Climate Courage & Radical Hope: How Ought We Respond to the Decreasing Likelihood of Successfully Addressing Climate Change?

Naomi A. Alexander
Student Number: 4229940

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Utrecht University
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Thesis Supervisor:
Dr M.A. van den Hoven

Second Examiner:
Dr G.H. Bos

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Abstract

In our current context, given the scientific and political realities with which we are faced, it is evident that the likelihood of successfully addressing climate change is rapidly decreasing. The central question of this thesis is how we ought to respond to this predicament, focusing particularly on the role that hope has to play in answering this question. It will be argued that hope is necessary for any legitimate response to our current situation, both in terms of justifying a response and motivating it. That is, a response cannot be justified if there is no hope of it delivering positive results, and if it is perceived that there is no chance of the hope being fulfilled then no one will be motivated to pursue that response.

To argue that hope is an essential element of any justifiable response to our current predicament, the nature of hope will be examined and hope will be distinguished from both wishful thinking and optimism. However, it will be argued that although hope is necessary in our current context, it is also not clear that it is possible. It will also be suggested that the alternative, giving up, cannot provide us with a justified response. Given this, the concept of radical hope, hope for an indeterminate good that transcends ones current understanding of the good, will be explored as a possible alternative. It will be suggested that radical hope shows one way that we may retain hope, despite the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change, and that this hope could inform our response to this predicament.

Introduction

'Time is running out'[1] is a declaration spoken and heard often in the public discussion about climate change. It refers to the reality, reported by the latest scientific studies, that there is a limited amount of time left before keeping global warming within safe limits will become impossible. Because of the disastrous and irreversible impacts warming over this level will have, and how severely these will affect future generations, we are faced with an urgent moral problem. Adding to the urgency of this predicament is that the political response thus far has not matched this reality, and there is little evidence to suggest that this will change as quickly as it needs to. As time continues to run out, we are therefore faced with a further ethical issue: how ought we respond to the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change?

This question has various elements which merit their own answers, but one essential element which is integral to any legitimate answer to this question, and has received limited attention in the debate so far, is hope. Hope is understood as a desire for something, where the realisation of the desire is perceived to be possible, and which manifests as a motivational force towards realising this desire. It is distinguished from wishful thinking on the grounds that it is evidence sensitive, and so one cannot hope for something if the probability of it happening is judged to be zero. It is distinguished from optimism because it is viewed as an active attitude rather than a passive mental state. Given both of these factors, hope is necessary for any

[1]See, for example, Wheaton, Sarah, *'Time is running out' to slow climate change, Obama tells Coast Guard grads*, 2015, *Politico*, May 20, URL= <http://www.politico.com/story/2015/05/obama-climate-change-time-running-out-118139.html>; Kerry, John, *On Earth Day, time running out for climate change*, 2015, *USA Today*, April 22, URL= <http://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2015/04/21/earth-day-2015-john-kerry-climate-change-column/26070603/>; Glatz, Carol, *Time is running out to fight climate change, Pope tells summit*, 2014, *Catholic Herald*, December 12, URL= <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2014/12/12/time-is-running-out-to-fight-climate-change-pope-tells-summit/>; Inman, Mason, *IEA Outlook: Time Running Out on Climate Change*, 2011*, National Geographic*, 9 November, URL= < http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/energy/2011/11/111109-world-energy-outlook-2011/>

legitimate response to the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change, both in terms of justifying a response and motivating it.

Although expressions of hope can be found easily in the discourse on climate change, there is little analysis of the nature or content of hope within this context, or its justification. The problem is, however, as the likelihood of successfully addressing climate change continues to decrease, any expression of hope seems more like wishful thinking. Moreover, it is not clear that legitimate hope is even possible in this context, because of the difficulty of identifying an achievable object of hope. Giving up hope, however, is also problematic, as the implications of doing so are of grave consequences. This therefore leads us to a somewhat impossible position: we cannot justifiably hope, but we cannot justifiably give up hope either.

However, another alternative presents itself through looking at the concept of radical hope, developed by Jonathan Lear in his book *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation.*[2] Through the example of the Crow people, Lear explores the question of responding to cultural collapse, and what a courageous way to do this could be. The answer he offers is radical hope. Radical hope is hope for an indeterminate good that transcends one's current understanding of the good, but can nonetheless be utilised to guide a courageous response. Applying this idea to climate change, as several commentators have done already, helps to show one way that we may retain hope, despite the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change, and how this hope can inform our response to this predicament.

The core project here is thus to show why hope is an important topic in our current context and why climate ethics and the broader climate movement require a philosophy of hope. To do so, three interrelated questions about hope will be raised: whether we should hope; what we should hope for; and some suggestion of how we might do it. Radical hope will then be explored as a potential candidate for such a philosophy. It will be argued that because hope is a prerequisite for all action on

[2] Lear, Jonathan, *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*, 2009, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press

climate change we should hope, but that because of the difficulty of hoping for something concrete in our unstable and uncertain context, this must hope be radical. Some suggestions of how such hope could be found will also be offered.

To make these points the first area that will be examined is our current context. Climate change and why it is an ethical issue will be briefly discussed, and two defining features of the moral problem will be identified: uncertainty and urgency. Our current political context will also be outlined. It will then be argued that, within this context, an account of hope is necessary for any legitimate response. To try and locate such an account, both the climate movement and existing philosophical literature will then be examined. It will be argued that although these domains do contain several useful insights into the nature of hope, they also suggest that hope may not be possible in our current context. Consequently, alternatives to hope will be considered but also shown to be problematic. The concept of radical hope will then be discussed as an alternative to these other responses. Looking first at Lear's argument and then the existing attempts to apply his ideas to climate change, it will be suggested that radical hope offers us an appropriate way to respond to the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change. Next, some implications of endorsing radical climate hope will be considered. One implication for climate ethics will be drawn from Lear's book itself, which adopts a more narrative style that weaves philosophical literature in with historical and anthropological information. It will be suggested that this style of ethics would be a useful addition to existing climate ethics literature. Finally, it will be argued that not only does radical hope offer a legitimate response to the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change, but it could also inform the nature of our political response.

