope: "So he recognizes the impossibility, and at that very instant he believes the absurd" (Kierkegaard, 1941/1954, pp. 57-58). The hope that is cognizant of impossibility but does not despair is a hope fraught with inherent contradictions on multiple levels: At one level, God is contradicting himself: " … it was indeed the absurd that God who required it [sacrificing Isaac] of him should the next instant recall the requirement … ." (p. 46). At another level, it is the contradiction caused by affirmation of both necessity and possibility with equal conviction: "The contradiction in this case is that, humanly speaking, destruction is certain, and that nevertheless there is possibility" (p. 173). Thus the "absurdity" of faith lies in its affirmation of wish in the face of impossibility: "By faith I make renunciation of nothing, on the contrary, by faith I acquire everything … " (p. 59). And again, "for after having made the movement of resignation, then by virtue of the absurd to get everything, to get the wish whole and uncurtailed … " (p. 58).

And how do the rules of hope, outlined earlier, enter into the picture? Due to the complexity of its narrative structure, the hope of Abraham does not adhere straightforwardly to any particular rule; rather, it requires a delicate balance among all the rules, for instance, a realistic acceptance of the inevitable in juxtaposition with an idealistic yearning for possibilities. This is true with faith-based hope in general. Furthermore, since complex structures that require the checks and balance of multiple rules are more prone to misdirection than simpler structures, faith-based hope can "go astray" more easily than wish- or coping-based versions of hope. A case in point is the so-called "false hope syndrome," when the "priority rule" of hope has tipped the balance and over-ridden other rules of hope, such as prudential and action rules. We will have more on the "false hope syndrome" later.

Vicissitudes of Hope within the Western Tradition

The story of Abraham is exemplary of faith-based hope within the Western tradition. It is, however, not the only narrative of hope. According to Greek myth, Prometheus stole fire from heaven and gave it to humankind; angered by this betrayal, Zeus ordered that a woman—Pandora—be fashioned who would bring misery to the race of men. As a "gift," Pandora brought with her a box. When the box was opened, a plethora of human ills escaped; only hope remained, caught under the lid. Was hope just another ill like the others that had escaped, or was it a benefaction left behind to aid humankind? The Greeks were ambivalent on this point. In general, however, the term, *elpis*, which is usually translated as "hope," had more a negative than a positive connotation (Myers, 1949). Plato reflects this negative attitude when he assigned hope to the mortal aspect of the soul or *psyche*, which is "subject to irresistible affections—first of all, pleasure, the greatest incitement to evil; then pain, which deters from good; also rashness and fear, two foolish counselors, anger hard to be appeased, and hope easily led astray" (*Timaeus*, 69d).

As exemplified by the story of Abraham, current conceptions of hope in Western cultures owe more to the Judeo-Christian tradition than to classical Greek thought. Brunner (1956) attributes the centrality of hope in Judaism and Christianity to the fact that these (and Islam, too) are historical religions. They emphasize events that presumably occurred in the past and other events that are promised to happen in the future (e.g., the coming of a messiah, redemption). The important point here is that the future is not conceived of as a repetition of the past, as the manifestation of some eternal, recurring cycle. Rather, past and future are related in a linear, progressive fashion.

In Christianity, hope was held in such esteem that it was classified not only as a basic emotion (cf. Aquinas, 1967), but also as one of the three theological virtues, along with faith and love (*agape*). Kierkegaard (1962) explained the relation among these three virtues in the following way: both faith and hope are grounded in love, for "love believes all things," and "love hopes all things"; and again, "no one can hope unless he also loves" (p. 239).

During the Enlightenment (eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries) the explicitly religious rationale for hope was gradually replaced by a different kind of faith, namely, faith in progress based on science. But the promises of science soon rang hollow in the sweatshops of the industrial revolution, and the Enlightenment gave way to romanticism and even nihilism. Nietzsche may be taken as representative of the latter trend. Harking back to the Greek myth, Nietzsche (1878/1986) observed that, by including hope among the evils in Pandora's box, Zeus only wanted to prevent humans from taking their own lives when overwhelmed by misfortune. Hope, Nietzsche asserted, "is the worst of all evils, for it protracts the torment of man" (p. 45).

Nietzsche's views on hope are an exception within the Judeo-Christian tradition (a tradition, parenthetically, that he was at pains to criticize). Fackenheim (1970) has posed the question: "How come Jews are still around after thousands of years, mostly exiled?" There is only one answer, he maintained, and that is *hope*. According to Fackenheim, hope is a "Jewish duty," now more than ever. "I think merely to survive, to exist as a Jew after Auschwitz, is to be committed to hope: to hope because you are commanded to hope, because to despair would be a sin" (p. 91). Echoing Fackenheim, the Christian theologian, Moltmann

(1980) argued that "hope is a command. Obeying it means life, survival, endurance, standing up to life until death is swallowed up in victory" (p. 20).

In short, hope has an ambivalent history within the Western cultural tradition—sometimes condemned but more often praised as a virtue. As a virtue, hope rests on a foundation of faith; but as indicated earlier, the faith need not be religious. Hope may be fostered by any belief system that promises a better future in spite of the realities of a problematic present (Desroche, 1979). Thus, it comes as no surprise that one of the major modern works on hope is by a Marxist philosopher, Ernst Bloch (1959/1986). Hope is also a central ingredient of what Bellah (1967) has called the "civil religion" of the United States. As Bellah explains, in the early years of the Republic, the United States was often compared by its leaders with ancient Israel: Europe was Egypt, and America, the promised land. That way of speaking is no longer heard, and the old frontiers that seemed to offer endless possibilities are long gone; nevertheless, there remains within American culture an implicit faith, not fully justified by fact or reason, that promises a better future, a "new frontier" or a "new beginning" (to cite several recent political slogans). And, as will be noted shortly, politicians who disclaim this hopeful message are liable to lose elections.

Hope and Expectancy

When analyzing one concept, it is often helpful to compare it with another concept of similar meaning. For example, the contrast between knowledge and belief sheds light on the meaning of each (Austin, 1961), and similarly for the contrast between loving and liking, or anger and annoyance (Averill, 1982, Ch. 11). In the present section, we contrast hope with two closely related concepts, expectancy and optimism.

When faced with a problematic future, people within Western cultures have a choice: Desiring a positive outcome, they may adopt either an emotional or a non-emotional stance. Hope and expectancy illustrate the difference between these two approaches. Expectancies are, or should be, a direct function of probabilities—the higher the probability, the greater the expectancy. Hope, by contrast, shows a curvilinear relation to probability (cf. the prudential rule discussed earlier).

Consider a politician who states, "I hope the economy will improve," compared to one who says, "I expect the economy to improve." Which one would garner the more votes? Probably the second. The first politician's statement of hope is compatible with the qualification, "but I fear that the recession will continue." The second politician's expectancy of improvement can not be qualified in a similar manner without self-contradiction, the reason being that expectancies are presumably based on rational (non-emotional) considerations.