For this purpose, the methodology that will be employed is literature review. Existing literature on climate ethics, the philosophy of hope and radical hope will all be examined. In addition, however, following Lear's example, sources other than academic literature will also be drawn on, such as media articles, testimonies of public figures, websites and other material. This is for two main reasons. Firstly, as

Lear's style of ethics is suggested as a useful source of inspiration for climate ethics, an emulation of this has been attempted here. Secondly, an account of hope is necessary not only for those engaged with the issue academically, but also those in civil society, government and business working on the problem and people involved in a personal capacity. So, to attempt to start to think about such a philosophy of hope that is not overly remote from this movement, material has also been drawn from outside the philosophical literature. This attempt should, then, be read not only as a contribution to the existing philosophical literature on hope and climate change, but also the broader public debate. Here, a further clarificatory note is required. Because of the aim of starting to reflect on a philosophy of hope for the climate movement, this "movement" is referred to repeatedly. The climate movement, here, is meant to indicate all organisations and individuals engaged with efforts to address climate change. There is, of course, no such movement as far as movement signifies a united body, and there is much that different parties within this umbrella term differ on. Nevertheless, for present purposes it suffices to take all those who are involved with attempting to address climate change together, and so it is this large and diverse group which is referred to whenever the climate movement is mentioned. They are, at least, unified in their concern for addressing climate change, and their need for hope.

1. The Ethics of Climate Change

1.1 Climate Change, Planetary Boundaries and the Anthropocene

Climate change is now widely recognised as a profound global challenge. To understand why this is the case, what must be examined is climate science. For this, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) provides the most authoritative and comprehensive account. To date, the IPCC has released five assessment reports. The most recent report, published in 2014, stated plainly that 'warming of the climate system is unequivocal.'[3] It reports that 'anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions… are now higher than ever… and are *extremely likely* to have been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.'[4] The report continues to explain that 'continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and long-lasting changes in all components of the climate system, increasing the likelihood of severe, persuasive and irreversible impacts for people and ecosystems.'[5] It goes into further detail about what these impacts are, including species extinction, undermining food security, exacerbating human health problems, increasing poverty and displacing large amounts of people. Of great significance from an ethical perspective is that 'risks are unevenly distributed and are generally greater for disadvantaged people and communities in countries at all levels of development.'[6] The report also addresses the longer term picture, noting that 'many aspects of climate change and associated impacts will continue for centuries, even if anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases are stopped', and that 'the risks of abrupt or irreversible changes increase as the magnitude of the warming increases.'[7] It then examines the solutions, explaining that both mitigation and adaptation strategies are needed to manage climate risks, and that although adaptation can reduce such risks, 'without additional mitigation

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[3] IPCC, *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report*, *Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, 2014, Geneva: IPCC, p.1
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 4
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 8
[6] *Ibid*., p. 13
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 16

efforts beyond those in place today, and even with adaptation, warming by the end of the 21st century will lead to high to very high risk of severe, widespread, and irreversible impacts globally.'[8] To avoid this, we need to 'maintain warming below 2°C over the 21st century relative to pre-industrial levels.'[9] This requires '40% to 70% global anthropogenic GHG emissions reductions by 2050 compared to 2010, and emissions levels near zero or below in 2100.'[10] The report is thus a stark warning about the severity of climate change which is already inevitable, but also the gravity of not mitigating further warming now. This point was picked up on by the international press, with headlines across the world declaring that 'time is running out'.[11] This was therefore the central message taken from the latest report.

It should be stressed that whilst climate change is our core area of concern here, it does not stand alone as an environmental issue. Rather, climate change is just one of nine of what Will Steffen and others have called 'planetary boundaries.' As they explain, 'the planetary boundaries framework defines a safe operating space for humanity based on the intrinsic biophysical processes that regulate the stability of the Earth System.'[12] Climate change is, however, along with biosphere integrity, a core boundary, meaning that it has 'the potential on its own to drive the Earth System into a new state should they be substantially and persistently

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[8] *Ibid.,* p. 17
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 21
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 20
[11] See, for example, Connor, Steve, *Climate Change 'final warning' as IPCC report pushes for fossil fuel phase-out by 2100*, 2014, *The Independent*, November 2, URL= <http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/climate-change/scientific-evidence-proves-climate-change-is-manmade-un-experts-conclude-9833748.html>; Frizell, Sam, *U.N.: Time is Running Out for Climate-Change Action*, 2014, *Time*, April 13, URL= <http://time.com/60769/global-warming-ipcc-carbon-emissions/>; Gosden, Emily, *UN climate change report: time running out to prevent 'dangerous, irreversible' impacts of global warming*, 2014, *The Telegraph*, November 2, URL=<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/earth/environment/climatechange/11203771/UN-climate-change-report-time-running-out-to-prevent-dangerous-irreversible-impacts-of-global-warming.html>
[12] Steffen, Will et al., *Planetary Boundaries: Guiding human development on a changing planet*, 2015, *Science*, 247: 6223, p. 736

transgressed.'[13] Moreover, it is biosphere integrity, not climate change, which has already passed the safe threshold level, although climate change is also now worryingly close. Another related idea that has gained prominence in recent years comes from Paul Crutzen. Crutzen states that because of 'the central role of mankind in geology and ecology',[14] we are now in a geological epoch best described as the 'Anthropocene.' Given the other threatened planetary boundaries, Dale Jamieson is therefore right to comment that 'climate change may be the first challenge of the Anthropocene, but it will not be the last.'[15] Thus, 'what is needed is an ethics for the Anthropocene, not only a climate change ethics.'[16] So, although climate change is the focus of our current discussion, it is not an isolated environmental issue, and many of the debates that take place in climate ethics would still be necessary, albeit with different content, if it were not for climate change itself.

1.2 Climate Ethics

Surveying the IPCC's report, and acknowledging the other environmental challenges we are currently facing, it is already apparent why climate change is a moral issue. Because of the causal role of people in climate change, and the huge negative impacts of climate change on (other) people, it is necessarily an area of moral relevance. Thus whilst it is an environmental, political and economic problem, it is also an ethical one. However, despite this, philosophical analysis on climate change was not immediately forthcoming. Seminal climate ethicist Stephen Gardiner describes how, although some philosophers have been writing about climate change since the 1980s, in general ethicists were slow to take on the topic.[17] Nevertheless, this has gradually changed, led, in particular, by Gardiner, Jamieson, Simon Caney

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[13] *Ibid.*

[14] Crutzen, Paul J., *The "Anthropocene*" in Ehlers, Eckart and Krafft, Thomas (eds.), *Earth System Science in the Anthropocene*, 2006, Heidelberg: Springer, p. 16

[15] Jamieson, Dale, *Reason in a Dark Time*, 2014, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 8

[16] *Ibid.,* p. 179

[17] Gardiner, Stephen M., *Ethics and Global Climate Change*, 2004, *Ethics*, 114:3, p. 555

and Henry Shue, aptly described by Jamieson as 'the climate ethics "gang of four"'.[18] Thanks to these four philosophers, and a growing number of others engaging in the climate change issue, there is now a great wealth of philosophical literature on the subject. The sub-topics are numerous but most significantly concern moral responsibility and ethical obligations in regards to climate change causation, mitigation and adaptation and the ethics of various potential responses.[19] However, to answer the question of how we ought to respond to the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change, there are two particular features of the moral problem of climate change that should be identified, both of which are especially relevant to hope in this context: uncertainty and urgency.

1.3 Our Current Predicament: Uncertainty, Urgency and Un-ideal Politics

Scientific uncertainty has been described by John Broome as 'an inherent part of the problem.'[20] This is because despite a strong scientific consensus on climate, this consensus in itself involves uncertainty and there remains much that we cannot be sure of. The precise nature, time and location of climate impacts, for example, will never be established. Equally, the IPCC does not claim absolute certitude about its findings. Rather, it indicates various levels of likelihood for all its claims.[21] Most of the core findings of the report are very likely (90-100% probability) which is, as Bill McKibben puts it, 'about as certain as science gets'.[22] Nevertheless, there will always inevitably be much that is unknown in regards to climate change. This uncertainty poses a challenge for all those working on climate change, including ethicists. As Gardiner suggests, most of our ethical theories are unaccustomed to dealing with

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[18] *Op. Cit.*, Jamieson, p. xii

[19] For a good overview of climate ethics, the two best collections of papers are Caney, Simon, Gardiner, Stephen M, Jamieson, Dale, Shue, Henry (eds.), *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*, 2010, Oxford: Oxford University Press and Arnold, Dennis G. (ed.), *The Ethics of Global Climate Change*, 2011, Cambridge: Cambridge University

[20] Broome, John, *Counting the Cost of Global Warming*, Isle of Harris: White Horse Press, p. 18

[21] *Op. Cit.*, IPCC, p. 1

[22] McKibben, Bill, *Think Again: Climate Change*, 2009, *Foreign Policy*, 170, p. 32

issues involving great uncertainty.[23] There is, however, now a substantial amount of literature within climate ethics dealing with this issue. In particular, much of this discussion has centred on the precautionary principle; a principle concerning what precautions should be taken in the face of risks.[24] Although it is not necessary to engage with the entirety of this debate here, it should be noted that uncertainty complicates moral action. That is, even if it were clear what one morally ought to do in particular circumstances, if those circumstances are themselves uncertain what one ought to do can also become so. Although uncertainty should not be overplayed as the core reason for a lack of action on climate thus far,[25] it does complicate the question of how we ought to respond to the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change.

Another defining feature of the moral problem of climate change, stemming directly from time running out, is urgency. This is that the severity of the problem increases dramatically the longer it is left untreated. It should be noted here that there is some disagreement about exactly how urgent this urgency is. Particularly from an economic perspective, some have argued that because future generations will be richer and more technologically advanced than us, they will be better equipped for coping with climate change. However, as Broome has discussed, even here there is much uncertainty. [26] Regardless, even if it were true that the problem is less urgent than widely thought, this does not detract from the fact that it becomes more urgent as time progresses. As Shue points out, as we continue to delay mitigation efforts, we do not only create danger, but we endanger additional generations, create additional dangers and create potentially desperate danger.[27] However, beyond this,

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[23] Gardiner, Stephen M., *A Perfect Moral Storm: The Ethical Tragedy of Climate Change*, 2011, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 41

[24] See, for example, Gardiner, Stephen M., *A Core Precautionary Principle*, 2006, *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 14:1, pp. 33 – 60

[25] For a more in-depth discussion on this matter see *Obstacles to Action* in *Op. Cit.,* Jamieson

[26] Broome, John, *Climate Matters*, 2012, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, p. 145

[27] Shue, Henry, *Deadly Delays, Saving Opportunities: Creating a More Dangerous World?* in Caney, Simon, Gardiner, Stephen M, Jamieson, Dale, Shue, Henry (eds.),

the urgency of the climate change problem involves another important element. That is, as time runs out, it is not only that the severity of the problem worsens and so the importance of confronting it deepens, but also that what this response is might change. That is, responding to the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change is not necessarily the same as responding to climate change when there is a high likelihood of successfully doing so. Moreover, when coupled with uncertainty, this creates a peculiar and particular problem. On the one hand we know that action is urgent; on the other the uncertainty clouds this picture, as well as complicating the decision of what action to take. As time continues to run out, we are thus presented with a moral problem that is not only growing more urgent but is also potentially changing.

If time is running out, another area that must be examined is climate policy, to assess whether it will be able to respond to this predicament in time. Although it is not necessary to go into the details of the climate negotiations so far, it is useful to establish what has been achieved to date. The short version of the story is this: the negotiations thus far have not even come close to achieving a treaty that puts the world on track to meet the IPCC's recommendations. It is not clear exactly how IPCC's findings about timeframe translate into a date of last opportunity for political action but, now, the focus is on the upcoming United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) conference of the parties (COP) in Paris in November 2015. However, already, serious doubts have been expressed about whether a satisfactory deal will be brokered here.[28] Aaron Maltais has thus appropriately labelled the political context we are currently in as 'radically non-

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Climate Ethics: Essential Readings, 2010, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 146-162

[28] See, for example: Goldenberg, Suzanne and Neslen, Arthur, *Paris climate summit: missing global warming target 'would not be failure'*, 2015, *The Guardian*, February 4, URL= <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/feb/04/paris-climate-summit-missing-global-warming-target-would-not-be-failure?CMP=share_btn_tw>; Holthaus, Eric, *Even the Architects of the Next U.N. Climate Change Agreement Are Pessimistic*, 2015, *Slate*, February 4, URL=<http://www.slate.com/blogs/future_tense/2015/02/04/u_n_paris_climate_talks_even_the_architects_of_the_agreement_are_pessimistic.html>

ideal.'[29] So, although the IPCC does indicate that remaining within the 2°C limit is possible, in our radically non-ideal political context the chance of this are slim, and increasingly so as time goes on.