But emotional appeals also have their advantages. In the United States, politicians who emphasize hope *under appropriate circumstances* tend to win—not lose—elections (Zullow & Seligman, 1990). Hope narratives, we have said, are more like rhetorical arguments than factual reports. Pursuing the previous example, the politician who expresses hope envisions a desired outcome (e.g., recovery from recession), suggests a plan of action (however vaguely), reinforces the belief (faith) that no obstacle is insurmountable, and thus instills a positive outlook in the electorate.

The above examples accentuate the difference between hope and expectancy, a difference that is often blurred in everyday speech. "Optimism" is another term that seems to combine elements of hope and expectancy. In most situations, optimism follows a rational calculus, as

does "expectancy"; that is, the more probable an outcome, the more optimistic a person might be. But optimism also has an emotional connotation. For example, some people are habitually optimistic, just as some people are habitually anxious, hostile, happy, and the like. In other words, the optimistic person is prone to hope. Nevertheless, there are good reasons for maintaining a distinction between hope and optimism, as well as between hope and expectancy. One way to illustrate this, and to broaden our perspective beyond the English-speaking world, is to examine hope in a Spanish-speaking country.

Hope in Venezuela and the United States

Etymologically, "hope" is a word of Germanic origin; the nearest equivalent in Spanish is *esperanza*, which has a Latin root. For most purposes, the differences in connotation between hope and *esperanza* are minor—with a notable exception. As discussed above, a rather sharp distinction is made in English between "hope" and "expectancy." In Spanish a distinction also is made between *esperanza* (hope) and *expectativa* (expectation). However, Spanish lacks the verb *expectar*; both "to hope" and "to expect" are implied by same verb, *esperar*. To express rational expectancy, circumlocutions are typically used, such as *saber que* (to know), *anticipar* (to anticipate), or *tener la expectativa de* (to have an expectancy of).

In her doctoral dissertation, Nancy Maria Romero (1988, 1990) asked university students in the United States and Venezuela what grades they hoped (*esperar*) and expected (*saber*) to receive on an upcoming mid-term exam. Since the concepts of hope and expectancy are more distinct in English than Spanish, Romero predicted that the difference between hoped-for and expected grades would be larger for American than for Venezuelan students. This prediction was confirmed; that is, Venezuelan students tended to expect the grade they hoped for, at least more so than did the American Students. When the expected grades and hoped-for grades were compared with the actual grades received, the expected grades were more accurate for both American and Venezuelan students—but more so for the Americans. The Venezuelan students were more likely to overestimate the grades they would receive; that is, their expectancies were biased in the direction of their hopes. They were, in a sense, more optimistic than realistic.

In short, Americans draw a sharper distinction between hope and expectancy than do Venezuelans, and their expectancies tend to be more accurate than the expectancies of Venezuelan students. These findings are consistent with those of Bustamante in Venezuela and Rodrigues in Brazil, who report that the grades expected by Latin American university students tend to be unrealistically high, perhaps because they are based more on emotion than on rational assessment (cited by Romero, 1988).

As an emotion, hope can lead to "greatness" (Kierkegaard), but it can also, especially when the rules of hope are violated, "easily lead astray" (Plato) or "protract the torment of man" (Nietzsche). But reason, too, can lead astray. "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions" (Hume, 1739/1978, p. 415). Taken out of context, this famous observation by Hume is little more than hyperbole. Yet it points to an important truth: When faced with potential harm, reason can sometimes take us only so far. At the point where reason fails, and yet action is necessary, we must construct a different story. We call that story "hope"—an emotion that prompts us to action when reason cannot do so. And herein lies a problem. Referring to hope (or its cognates in other Western languages) inevitably introduces a subtle cultural bias. "Hope" is a conceptual figure against the ground of Western culture. When we

turn to Eastern cultures, as we now do, not only does the ground change, but so, too, does the figure—the concept of hope itself.

NARRATIVES OF HOPE IN EASTERN CULTURES

By "Eastern" we refer to the East Asian societies of China, Japan, and Korea. We begin with a few observations on the terms in East Asian languages that are near equivalents to "hope" in English. We then explore the cultural background in which these terms have meaning, with particular emphasis on Confucian and Buddhist traditions. Our primary focus is on narratives of hope within Chinese culture; in addition, we summarize the results of a study comparing hope in Korea and the United States.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

"Hope" is usually translated into Chinese as "*hsi-wang*." The translation, however, is inexact. *Hsi-wang* is almost synonymous with optimism, in the sense of a favorable but realistic estimate of the possibilities for having one's goal met. Thus, it wouldn't be possible without sounding illogical to say about a terminal illness that there is still "hsi-wang." Far more versatile is the word stem "*wang*," which is closely related to wish/desire. A few examples from Mathews' (1963) Chinese-English Dictionary should suffice: (a) The "*wang*" in Chinese also means "gaze," so we have the expression: "to bore through with both eyes by gazing," which refers to "a long expectant attitude" (p. 1045b); (b) "*wang*" in combination with 'thirst' means "ardent longing for, as a thirsty man longs for water" (p. 1045c); (c) "*wang*" in combination with "hot" means "earnest longings for; ardently desiring" (p. 1045c); and, (d) "*wang*" in combination with "earnest" means "earnestly hoping" (p. 1045a). In all these cases, there is no appraisal of one's ability to meet goals, but simply that of the desirability of the goal and the uncertainty of its attainment. In addition, the following observations can be made: (a) The Chinese have a word for the condition referred to by Ortony, Clore, and Collins (1988) as being "pleased about the confirmation of the prospect of a desirable event" (p. 110). In contrast to the multipurpose term "satisfaction" given by Ortony et al. as token for this condition, the Chinese have a specific term for it: "*ju-yuan*" or "as one would wish" (Mathews, 1963, p. 1158c); and, (b) Mathews gives two examples of "vain hopes": "to gaze at plums to quench one's thirst, to sketch a cake to satisfy one's hunger" (p. 1045a). The first case refers to a famous general who called attention to the plum trees (the sight of sour plums helped to generate saliva) on the road when his soldiers were suffering from thirst in a long march. The second case is self-explanatory. These Chinese proverbs of "vain hope" are cases of wishful thinking that forfeits the futuristic orientation of hope by supplanting it with immediate gratification in the here and now. This is different from the "false hope syndrome" in the West, where the future expectancy remains except that it fails to include reality into its equations.