1.4 Recap: The Ethics of Climate Change

So, anthropogenic climate change is real and happening. Severe, negative climate impacts for both current and (much more drastically) future generations are now inevitable. However, the IPCC's findings suggest that the most catastrophic impacts can still be avoided. This would, however, require aggressive and immediate mitigation. The less immediate and aggressive this mitigation response is, the smaller the probability of avoiding such impacts becomes. Unfortunately, the political response up until this point has not reflected this predicament, and it seems unlikely that this is going to substantially change at the pace required. Thus, to put it crudely, time is running out on time running out. The question, then, becomes how we should respond to this seemingly impossible predicament.

[29] Maltais, Aaron, *Radically non-ideal climate politics and the obligation to at least vote green*, 2013, *Environmental Values*, 22:5, pp. 589-608

2. Climate Hope

2.1 The Need For Hope

For many, the obvious response to this situation is action: to implement climate policies that will secure the necessary emission reductions. Much of the existing climate ethics literature has been devoted to making this point and further specifying how this should be done. This is, undoubtedly, the appropriate response. However, as the likelihood of successfully addressing climate change decreases what action is appropriate may also change. There are several elements that may contribute to such a change and inform an appropriate response. One issue that is crucial in terms of responding is moral motivation. Gardiner has looked in detail at how certain factors of the climate change problem (such as that causes and effects are spatially and temporally fragmented) make us particularly susceptible to moral corruption, whereby we believe that we are not doing anything wrong, and so don't alter our behaviour.[30] Equally, as Daniel Gilbert comments, 'global warming doesn't… violate our moral sensibilities, it doesn't cause our blood to boil (at least not figuratively) because it doesn't force us to entertain thoughts that we find indent, impious or repulsive.'[31] Factors like these, and that climate change-causing activities are deeply embedded in our society and daily life make moral motivation on this matter exceptionally difficult. This is troubling because such motivation is required for any active response to climate change.

However, another element which is part of moral motivation and is important not only in responding but also in informing how such a response may change as time goes on, is hope. Hope is of crucial importance because it is not only an integral part of any effective, ethical response, but it is also a prerequisite. This is because no response to the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change could be soundly justified if there was no hope of it delivering a positive result. Here,

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[30] *Op. Cit.,* Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*

[31] Gilbert, Daniel, *If Only Gay Sex Caused Global Warming*, 2006, *LA Times*, July 2, URL= <http://articles.latimes.com/2006/jul/02/opinion/op-gilbert2>

hope should be distinguished from wishful thinking and from optimism. Wishful thinking, unlike legitimate hope, involves letting desire rather than the reality of the situation determine one's outlook. Hope, by contrast, should be evidence sensitive, and so informed by reality or, more accurately, our perception of reality. That is, especially given the uncertainty inherent to climate change, the most reliable grounding that hope can have is our understanding of the situation, taking into account all available evidence. Although our judgment is necessarily fallible and limited, if the evidence is considered it is the soundest judgement we have. Optimism, on the other hand, is not necessarily guilty of ignoring evidence like wishful thinking, but is rather in danger of promoting complacence. Optimism involves a positive outlook that is so positive that it does not necessarily see the need for action, and thus does not motivate it. One could be optimistic about something that is realistic but do nothing towards achieving it, whereas hope involves an active engagement in attempting to bring about the hoped-for. One could also be wishfully optimistic, where the vices of wishful thinking and optimism are combined. Implicit in this understanding of hope is that hope is understood as a choice. So whilst we may be predisposed to be optimistic about something, hope is something that we can choose to do, or not. This is particularly pertinent because hope is understood as being an active disposition, not just a psychological state. So, even if we are psychologically optimistic, we might not be actively hopeful. Of course hope alone, even when understood in this way, would be unlikely to result in action. A concern for future generations, understanding of the problem, respect for nature and various other factors could and would also play a role. However, although it is not a sufficient condition it is, unlike these other factors, a necessary one. Moreover, whether or not we hope, and the content and nature of this hope, will necessarily inform how we respond to our current predicament. There are, then, several important questions that we should ask about hope in relation to climate change. Firstly, should we hope? If the answer to this is in the affirmative, two further questions open up: what should we hope for? And how should, or can, we do it?

2.2 The Hopeful Climate Movement

To explore these questions about hope, it is useful to look at how, if at all, hope already features in the climate change discussion, as it is possible that some answers to these questions can be found here. Perhaps surprisingly, expressions of hope abound. It is common for articles and books about climate change to talk at length about the severity of the problem and the various challenges to confronting it, but then to end on a positive note with an affirmation of hope. Take, for example, a *Foreign Policy* article by McKibben, in which he states that 'it might be too late'[32] and that 'solving this crisis is no longer an option.'[33] According to McKibben, 'the only question now is whether we're going to hold off catastrophe.'[34] Yet when Eileen Calussen wrote a response agreeing with his article but saying that she is more optimistic about our prospects for addressing the problem, McKibben replied 'actually, we don't even differ on that, because I sure hope so too.'[35] Byron Williston points to George Monbiot's *Heat,*[36] Mark Lynas' *Six Degrees,*[37] James Hansen's *Storms of My Grandchildren*[38] and Gwynne Dyer's *Climate Wars*[39] as all also containing this combination of frightening accounts of the situation coupled with implicit or explicit expressions of hope.[40] However, although expressing hope, these books do not look at what hope actually means in this context, nor if it can be justified. It is therefore not clear whether these expressions are really hope or just wishful thinking.

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[32] *Op. Cit.*, McKibben, p. 32
[33] *Ibid.,* p. 38
[34] *Ibid.*
[35] Claussen, Eileen, *Hope and (Climate) Change*, 2009, *Foreign Policy*, 171, p. 9
[36] Monbiot, George, *Heat: How to Stop the Planet from Burning*, 2006, London: Allen Lane
[37] Lynas, Mark, *Six Degrees: Our Future on a Hotter Planet*, 2007, London: Harper Perennial
[38] Hansen, James, *Storms of my Grandchildren: The Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and our Last Chance to Save Humanity*, 2009, New York: Bloomsbury
[39] Dyer, Gwynne, *Climate Wars*, 2008, Toronto: Vintage Canada
[40] Williston, Byron, *Climate Change and Radical Hope*, 2012, *Ethics & the Environment*, 17:2, p. 166

There are a few notable exceptions of works on climate change that do directly address the issue of hope. One is Chris Turner's *The Geography of Hope*,[41] which documents sustainable solutions from around the world that can function as a source of hope. This is, though, exactly what Turner's book is: a source of hope, rather than an analysis of it. Turner attempts to offer us some grounds for hope rather than examining the form and content of it. Equally, another book which directly tackles the issue of hope in the context of environmental crisis is *Active Hope*[42] by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone. It is an impressive manual in becoming active participants in bringing about hope so as to deliver 'our finest response to the multifaceted crisis of sustainability.'[43] It is, however, more of a practical guide than a philosophical analysis, offering instructions and tools for fostering this active hope. There has also been some treatment of the relationship between climate change and hope from a religious perspective. A recent example is the progressive Jewish magazine *Tikkun.* Their spring 2015 issue was dedicated to exploring 'the place of hope in an era of sweeping environmental destruction'[44], in which Anna Peterson noted, with regret, that 'philosophers and theologians, along with activists and advocates, rarely think about what makes hope possible or what sustains it.'[45] In the same issue, *Tikkun* launched an online series on the subject,[46] presumably in an attempt to start a conversation on this topic.

Interestingly, in the past year there has been a notable shift in climate campaigning from doomsday messaging about the magnitude of the problem to a more positive, solutions-focused narrative. This seems to be because of the realisation, remarked upon by Monbiot, that 'expounding a positive vision should be at the centre of attempts to protect the things we love': 'An ounce of hope is worth a ton of

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[41] Turner, Chris, *The Geography of Hope*, 2010, Toronto: Random House Canada
[42] Johnstone, Chris and Macy, Joanna, *Active Hope: How to face the mess we're in without going crazy*, 2010, Novato: New World Library
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 4
[44] Lerner, Michael (ed.), *The Place of Hope in a Climate Disaster*, 2015, *Tikkun*, 30:2
[45] Peterson, Anna, *Climate change and the Right to Hope*, 2015, *Tikkun*, 30:2, p. 42
[46] Tikkun, *Online Exclusives: The Place of Hope in an Age of Climate Disaster* [Webpage], URL= <http://www.tikkun.org/nextgen/online-exclusives-the-place-of-hope-in-an-age-of-climate-disaster>, accessed 25/6/15

despair.'[47] For example, Al Gore, known for spreading awareness about the severity of the problem through his famous slideshow and documentary *An Inconvenient Truth,*[48] is now widely reported as showing a 'new optimism.'[49] An example of how this has manifested in climate campaigning is the *People's Climate March*[50]*,* which took place in September 2014 in over 150 countries. Headlines on media and blog sites following the march repeatedly referenced hope.[51] Equally, there are a multitude of new projects that focus on showcasing climate solutions, such as the NGO 10:10's online platform *It's Happening*[52] and *Beautiful Solutions*[53] from influential author Naomi Klein. *10:10* have named one of their main campaigns *Climate Optimism*[54] and Gore's NGO *Climate Reality* have a major campaign entitled *Climate Hope.*[55] As indicated by Monbiot, this can be interpreted as a deliberate

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[47] Monbiot, George, *Saving the world should be based on promise not fear*, 2014, *The Guardian*, June 16, URL= <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jun/16/saving-the-world-promise-not-fear-nature-environmentalism>

[48] Gore, Al, *An Inconvenient Truth*, 2006, Director: Guggenheim, Davis, USA: Paramount Pictures

[49] Schwarz, John, *The New Optimism of Al Gore* [Film], 2015, *The New York Times*, March 16, URL= <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/17/science/the-new-optimism-of-al-gore.html?ref=science&_r=0>

[50] People's Climate March, *Homepage* [Webpage], URL= <http://peoplesclimate.org/>, accessed 5/6/15

[51] See, for example, Brahic, Catherine, *Hope against the odds is mood of NY climate march*, 2014, *New Scientist*, 22 September, URL= <http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn26245-hope-against-the-odds-is-mood-of-ny-climate-march.html#.VXGGIVyqqkp>; Grim, John and Tucker, Mary Evelyn, *'Good Energy and Hope All Around': Reflections on the People's Climate March*, 2014, *Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies News,* URL= <http://environment.yale.edu/news/article/reflections-on-the-peoples-climate-march/>; Robinson, Mary, *Hope and Justice from the People's Climate March*, 2014, *Mary Robinson Climate Justice Foundation News*, September 22, URL= <http://www.mrfcj.org/news/hope-and-justice-from-the-peoples-climate-march.html>

[52] 10:10*, It's Happening* [Webpage], URL= <http://www.1010uk.org/itshappening>, accessed 5/6/15

[53] This Changes Everything, *Beautiful Solutions* [Webpage], URL=<https://solutions.thischangeseverything.org/>, accessed 5/6/15

[54] 10:10, *Climate Optimism* [Webpage], URL= <http://www.1010uk.org/projects/climate-optimism>, accessed 5/6/15

[55] Climate Reality, *24 reasons for hope* [Webpage], URL= <http://climaterealityproject.org/video/24-hours-reality-24-reasons-hope>, accessed 5/6/15

rebranding of the climate change problem. Cheryl Hall explains that the recent trend to 'present positive visions of a happy and healthy green future rather than gloomy pictures of deprivation and sacrifice' is because of 'the worry… that a negative discourse of "gloom and doom" is counter-productive, fostering resistance apathy or despair'.[56] However, the nature and content of this hope remains vague, thus concealing whether this is only a tactical strategy or is motivated by a more fundamental hope, and whether this framing can be justified.