Japanese and Korean Concepts

Boucher (1980) constructed affective lexicons for a variety of cultures, including Japan and Korea (but not China). Interestingly, Korean participants in Boucher's study did not spontaneously list hope as an emotion. This does not mean that the Koreans lack a term for hope, only that the Korean concept (*himang*) lacks the emotional connotation of the English concept. By contrast, Japanese participants listed a cluster of hope-related terms with affective connotation. On close examination these terms are all derivations of "*nozomu,*" which is the equivalent of "*wang*" in Chinese. "*Nozomu*" is rendered according to standard Japanese-English dictionary as "desire, hope, aspiration." From "*nozomu*" we get the following derivations: "*kibo,*" which has the same connotations, plus "anticipation;" "*hossuru*" meaning "desire, craving, want, ambition." Another derivation of "*nozomu*" is "*negau*" meaning "desire, wish, aspiration, vow, prayer, petition." Lastly, a related word is "*machi*" meaning "wait." And the Japanese lexicon has a plethora of terms describing this condition such as "eagerly waiting," "tired of waiting," or "waiting all day for." The same is true for "*wang*" in Chinese.

Because of the close conceptual overlap between "*nozomu*" and "*wang,*" much of what we have to say about hope in China applies as well to the Japanese context. Philosophically and culturally, Korea also has been heavily influenced by China; not surprisingly, then, Korean and Chinese conceptions of hope are similar in fundamental respects. We will discuss the Korean concept of hope (*himang*) in detail shortly.

Cultural Background

Earlier, we noted the importance of the Judeo-Christian tradition in shaping the (positive) conception of hope in Western cultures. Eastern conceptions of hope rest on different foundations, namely, Confucianism and Buddhism. As in the case of Christ, little is known of the life of Confucius, even if he existed as an actual historical figure (Brooks & Brooks, 1998). Be that as it may, he is generally said to have lived from 551-479 BCE. Buddha, the "Enlightened One," is the name given to Siddhartha Gautama, who lived from 563-883 BCE. Although Confucius and Buddha were contemporaries, they were geographically distant, the former born in China, the latter in Northern India. Over the centuries, however, Buddhism spread from India to much of Asia, including China, Korea, and Japan, where it flourished in coexistence with Confucianism. Ironically, Buddhism largely disappeared in India proper by the 12th century due, in part, to the assimilation of Buddhist teachings into Hinduism and to the Muslim invasions, which destroyed many of the Buddhist monasteries in Northern and Central India.

A major difference between the Judeo-Christian and the Confucian intellectual traditions has to do with the place of humans in the natural and social order. In the book of Genesis (Ch. 1, v. 28), humans are given dominion "over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." But humans are also depicted as finite creatures who must trust in the ultimate goodness and wisdom of a transcendent God for their salvation. The Judeo-Christian tradition thus encourages action in situations where action is possible, and reliance on God's benevolence in situations that otherwise might appear "hopeless."

Neither an urge to action, in the sense of dominion, nor faith in a transcendental and ultimately benevolent power, play an important role in Confucian philosophy. Instead,

emphasis is placed on the cultivation of one's humanity or *jen*. This leads to a different emphasis in Eastern conceptions of hope, if "hope" is even an appropriate translation for its Chinese counterpart "*hsi-wang*." Consider the fact that "hope" and its variants (e.g., hoping) are mentioned over 150 times in the Bible (*New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance*), but not once in the English translation of *The Analects of Confucius* (Legge, 1971*)*. The latter is a much smaller work, but that does not account for the difference. "Desire" (or "*yu*" in Chinese), an important component of the Western conception of hope, is often referred to in *The Analects of Confucius*, but typically as something to be brought into harmony with the moral order:

> The Master [Confucius] said, "at fifteen I had my heart bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm. At forty, I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven. At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired [*yu*], without transgressing what was right. (*Analects* 2/4, in Legge, 1971, pp. 146-147).

The Confucian tradition differentiates between petty and noble desires. As indicated in the above passage, the former are to be transcended, whereas the latter are fostered by the Confucian "gentleman." Hopes that are associated with fears are considered "petty" desires unworthy of the gentleman scholar: hopes for gain and fears of loss are simply referred to in both Taoist and Confucian texts as "*de-shi zhi xin*" (thoughts/emotions [heart] of gain and loss).The nobler version of wish is the "personal vision," a cardinal sentiment in the Confucian tradition. From the perspective of self-cultivation, the quality of one's wish/hope makes all the difference in the world. Thus Confucius was wont to encourage his disciples to express their wish/vision/ambition. One of his favorite conversation starters was the invitation to self-disclosure about wishes: "Come, let each of you tell his wishes" (*Analects*, 5/25, in Legge, 1971, p. 182). Once at the request of his disciple Tsze-lû, Confucius also shared his wishes: "in regard to the aged, to give them rest; in regard to friends, to show them sincerity; in regard to the young, to treat them tenderly" (*Analects*, 5/25, in Legge, p. 183). Implicit in his interest in the wish statements of his disciples is the master's evaluation of them by the quality of their wishes. To illustrate this point, we turn to an episode in the *Analects* (11/25): One day Confucius posed a hypothetical question: "From day to day you are saying, 'We are not known.' If some *ruler* were to know you, what would you like to do?" Most of his disciples told of their political ambitions, then the master turned to Tsang Hsî, and said, "Tien, what are your wishes?" The following passage is cited in full to give a flavor of what is involved in a discourse on wishes in the Confucian tradition:

> Tien, pausing as he was playing on his lute, while it was yet twanging, laid the instrument aside, and rose. "My wishes," he said, "are different from the cherished purposes of these three gentlemen." "What harm is there in that?" said the Master; "Do you also, as well as they, speak out your wishes." Tien then said: "In *this*, the last month of spring, with the dress of the season all complete, along with five or six young men who have assumed the cap, and six or seven boys, I would wash in the [river] Î, enjoy the breeze among the rain altars, and return home singing." The Master heaved a sign and said, "I give my approval to Tien." (Legge, p. 248, italics in original).

Confucius was praising Tien for the quality of his wish. When the other disciples were asked what they would do if their talents were recognized by the ruler, the majority spoke of

their political ambitions, but not Tien, who indulged in fantasies of a spring outing. Tien's fantasies had the simplicity of a rustic, yet the refined taste of a cultured gentleman. The Master's approval of Tien indicates that Confucius, unlike Plato, privileged the aesthetic over the political as paradigm for self-cultivation (see Hall & Ames, 1987). The story also illustrates how, for Confucius, people are to be judged by the quality of their wishes.

Confucian and Buddhist moral teachings are in many respects similar; for example, both see the origin of suffering in petty desires which are to be overcome through a cultivation of the self. But there are also important differences. The Buddhist hope is based on the belief in reincarnation, which in turn fosters the hope of reward in the next life either on earth or, more typically, in heaven. In very general terms, the Buddhist heaven is a place where wishes are granted to those who have accumulated enough merit in their previous lives (Sundararajan, 1979, 1981). The Buddhist hope is frequently expressed in terms of "making a vow." For illustration, consider the following episode in a 7th century anthology of Buddhist folklore (*Fa-yuan chu-lin*): When the young man Tung Ch'ing-chien died, he appeared in a vision to his father and said, "I hope that from now on father and mother would no longer weep for me, nor offer me sacrifices. Mother has made the vow to see me again, hence after she dies in the near future, she shall be reborn in the same place as I am. Father shall live up to seventy-three … ." His father said to him, "Your mother misses you so much that she is now in critical condition. Would you like to let her see you?" "No" said Chien, "it is not necessary for us to meet. It would only deepen her sorrow. Just tell her what I said, and she will be consoled … ." (Takakusu & Watanabe, 1960, p. 677c; translation adapted from Sundararajan, 1979, p. 234).