In climate ethics, expressions of hope tend to be more timid. To illustrate this, we can look to the major works of Gardiner, Shue and Jamieson. Gardiner ends his book *A Perfect Moral Storm* by considering 'the immediate future.'[57] He admits that the first draft of the book, written on the eve of the UNFCC COP in Copenhagen in 2009 when 'much hope filled the air',[58] had a much different conclusion. This had cautioned against assuming the problem would be sufficiently addressed. However, given Copenhagen's failure to achieve a satisfactory deal, Gardiner no longer has to make this point: now, 'the mood is more pessimistic.'[59] Yet he does not seem to think that all hope is lost, as he ends with a call to action: 'the time to think seriously about the future of humanity is upon us.'[60] Likewise, Shue's recent book *Climate Justice,* which contains his papers on climate ethics written over the course of his career, ends with a piece detailing his recommendations for climate policy entitled *Climate Hope.* The final lines of his book read: 'we need to act promptly to… replace the currently darkening prospects with brightening hope.'[61] So, he clearly does see some room for hope. Even the title of Jamieson's recent book seems to imply pessimism: *Reason in a Dark Time.* In his conclusion, he states his own, limited hope: 'climate change will increasingly present us an array of challenges that we will have to manage and live with as best we can, and hope that the darkest scenarios do not

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[56] Hall, Cheryl, *What Will It Mean to be Green? Envisioning Positive Possibilities Without Dismissing Loss*, 2013, *Ethics, Policy & Environment*, 16:2, p. 125
[57] *Op. Cit.*, Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm,* p. 439
[58] *Ibid.*
[59] *Ibid.*, p. 441
[60] *Ibid.*, p. 442
[61] Shue, Henry, *Climate Justice*, 2014, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 339

come to pass.'[62] So although some suggestions of hope can be detected among climate ethicists, it is much more cautious in nature and, unlike in the wider movement, there has not been an obvious embracing of hope.

One prominent environmentalist thinker who has engaged substantially with the topic of hope is David Orr. Orr has named the collection of his most important essays *Hope is an Imperative.*[63] He offers an analysis of the nature of hope that is, as indicated by his book's title, explicitly framed as a normative issue. There are two defining features of hope on Orr's reading: one relating to action, the other relating to truth. To start with the former, Orr writes that 'hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up'.[64] By this, he means that hope is an active, engaged disposition that changes the way we act, and cannot be a passive mental state. Here, he distinguishes hope sharply from optimism, which he views as merely a confident attitude.[65] As he puts it, 'optimism leans back, puts its feet up'.[66] Secondly, Orr posits that hope must be based upon reality: 'it must be rooted in the truth as best we can see it, knowing that our vision is always partial.'[67] Orr sees this as a defining feature of hope when compared with wishful thinking, commenting that 'there are legitimate grounds for hope in hard times, but not one speck of ground for wishful thinking of any kind.'[68] Orr is thus the exception in so far as he does recognise the importance of hope and that it is an ethical issue, and does begin to elaborate what hope in the context of climate change really means. It is striking, however, that there are so few people expressing this recognition, much less writing about it.

A brief look at both climate ethics and the broader climate movement presents several important observations in regards to climate change and hope. To start with the latter, it seems that hope is, perhaps surprisingly, plentiful. However,

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[62] *Op. Cit.*, Jamieson, p. 238
[63] Orr, David, *Hope is an Imperative*, 2010, Washington D.C.: Island Press
[64] *Ibid.*, p. xix
[65] Orr, David, *Optimism and Hope in a Hotter Time*, 2007, *Conservation in Context*, 21:6, p. 1392
[66] *Ibid.,* p. 1393
[67] *Ibid.,* p. 1393
[68] Orr, David, *Hope in Hard Times*, 2004, *Conservation in Context*, 18:2, p. 297

actual analysis of this hope (with the exception of Orr), is not. Because of this, whether such hope is justified is obscured by these allusions to hope. Turning to climate ethics, although some hope can also be detected, not least by the fact that these thinkers all continue to dedicate their work to this cause, it is less obviously apparent. In a way, being more reserved about expressing hope seems wise because it is realistic. However, climate ethics is arguably empty if not supplemented by a philosophy of hope, as otherwise it is not clear what the purpose of it is. That is, given that much of climate ethics is devoted to giving policy recommendations – as well as recommendations for individuals about ethical action in the context of climate change – for such recommendations to be justified there must be some hope that they would, if adopted, deliver a positive result. Thus the cautious hope of climate ethics is still not sufficient, nor does it provide us with an answer to any of our three questions. Orr's work about hope contains several useful insights into hope by framing it as a normative issue, and specifying that it must be based on our understanding of the truth and involve an active engagement in bringing the hope to fruition. To do this, he distinguishes hope from optimism and wishful thinking. Although he does not make a distinction between the two, his analysis suggests that he would be sympathetic to the further distinction previously introduced. Turning to existing literature on the philosophy of hope can thus help to further clarify these conditions and distinctions, and show the necessity but difficulty of hope in the context of climate change.