This story meets our definition of a narrative of hope: To the bereaved mother of Chien, death is the obstacle to her desire to be with her son; belief in reincarnation fosters the promise of reunion in the hereafter, and thereby helps her to bear the pain of separation, and channels her energy into acceptance of her own impending death in anticipation of a better future. The reader is led to believe that, as predicted by her deceased son, this poor woman will be able to maintain a positive outlook in spite of all these calamities. This protocol of Chien's mother shares with Abraham all the essential elements of a full-fledged hope: the acceptance of impossibility/death without despair, the dialectic interplay between necessity (death and separation) and possibility (heavenly reunion in the hereafter), or reality and desire. Yet, there are striking differences between the Buddhist hope and that of Abraham.

In the Buddhist story, everything hinges on "making a vow" (to be reborn in heaven). Thus the Buddhist faith is intrapersonal: Salvation depends on "self power," on one's own intrinsic qualities such as sincerity of the vow. In sharp contrast is the faith of Abraham, which is interpersonal—an affair between God and the soul, and a journey into the unknown that depends on the "other power" (God) for the fulfillment of the promise. Another major difference is salience: Faith-based hope is not salient in traditional China. Far more salient is wish-based hope, in which the intrapersonal focus of the Confucian tradition (see Sundararajan, 2002a), with its concomitant emphasis on self reliance, finds eloquent expression in the well-known story of the "foolish old man who moved the mountains." As told in the ancient text *Lieh-Tzu* (date uncertain, but 3rd century AD or earlier), an old man in his nineties decided to move the two mountains that obstructed traffic (Yuan, 1957, pp. 135-136). His wife by the name of "Offering Suspicion" reminded him of his age; so did the "wise old man at the bend of the river." But the "Foolish Old Man" said to them, "Even if I die, I have sons, and when my sons die, they have their sons, who in turn will have their sons. Thus

with concerted effort of generations, we will surely be able to level the mountains" (p. 135). The "foolish" old man was readily joined by his sons and grandchildren, as well as neighbors, and the crew kept digging at the mountains for over half a year, until God (*Shang-ti*, The Lord in Heaven) heard about their project through a minor god who eavesdropped on their conversations. Moved by the hero's "steady-fast sincerity" (p. 136), God had the two mountains removed from the path of the "Foolish Old Man."

Although the term "hope" (or its Asian near equivalent) does not appear anywhere in the text, this story has all the thematic elements of hope: The hero had a desired outcome (remove the mountains), planned his action based on the belief that concerted efforts of humans could overcome Nature, and consequently held a positive outlook toward the daunting task he imposed on himself and others. It also forms some striking contrasts with the story of Abraham. Consistent with the "individualistic" versus "collectivistic" distinction between cultures, Abraham's drama, as retold by Kierkegaard, is played out in solitude, in the "depth" of the protagonist's soul as it were, whereas the "Foolish Old Man" has turned his personal conviction into a community affair. But the most important difference lies in the fact that Abraham's is a faith-based hope, whereas that of the "Foolish Old Man" a wish-based hope. Otherwise put, the story of Abraham cannot be explained by the frameworks of either wishing or coping alone, but requires the integrative framework of the third element—faith. By contrast, the story of the "Foolish Old Man" can be explained by the framework of wish alone.

Not to be found in the "Foolish Old Man" is the dialectic interplay between wishing and coping: the dialectics of impossibility and possibility, of despair and "hope beyond hope" are not there. The hero's self-imposed task of moving the mountains is daunting but not impossible, given the fact that it is realistic in the Chinese tradition to count on the continued efforts of one's progenies to finish a task. But realistic assessment of the situation, a hallmark of the coping framework, is not what "Foolish Old Man" is admired for. Rather, he has been understood by the Chinese to be the paragon of determination, sincerity, perseverance, and so on, all having to do with the edifying quality of his wish. For instance, the contemporary raconteur, Yuan Ke (1957) commended the "Foolish Old Man" for his "readiness to implement his ideas," and his "undaunted spirit and ambition" (p. 136). The Chinese emphasis on the volitional and qualitative aspect of wish/desire stems from their belief that the key to correct action lies in the correct wish/desire, a perspective quite different from the coping-oriented assumptions of the West that privilege accurate assessment of the situation as vital to successful action. Furthermore, we may recall that the "sincerity" of the "Foolish Old Man" is the same factor that defines the efficacy of the "vows" the Buddhists make to be reunited with their loved ones in heaven (see the story of Tung Ch'ing-chien discussed earlier).

A Contemporary Example

On a visit to Taiwan where she was raised and received her undergraduate education, Louise Sundararajan had the opportunity to interview a successful businessman, David Chow, and his wife, Nancy Chin. Mr. Chow had been kidnaped in 2000 and held in captivity for 23 days, during which time he was tortured and beaten almost daily. Mr. and Mrs. Chow were interviewed in December, 2002. The results of that interview are presented here with permission.

A devout Buddhist, Mrs. Chow said that her Buddhist prayer had been helpful during the ordeal. Although more secularly minded, Mr. Chow had learned some religious practices from a Buddhist-Taoist denomination called "Tien-Ti Chiao" (Heavenly Lord denomination). He found particularly useful the following twenty-word mantra that he chanted often during his captivity.

Chung (Loyalty)	*Cheng* (Rectitude)	*Po* (Equanimity)	*Chie* (Moderation)
Shu (Forgiveness)	*Yi* (Justice)	*Hsiao* (Filial piety)	*Chien* (Frugality)
Lien (Purity)	*Hsin* (Trust)	*Jen* (Benevolence)	*Chen* (Truthfulness)
Ming (Insight)	*Ren* (Fortitude)	*T'su* (Compassion)	*Li* (Propriety)
The (Virtue)	*Kung* (Fairness)	*Chue* (Awareness)	*Ho* (Harmony)

By meditating on these 20 words, Mr. Chow was able to transcend the pain and suffering during his captivity. (A full description of this meditative practice can be found on the *T'ien-Ti Chiao* web site: http://www.tienti.org.) Few Westerners in a similarly traumatic situation would think of meditating on such words as "insight," "rectitude," filial piety," "frugality," "propriety," and the like. But within the Chinese tradition, the characteristics denoted are the mark of a good person, and being a good person is the ticket to salvation. Mr. Chow said, in an interview reported elsewhere (Lin, 2000, pp. 76-81), that when he chanted the twenty-word-truth, he had a vision of the leaders in the religion, and was thereby filled with a sense of security, harmony, and connectedness.

"Hope," it might be noted, is not a term on the list of 20. This is not an omission peculiar to this list. Mr. and Mrs. Chow were asked to complete a brief questionnaire consisting of 14 items. Each item described a personal characteristic that might be important when dealing with a traumatic situation, specifically included in the list was the trilogy of "faith," "hope," and "love." The instructions were:

> During the kidnaping, I was able to cope because of the following factors (please rate them according to their importance on a scale of 1, least important, to 5, most important): Courage, hope, love, faith, endurance, perseverance, determination, insight, self-confidence, the belief that man shall overcome fate, flexible response to circumstances, problem solving ability, IQ, strength/fortitude.

The following are Mrs. Chow's ratings:

Rated 5: perseverance, determination, self-confidence, strength/fortitude
Rated 4: problem solving ability
Rated 3: endurance, insight, flexibility
Rated 2: courage, hope
Rated 1: love, faith, IQ, man shall overcome fate

Mr. Chow's responses were not as differentiated as his wife's. He gave the highest rating of 5 to every item except "love," which received a rating of 3. Mr. Chow was therefore asked to select the top five factors. His choices were: "endurance," "flexible response to circumstances," "problem solving ability," "strength/fortitude," and "perseverance."

The above results are based on the responses of only one couple, but they are given added weight in view of the direness of the situation, a situation that in the West would normally call for responses of "faith" and "hope." More important, the responses of Mr. and Mrs. Chow are consistent with our earlier discussion of hope within the Chinese tradition. To recapitulate briefly, being primarily wish-based in its narrative structure, Chinese hope seems to be underdeveloped in its rhetoric of coping in the form of direct action, and even in the type of secondary control implied by "hope beyond hope" (i.e., reliance on some power beyond the self). Simply put, *hsi-wang* (hope) is typically not considered a coping mechanism; even in dire situations, the Chinese tend to rely on self-power (courage, fortitude, etc.) rather than other-power (God, grace, etc.).

The above point can be illustrated in another way. With the exception of Chinese Christian sayings and some Buddhist folk-tales, the faith-based version of hope, with its rhetoric of "hope beyond hope," exists primarily in cryptic forms in the Chinese language. For instance in such proverbs as the following: "Twenty years later I'll be another able-bodied man" (a statement expressed by men of valor who use the folk belief in reincarnation to defy death, for instance, and by condemned criminals at the point of execution); or "Trying to cure a dead horse like a live one" (an illustrative scenario would be that of family members seeking medical treatments for someone with inoperable cancer). Note that such statements are relatively dispassionate; they lack the rhetorical force of many Western maxims, such as "Hope is the balm and lifeblood of the soul," "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and, of course, "Never say die!"

HOPE IN KOREA AND THE UNITED STATES

Korea, like China, has been heavily influenced by Confucian and Buddhist philosophies (although in recent centuries, Christianity has also become a major influence in Korea, more so than in China). Therefore, much of what we have said about hope in Chinese culture also applies to Korean conceptions of hope, and vice versa. But whereas our previous discussion of hope in China was primarily an exercise in indigenous psychology, the following analyses are explicitly cross-cultural, that is, a direct comparison of hope in Korea and America (the United States).

Following back-translations, questionnaires were administered to groups of university students in the United States and Korea. Since the results of these studies have been published elsewhere (Averill et al., 1990; Averill, 1996), only some of the more salient findings are discussed here.

The first item in the questionnaire asked participants to rate the extent to which hope was similar to each of 10 psychological states (e.g., an emotion, an intellectual process, an attitude). Koreans tended to classify hope (*himang*) as a permanent part of personality, closely related to the intellect and will. The American participants, by contrast, saw hope as a more transitory state—as an emotion and/or as a way of coping, These results may reflect a difference in the way hope is conceived, or, alternatively, in the way emotions are conceived, in the two societies. This is an issue to which we will return shortly.

As described in an earlier section comparing hope and expectancy in American and Venezuelan societies, a concept derives its meaning, in part, from other concepts to which it

is related. Participants were therefore asked to list three synonyms of hope. Among the most frequently listed synonyms by both Koreans and Americans were "wish," "desire," "need," "want," "dream," and "expectation." But there were also notable differences: Americans counted as synonyms such terms as "faith," "prayer," "belief," "feeling," and "trust," whereas Koreans saw hope as related to "ideal," "ambition," "pursuit," "success," "effort," and "goal." There is an obvious difference in connotation between these two clusters of terms, a difference, however, that might seem contradictory to our earlier characterization of Western hope as coping-based and Eastern hope as wish-based. The group (Americans) whose culture values direct action to overcome obstacles endorses synonyms that have an internal, almost ethereal connotation, whereas the group (Koreans) whose culture values authenticity and self-development endorse synonyms that are action oriented. The contradiction is more apparent than real. As we have explained, for coping to be effective it must be realistic, but realism does not preclude appeals to, or trust in, others (including a "higher" authority, as in prayer). Similarly, although wishing has an idealistic slant, it does not preclude—indeed, it encourages—actions of a relevant kind. In a broad sense, then, the responses of the American and Korean participants are keeping with their respective cultural traditions. The mention of faith, prayer, etc., by Americans reflects the influence of the Judeo-Christian religious tradition (as illustrated by Kierkegaard's commentaries on the story of Abraham); likewise, the Korean responses reflect the influence of Confucianism and Buddhism (as illustrated by the Chinese folk tales recounted earlier). The latter emphasize the ideal person and society, which helps account for the stress the Koreans placed on "ambition," "effort," and "pursuit" as synonyms of hope.

A concept is informative only to the extent to which it distinguishes one condition from another. Therefore, when exploring the meaning of a concept, it is important to examine not only synonyms, but also antonyms. For example, the concept, "good," has different implications for a person who contrasts it with "evil," "immoral," and "cruel" than it does for a person who contrasts it with "failure," "malfunction," and "misfortune."

When asked to list three antonyms of "hope," both Koreans and Americans mentioned "despair," "pessimism," "giving up," "discouragement" and "realism"; but whereas Americans also emphasized "indifference," "apathy," and a "lack of caring" as antonyms, Koreans were more likely to mention "frustration" and "failure." These differences are consistent with the American emphasis on faith and trust, and the Korean emphasis on ambition and effort: Faith that is thwarted leads to indifference; effort that is thwarted leads to frustration.

To enable more detailed analyses, participants were asked to describe a representative episode of hope, one that occurred within the past year. Koreans (more often than Americans) chose episodes that were of long duration, that were achievement-related, and that involved abstract goals. For example, although Koreans and Americans were similar in expressing altruistic sentiments, there was a difference in the specificity of the events described: Americans tended to focus on a specific situation (e.g., "I hoped my sister would have a healthy baby"), whereas the Koreans tended to focus on broader personal and social ideals (e.g., "I hoped to be the most humanistic person").