2.3 Hope in Philosophy

The topic of hope has a substantial history in philosophy. However, as Barbara Nunn has noted when doing a historical survey of the field, 'although hope has been theorised as a virtue at least since the time of Aquinas, there has been very little written about it in twentieth century analytic philosophy.'[69] In more recent years, however, several philosophers have expressed disappointment about this lacuna and attempted to rectify it. Two such philosophers, both of whom offer valuable insights

[69] Nunn, Barbara, *Getting Clear on What Hope Is* in Elliot, Jaklin (Ed.), *Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hope*, 2005, New York: Nova Science Publishers, p. 64

into the nature and value of hope and distinguishing it from optimism and wishful thinking, are Luc Bovens and Philip Pettit. To start with what hope is, both provide a definition of hope that delineates it from wishful thinking. Bovens defines hope by identifying three key features: desire, non-confident belief and mental imaging. By desire he means that you want the hoped-for to become reality. By non-confident belief he suggests that your confidence that the hoped for will become reality must be between 0 and 1, because if it is impossible you cannot legitimately hope for it and if it is definite there is no need to. By mental imaging, he implies that you must have engaged with thinking about and picturing the hoped-for. Similarly, Pettit agrees that hope involves 'a non-zero, non-unit probability to that desired project'.[70] So, hope is distinguished from wishful thinking on the grounds that the probability of the hope being realised cannot be thought to be zero. However, Bovens admits that the relationship between hope and wishful thinking can be problematic because hoping can be an open invitation for wishful thinking. This does not, however, equate hope to wishful thinking, and Bovens is explicit that hope does not involve raising 'the subjective probability of the desirable states of the world beyond what is warranted by the available evidence.'[71] Rather, hoping involves full acknowledgement and confrontation of reality.

The differences between hope and optimism become apparent when looking at why both philosophers think hope is valuable. Bovens argues that 'hanging onto hope in trying times may be invaluable to one's survival.'[72] He suggests that hope has an instrumental value because it is enabling ('sometimes hoping facilitates the realising of the projected state of the world');[73] counteracts risk aversion ('it makes us focus on the possible gains in more than fair gambles');[74] and because 'hope engenders new constitutive hopes',[75] allowing us to recognise new ways to realise the general

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[70] Pettit, Philip, *Hope and Its Place in Mind*, 2004, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 591:1, p. 154
[71] Bovens, Luc, *The Value of Hope*, 1999, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 59:3, p. 678
[72] *Ibid.*, p. 607
[73] *Ibid.*, p. 671
[74] *Ibid.*, p. 672
[75] *Ibid.*, p. 673

good of what we had been hoping for. Equally, Pettit writes of the importance of what he labels 'substantial hope'. Similarly to Orr, Pettit describes how substantial hope is an active attitude, not just a passive mental state: 'it is also to act and react as if the prospect were going to happen.'[76] Here, we may worry that whilst Pettit has distinguished substantial hope from optimism by including an element of active engagement, he is simultaneously collapsing back into wishful thinking. However, Pettit shows that this is not the case because hope does not involve self-deception. Rather, it involves admitting the reality of the situation but 'for current practical purposes… investing… confidence in a firmer, encouraging prospect.'[77] So, looking at the work of Bovens and Pettit on hope has shown in further depth the differences between hope and wishful thinking and optimism. Unlike wishful thinking, hope must be informed by our understanding of reality, and thus we cannot hope for something if we judge there to be no possibility of it being realised. Unlike optimism, hope necessarily includes an active component, which strives to realise the hoped-for rather than being confidently complacent. Accordingly, both see hope as an important and valuable element of human life.

Similar ideas are found if we look at the few existing cases of philosophers engaging with the topic of hope specifically in the relation to the environment. Lisa Kretz has been researching the intersection of hope and environmental philosophy for nearly a decade, and has noted that there is regrettable lack of work that examines the two.[78] She argues that it is imperative that environmental philosophy engages more extensively with the issue of hope because it motivates and is necessary for positive moral action. Because of this, 'it is a self-fulfilling prophecy… through placing oneself in a state of hope, one begins a process that brings to realisation desired states of the world.'[79] So, she argues that not only do we have a duty to hope but also that philosophers need to engage more with the concept, especially in relation to environmental problems. One philosopher who has answered this request is

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[76] *Op. Cit.*, Pettit, p. 158
[77] *Ibid.,* p. 162
[78] Kretz, Lisa, *Hope in Environmental Philosophy*, 2013, *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 26, p. 927
[79] *Ibid.*, p. 976

Catriona McKinnon. McKinnon argues that although 'for many people, these facts and our failures to date justify despair about our prospects for doing what it takes to properly address the problems of climate change',[80] such despair cannot be justified. Like Bovens and Pettit, McKinnon specifies that a criteria of hope is that it is possible[81] and also that hope has an instrumental value: 'hope can increase the probability that a person's agency achieves its purpose, and so can galvanise the person's will as it aims at this purpose.'[82] Focusing particularly on individual contributions to mitigation efforts, McKinnon argues that despair is not justified as long as there is some possibility of making a difference. She reasons 'hope keeps open a space for agency between the impossible and the fantastical; without it, the small window of time remaining for us to tackle climate change is already closed.'[83] She therefore views hope as an ethical imperative in our current context.

Surveying the different accounts of hope in unison, it is possible to discern a few key features that are particularly relevant in regards to climate change. Firstly, hope requires desire for something. Thus when we are hopeful in regards to climate change, we must provide some account of what this hope is for. It is not sufficient simply to be hopeful in general. Secondly, as previously discussed, hope is differentiated from wishful thinking and optimism. Unlike wishful thinking, we cannot hope for something if we judge the probability of it happening as zero. Unlike optimism, hope is understood as involving an active engagement with attempts to realise the hoped-for. Finally, taking these qualifications into account, hope is viewed as a positive force because it can play a crucial role in actually bringing about that which is hoped for. Thus recalling our three questions about hope, we can see that we should hope, but only if we are hoping for something and if there is a chance of that hope actually being realised.

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[80] McKinnon, Catriona, *Climate Change: Against Despair*, 2014, *Ethics and the Environment*, 19:1, p. 31
[81] *Ibid.,* p. 34
[82] *Ibid.,* p. 45
[83] *Ibid.*

2.4 The Dangers of Climate Hope

Returning, then, to hope in relation to climate change, it is evident that the expressions of hope previously mentioned are admirable but problematic. They are admirable because they are needed for any chance of successfully addressing climate change. They are problematic, however, because in our current context it is not clear how legitimate hope, as distinguished from wishful thinking, is possible. For the sort of hope that all of the philosophers refer to requires an object of hope that, in light of the available evidence, is perceived to be realisable. However, given the combination of urgency and uncertainty presented by climate change, it is hard to know what we could identify as an object of hope with the confidence that there is at least some chance that it will be realised. For example, one potential object that the hope expressed in the climate movement may be directed towards is that we will mitigate climate change and thus stop climate impacts that will harm future generations and us. But, as we have seen, there is no chance of this happening, thus this cannot be our object of hope. Another candidate for an object of climate hope is ambitious climate policy, the hope that states will make real commitments to reduce their emissions and actually do so. This, although unfortunately unlikely, it not impossible, so is perhaps a more suitable candidate for an object of hope. However, even this is insufficient unless we can specify what the hoped for outcome of such policy would be. Complicating hope in the case of climate change even further is the necessarily collective nature of this hope. For, if we are affirming the importance of hope in comparison to optimism on the grounds that it is motivational and so important for realising the hoped-for, in the case of climate change this only holds if it's on a collective level. So, despite many affirmations of hope in the climate movement, it is not evident if these really are hope, or even if hope is possible in this context.