When asked what they did because of their hope, both Koreans and Americans indicated that they "worked harder" and "became better organized." Again, however, these similarities mask subtle differences. Americans tended to say they "worked harder" or "became better organized" primarily when they had some personal control over the outcome. By contrast,

perceived control had little influence on the responses of the Koreans. This is consistent with the tendency of Koreans to view hope as a personal attribute rather than as an episodic (e.g., emotional) reaction to a specific situation.

Earlier, we described briefly four kinds of rules (prudential, action, moralistic, and priority) that help guide the construction of hope narratives. Rules are the *shoulds* and *should nots* of behavior. One of the best ways to identify a rule is to note when it is violated. With this in mind, participants were asked to describe three things that might make life easier and more enjoyable, but that they *should not* hope for. Participants were also asked to give the reasons they should not hope for the realization of their fantasy. For Americans, the most frequently mentioned fantasies involved material goods (e.g., money, a car), interpersonal relationships (e.g., meeting friends), and achievement (e.g., success in academic endeavors), in that order. For Koreans, the most frequent fantasies involved hedonistic pursuits (e.g., sex, food), material goods (e.g., money), and freedom from social and personal obligations (e.g., doing whatever one wants).

Of greater interest than the objects of fantasy were the reasons participants offered for not hoping. Americans tended to focus on the difficulty of achieving the objects of their fantasies (which would imply a violation of prudential rules), whereas the Koreans focused on the potentially harmful effects that might result if their fantasies were realized (which would imply a violation of moralistic rules). Specifically, by a ratio of almost four to one (37% to 10%), the Koreans expressed more concern than did the Americans about the violation of social and/or personal values as a reason for not hoping. By contrast, by a ratio of more than two to one (28% to 12%) Americans, more than Koreans, indicated that achieving their fantasy would be impossible or unrealistic.

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF EAST-WEST DIFFERENCES

The above results, as well as those described earlier for Chinese conceptions of hope, suggest Eastern and Western cultures differ not only in their notions of hope, but also in their conceptualizations of emotion. For example, the Korean concept of *himang*, as well as the Chinese concept of *hsi-wang* lacks the passionate overtone of the English concept of hope, particularly of faith-based narratives. Faith-based narratives exist in both China and Korea, but they tend to be underdeveloped. Compared to the Biblical story of Abraham, for example, Korean and Chinese stories of hope might best be considered protonarratives (Sundararajan, in press).

As we have seen, faith-based hope also tends to be unstable in the West, typically decomposing into a hope that places emphasis on the thematic element of coping. Consistent with the novelty-focus and authenticity-focus divide outlined earlier, in the West a realistic assessment of the situation holds the key to successful coping/action (prudential rules of hope); in the East, by contrast, Confucian and Buddhist traditions emphasize the quality of the wish (moralistic rules of hope).

To repeat a point made earlier, wish-based and coping-based versions of hope are not "worse" than faith-based versions, only simpler in structure. Given an appropriate context, simpler is often better. The issue is thus not one of better or worse, but of appropriateness. Difficulties may arise, for example, when people schooled in an authenticity-focused culture

find themselves in a novelty-focused culture, and vice versa. Their hopes may be misunderstood, or prove ineffective in the altered cultural context (see Chang, 2001, for relevant data, but couched in terms of optimism).

East and West differ in their representations of emotions in general, as well as in their narratives of hope. The former privilege the enduring personality and volitional aspect, whereas the latter, the episodic aspect of emotional life. In other words, in authenticity-focused cultures, emotions have an intrapersonal orientation; in novelty-focused cultures, an interpersonal orientation. This way of framing the issue calls for a re-thinking of the conventional notion of people in Eastern ("collectivist") cultures as "interdependent" and those in Western ("individualistic") cultures as "independent" (see Sundararajan, 2002a). The point we wish to emphasize, and which our analyses support, is that Eastern (authenticity-focused) cultures gravitate toward constant variables, such as enduring sentiments or personality traits, whereas Western (novelty-focused) cultures pay more attention to episodic variables, such as emotional responses to stimuli.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

We started this essay by outlining our theoretical assumptions. The most fundamental assumption is that hope is a story we tell ourselves and others, a story with the rhetorical power to "seduce to life." Another assumption is that emotions are complex, rule-governed patterns of response that derive their meaning, in part, from the culture in which they are embedded. A corollary to this latter assumption is that emotions are subject to creative variation and change. Arieti (1976) has described creativity as a "magic synthesis" because it often involves the reconciliation of opposites. Among the opposites reconciled in hope are the thematic elements of wishing and coping, idealism and realism, possibility and necessity. The synthesis of these elements is made possible by a third, namely, a belief system we have called faith. Hope's faith is not "blind." There are rules (pragmatic, moralistic, etc.) that constrain the kinds of events for which a person may hope, and the kinds of actions that might be taken when hoping.

Aligned with the dualities of wishing and coping (idealism and realism, possibility and necessity) are two criteria for evaluating a response as creative, namely, authenticity and novelty. As we have seen, cultures differ in the relative emphasis they place on these two criteria when evaluating creativity, with Eastern cultures having an authenticity focus and Western cultures, a novelty focus. Our structural analysis further suggests that three subtypes of hope can be distinguished: faith-based, wish-based, and coping-based. Faith-based hope is the full-fledged version, at least to the extent that it incorporates the unique features of wishing and coping as well as the thematic elements they have in common. But faith-based hope tends to be unstable; in everyday usage, it often decomposes into simpler, partial narratives, along the authenticity- and novelty-focus cultural divide. That is, in Eastern cultures, narratives of hope tend to emphasize the wishing element, and in Western cultures, the coping element.

Implications for Theory and Research

Our analysis of hope extends the claim by Oatley (1999) and others that emotions are occasioned by insufficient rational basis for action. The "insufficiency" hypothesis can be restated as follows: Perceived emotions involve an attribution to "something else" in order to explain behavior for which there is insufficient rational basis. Traditionally, the "something else" of emotion has been attributed to an instinctual impulse or physiological reaction over which we have little control. Hope does not fit this traditional paradigm: It is too cognitive, has few discernable physiological accompaniments, and is not associated with stereotypic behavioral expressions. Might not the "something else" of emotion lie in the other direction, a direction opposite to regression and impulsivity? Might not the attribution of "something else" be warranted by the seeming increase in the emoter's behavioral repertoire, by scenarios that suggest an increase, rather than a decrease, in cognitive complexity? Using hope to illustrate the point, our answers to these questions would be, yes.

Scherer (1994) has suggested that the evolutionary function of emotion is to *decouple* a stimulus from a response. In pre-emotional organisms (roughly at the level of fish or amphibians) behavior is regulated by reflexes and fixed action patterns, whether innate or learned. As we ascend the phylogenetic scale, the range of environments to which organisms can adapt becomes increasingly complex. This, according to Scherer (1994), presents an "engineering" problem—how to preserve the advantages of a quick and energetic response to potentially important events while at the same time introducing the flexibility needed to adapt to a range of environments. The solution to this problem, Scherer suggests, is the emotions. Emotions introduce a latency period that allows for a continuous appraisal and reappraisal of the situation and, concomitantly, the organization of appropriate responses. This process reaches its highest level in humans, which are the most emotional of species. The extent of decoupling varies within as well as between species, depending on the emotion under consideration. In humans sudden fright falls at one end of the continuum, where stereotyped responses are elicited almost automatically by the stimulus. Hope falls at the other end of the continuum: The responses associated with hope, as well as their temporal course, vary greatly depending on the desired object and the nature of the goal-block. Most emotions fall between the two extremes of tightly and loosely coupled emotional responses.

Parrots are not known for the breadth of their emotional repertoire, and even within that restricted range we can safely assume that their fears far outweigh their hopes. Nevertheless, observations on the grey parrot by Pepperberg and Lynn (2000) may be used to illustrate the above ideas. These researchers postulate that levels of consciousness can be inferred from different scenarios of problem solving in dealing with an unresponsive environment. The lowest level of response involves no consciousness and no choice of behavior. A computer is at this level; when a computer operation is blocked, it simply freezes with an error message. Contrast this with an animal that has been trained to press a bar for reward; it has two (logical) choices in response to continuous goal-block, namely, stop the behavior, or, continue as if nothing happened. The grey parrots observed by Pepperberg and Lynn exceeded even this level: They showed yet a third possibility in response to goal-block, namely, they threw a "temper tantrum" by banging their beaks, etc. In contradistinction to the regression vein of theorizing about emotions, Pepperberg and Lynn's interpretation is that emotional reactions signify a higher state of consciousness: "[A] subject is most conscious when normal cognitive

processes fail and it must access *something else* to decide how to proceed" (p. 899, emphasis added).

With the above as background, let us return to the "something else" of emotion. Emotions that are tightly coupled, such as some primitive fears, may be mediated by distinct neural pathways (LeDoux, 1996). Loosely coupled emotions, of which hope is a paradigm case, cannot be so easily explained; they are too cognitively complex, too divorced from the immediate situation. Recognizing the limits of current knowledge in cognitive neuroscience, let us therefore take a clue from science fiction, a favorite theme of which involves alien invaders who are highly rational but who cannot experience emotion. Whether their intent is to aid or (more commonly) to harm us Earthlings, these aliens are invariably portrayed as deficient. They are capable of calculating future expectancies and acting accordingly, but they do not experience hope—nor fear, anger, love, or any of the other emotions that make life, in the human sense, vital and meaningful. Metaphorically, they lack "spirit."

The metaphor is instructive. Hope, especially the faith-based hope exemplified by the story of Abraham, has often been described as "spiritual." It is an appropriate description—as long as "spiritual" is not reified into something existing over and beyond the meaning afforded by the narrative structure of the story. Nor was Abraham's behavior mediated by a special circuit in the brain, a kind of "emotional chip," that alien invaders and some people lack. Rather, he had a belief system that allowed him to act in a manner that was in some respects "absurd" but nevertheless adaptive within his cultural context.

In spite of his jaundiced view of hope, noted earlier, Nietzsche (1889/1997) advocated a "spiritualization of the passions." This was a call to overcome the hoary distinction between a "higher" (spiritual) and a "lower" (bodily) aspect of human nature, a distinction that has been incorporated into contemporary psychology as that between cognition and emotion. Recognizing the cognitive complexity and potential creativity inherent in emotion makes this distinction superfluous. It is not simply that cognition and emotion are inextricably intertwined; they do not even exist as separate entities.

The spirit metaphor has methodological as well as theoretical implications. To the extent that the attribution of "something else" becomes imperative in extreme scenarios, which render "insufficient" commonsense explanations, outliers—such as mystics (Sundararajan, 2000a; Sundararajan, 2002b)—are more likely than the majority of the population to be capable of "spiritualizing the passions." Thus, to clarify the most complex forms of hope, that which we have called faith-based, we have drawn on creative thinkers such as Kierkegaard to supplement everyday accounts, as reported, for example, by university students.

The Typicality and the Ultraist Fallacies

Implicit in our approach is a healthy skepticism toward "the typicality fallacy" (Fauconnier, 1997). Fauconnier points out that in modern semantics, "only supposedly 'simple' or 'typical' conditions of use were considered." The implicit expectation was that once typical usages were understood, an understanding of more "unusual" uses would follow by extension (p. 33). That expectation has not been fulfilled. Again, to quote Fauconnier with respect to modern semantics, "restricting one's attention to supposedly typical isolated

sentences with their default meanings … is liable to leave out the crucial elements upon which meaning construction actually depends" (pp. 125-126).

It cannot be said that emotion researchers have overlooked the unusual. If anything, more attention has been devoted to extreme instances (e.g., anxiety disorders, depression, homicidal rage) than to typical manifestations of emotion. We will return to this point shortly, for it presents problems of its own. For now, we note that there is a sense, not commonly recognized, in which the typicality fallacy also dominates the study of emotion. We are referring to the tendency of theorists to reduce emotions to their common thematic elements. In the present chapter, we have abandoned the atomistic approach of thematic analysis in favor of a more holistic narrative approach.

In some respects, we have stood the "typicality fallacy" on its head, just as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) have challenged the received wisdom about how metaphors are formed and understood. In contradistinction to the conventional notion of metaphors as anomalies to the "normal" way of language comprehension, which is supposed to be literal, Lakoff and colleagues have shown that metaphors are by no means exceptions but the norm of language comprehension. Likewise we have shown that in the most complex and creative expression of hope, the faith-based version, can be found the most complete structure of hope, from which other simpler structures of hope are derived. Our analysis thus differs from the common-denominator approach prevalent in the field. For instance, in their book, *The cognitive structures of emotions*, Ortony et al. (1988) place hope and fear under the same category of "prospect-based emotions," with hope one of the tokens, undifferentiated from optimism and anticipation. This stripped-down approach to hope forms a sharp contrast to our approach, which is driven by two interrelated theoretical commitments: rhetoric and creativity. These commitments explain why, in contrast to the received wisdom to focus on the simple and the common, we privilege the complex and the innovative.

But as we strive to avoid the "typicality fallacy," so, too, must we avoid its opposite, what we might call the "ultraist fallacy." The latter mistakes the exceptional for the norm, thus providing a misleading picture of what people can, or should, do. Research on anger provides a good illustration of this fallacy. By focusing mainly on dramatic variants of anger (e.g., aggression, rage, and hostility), while ignoring more constructive everyday experiences, a distorted picture of anger has come to dominate theory and research (Averill, 1982). Similarly, when it comes to "spiritualizing the passions," we need not rely solely on exceptional sources, such as mystics, to illustrate the points we made earlier (Averill, 2002).

A comprehensive analysis of emotion and (in this instance, hope) must be capable of explaining both the exceptional and the commonplace, and the difference between the two. However imperfectly we may have succeeded, we have attempted such a comprehensive analysis in the present chapter. Drawing on reports of university students, interviews, and textual analyses, as well as cross-cultural comparisons, we have explored extended narratives of hope (as exemplified by the faith-based hope of Abraham, and its variants in other cultures), and we have shown how some common variants of hope (e.g., wish-based and coping-based) can be understood as simplifications of the more complete version.

Before concluding this chapter, two further topics deserve brief mention, namely, the conditions under which hope leads to negative and positive outcomes.

When Hope is Folly

Psychology has frequently been criticized for emphasizing the negative in human affairs. One place where that criticism might seem particularly relevant is the emotions. For example, research on so-called "negative" emotions (fear, anxiety, anger, jealousy, sadness, etc.) far outweighs research on "positive" emotions. Hope is a prime example of such neglect. But, at the risk of appearing contrary, it is worth noting that no emotion is positive or negative in and of itself, but only within a context. Thus, just as fear may be highly beneficial under some conditions, and even sought after (as in extreme sports) for the thrill it provides, so, too, can hope be harmful when inappropriately held. This has led Omer and Rosenbaum (1997) to speak of "diseases of hope," and Polivy and Herman (2002), of the "false hope syndrome." These are not new observations (cf. the earlier quotes by Plato and Nietzsche); it is therefore important to consider how, from the perspective of this chapter, hope can sometimes lead astray.

In comparison to Abraham who showed the suppleness of will to abandon his wish as well as to regain it, and the mental strength to plumb the depth of both despair and faith, victims of false hope tend to think in either-or terms: either to abandon the goal or to pursue it with unrealistic expectations. From this perspective, the remedy for the false-hope syndrome lies in higher degrees of cognitive complexity, with the necessary capacity to master the dialectics of idealism and realism without letting one to be supplanted by the other—to be, in other words, emotionally creative. If that is not possible, for personal or situational reasons, the best alternative (particularly in Western cultures) might be to follow the simpler but less hazardous path of coping, and to abide by the cardinal rule of coping to assess situations realistically. This is also the conclusion reached by Polivy and Herman (2002) with regard to the false-hope syndrome.

But we cannot leave the matter with a paean to realistic thinking. As Robert Browning so eloquently observed:

> Ah! but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, Or what's a heaven for? (*Andrea del Sarto*)

Indeed, what is a heaven for? For that matter, what is a heaven? Throughout this chapter we have emphasized the role of faith in mediating the often conflicting demands of wishing and coping, idealism and realism. We have also emphasized that by "faith" we do not mean any particular creed. The belief, for example, that beings from outer space will arrive in flying saucers to rescue a select band of people from the otherwise destruction of the human race, that belief is a form of faith, one no more absurd than the beliefs on which some established religions were founded (Festinger, Riecken, & Schachter,1956). Yet, such a faith provides a poor basis for hope, and not simply because it is unrealistic.

A central assumption of this chapter is that narratives of hope cannot be understood apart from the cultures in which they are embedded. Neither can a heaven. Hope becomes false when this simple truth is ignored. Put differently, a hope that is not based on shared cultural meanings is likely to lead to folly. This is true not only of faith-based hope, but also of the simpler narratives of wishing and coping. Thus, when we stated above that the cardinal rule of coping is to assess a situation realistically, we did not mean an objective factual analysis (cf. our earlier discussion of hope versus expectancy). "Realism" as it applies to hope

involves a shared understanding of what is worth striving for, under what conditions, and in what manner, even if the desired outcome is seemingly beyond grasp. Similar considerations apply to wishing, particularly within an Eastern cultural context.

Hope and Recovery from Illness

Although hope can sometimes be folly, it also has well-documented benefits, including recovery from illness. By differentiating hope into three subtypes (wish-based, coping-based, and faith-based), we have lengthened the causal chain, if there is any, between hope and health. Without differentiation of its subtypes, the term hope can become reified as a biological entity or a magical pill, an entity presumed to have direct causal relations to health and disease. In this connection, a cross-cultural comparison of reification is helpful. Consistent with our novelty-focus versus authenticity-focus hypothesis of cultures, researchers in the West see a correlation between health and positive emotions, including hope, whereas writers schooled in Chinese medicine claim that health and disease have to do with "personality" (Shi, 1989). Thus, personal/cultural background of the researcher and patient must be taken into account when interpreting the relation between hope and recovery from illness.

A case in point is Snyder's (1994, 2000) "hope scale," which identifies hope with personal mastery—or, in Snyder's terms, "agency" and "goal path." We do not question the potential benefits of personal control and perceived self-efficacy in stressful situations, as documented not only by Snyder (2000) but others as well (e.g., Peterson, 2000; Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 2001). It is worth pointing out, however, that an assessment of hope in terms of mastery fits well within the Western tradition, with its narratives of coping rather than wishing.

Recall from our comparison of hope in the United States and Korea, for example, that the Western conception of hope is predominantly as an episodic emotional state, whereas the Eastern conception is as a more enduring personality trait. This difference, although subtle and not marked by rigid boundaries, has important implications. For example, inherent in Snyder's approach is an understanding that hope (at least realistic hope) is beneficial and should be encouraged. The Eastern equivalent of hope is also considered beneficial and to be encouraged, but more in the name of self-cultivation than in the name of mastery over events. Self-cultivation involves refinement of the whole person, not sub-personal attributes. Thus, one cultivates "*qi*" rather than "emotions." More specifically with regard to hope, the Eastern emphasis is less on overcoming environmental obstacles than on developing such personal characteristics as endurance, patience, and acceptance. Needless to say, these latter traits are not entirely neglected in Western discussions of hope (Capps, 1995), nor is the importance of active coping entirely absent in Eastern narratives of hope. But the cultural difference in the relative emphasis placed on each is difficult to ignore.

At the practical level of health care, the take-home lesson from our analysis is that the rhetoric of hope speaks many languages: The practitioner needs to capitalize on "courage" or "fortitude" if the patient is Asian; on "optimism" or "problem solving skills" if the patient is a Westerner; and on culturally relevant "faith" in either case, especially if the desired outcome is seemingly beyond grasp.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter is longer than most, for it is actually three essays in one: The first essay is an account of hope within the Western cultural tradition; the second is a corresponding account of hope within the East Asian tradition; and the third is an attempt at theoretical integration and extension, drawing on insights from research in cognitive science, narrative psychology, and emotional creativity. Although it is traditional to end a chapter with a pithy summary and final words of wisdom, we find that difficult without becoming redundant or banal. Therefore, we conclude with a personal observation: We have enjoyed and profited from writing this chapter; our hope (no pun intended) is that you, the reader, might share a little in that enjoyment and profit.

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