It is worth reflecting here on exactly why it is so important that hope in the context of climate change is actually hope, rather than wishful thinking or optimism. This is because wishful thinking in this case could be actively irresponsible. That is, disregarding the evidence, and pursuing a strategy informed by a conviction not supplemented by evidence, could prove disastrous. For example, if it was hoped that

climate change could be avoided, and so all efforts and resources were put into campaigning for mitigation but none into adaptation, this would clearly not be a justified hope, nor an appropriate response. In that case the very same arguments that climate ethicists and campaigners use to critique policy makers could be used against them: you are advocating and following a route that will bring considerable harm to future generations. This would not be hope, but wishful thinking, and would not only be foolish but irresponsible. This might seem like an unnecessary point to make. Surely, it might be thought, those concerned about climate change would not advocate wishful thinking to the extent that it would harm the people they are trying to protect. Unfortunately, however, this is not necessarily the case. Gardiner demonstrates this when considering the possibility of a 'green energy revolution'. As he explains, many of 'those most in favour of action on climate change… are social and technological optimists' who 'believe that there is a win-win scenario: it is possible for us to do right by future generations in particular (and perhaps even the poor and nature more generally) without making any serious sacrifices ourselves.'[84] He suggests that they obscure the reality of the problem, which in turn contributes to inaction. This can be characterised as wishful thinking, and is arguably what much of the "hope" found in the climate movement actually is. It is also discussed by Orr, who writes that one response strategy to our current predicament is 'to admit the peril to civilisation on one hand while on the other offering a long list of gee-whiz technologies to solve various problems, presumably without creating others.'[85] He admits that he has been guilty of this himself 'and it resonates with audiences eager to find reasons for optimism and hoping that no great change of behaviour or lifestyle will be required of us.'[86] But he is clear that there are no grounds for such a conviction. Such wishful thinking is a temptation that many working on climate change fall into, but can actually be damaging to their purpose. To be justified, hope must be sensitive to the available evidence.

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[84] *Op. Cit.*, Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*, p. 63
[85] *Op. Cit.*, Orr, *Hope in Hard Times*, p. 296
[86] *Ibid.*

2.5 Recap: Climate Hope

So, hope is an important element of any legitimate response to our current predicament. Although affirmations of hope by those working on climate change can be found, there have been only limited attempts to provide an account of hope in this context. Nevertheless, looking at these existing accounts alongside philosophical analysis of hope offers several useful insights into the nature of hope, pointing both to the value of hope but also some criteria that distinguishes this valuable hope from wishful thinking and optimism. However, the hope currently found in the climate movement does not meet these criteria, nor is it apparent that it can. It therefore looks more like wishful thinking, which is worrying because wishful thinking can lead directly to an irresponsible response to the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change. Although climate ethicists are not guilty of this charge because they are more reserved in their expressions of hope, it is equally problematic that they stay largely silent on the issue because if hope is impossible then their recommendations should surely reflect this. If hope does appear to be impossible, it is thus necessary to consider alternatives.

3. Alternatives Responses: The Ethics of Giving Up

3.1 Fiddling While the Planet Burns

If the reality that we are faced with is that time is running out, an alternative to hope that must be considered is the very opposite. That is, it might be thought that as the likelihood of successfully addressing climate change shrinks, really the only appropriate response is to abandon hope and give up. What exactly this would consist of in this case is varied. It could be that any response to climate change is futile. It is this kind of sentiment that was expressed by James Lovelock when he advised a journalist interviewing him to 'enjoy life while you can. Because if you are lucky it's going to be twenty years before it hits the fan.'[87] Andrew Fiala has explored what Lovelock is suggesting here in his article *Nero's Fiddle,* where he claims that it may be rational for us to pursue self-interest in the face of crisis or, metaphorically, 'to fiddle while Rome burns.'[88] Fiala argues that, in our current context, pursuing short-term self-interest seems reasonable. Although really the rational thing to do is to confront the problem, it may seem like the rational thing to do is to enjoy yourself, especially when that is what others are doing. Moreover, because of this, and the way that it leads people to 'fiddle while Rome burns', it can actually become rational to do nothing but pursue self-interest, because the more people continue to fiddle the more attempting to solve the problem will be pointless. To be clear, Fiala is not endorsing giving up hope. To the contrary, he is adamant that 'in thinking about the global ecological crisis… we must walk the razor's edge between hope and despair.'[89] Rather, he is acknowledging the difficulty of the position we are in and that 'at some point a strategy of despair and selfishness will become the reasonable option. '[90] Fiala acknowledges that 'some may argue that it is never rational to give

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[87] Aitkenhead, Decca, *James Lovelock: 'enjoy life while you can: in 20 years global warming will hit the fan'*, 2008, *The Guardian*, March 1, URL= <http://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2008/mar/01/scienceofclimatechange.climatechange>

[88] Fiala, Andrew, *Nero's Fiddle: On Hope, Despair, and the Ecological Crisis*, 2010, *Ethics and the Environment*, 15:1, p. 51

[89] *Ibid.,* p. 53

[90] *Ibid.,* p. 64

up hope',[91] but objects that in this case this noble idea does not hold, because if the problem really can't be solved then pursuing self-interest will at least yield some gain. So, although not endorsing giving up, he is underlining the difficulty of the predicament with which we are faced, and suggests that there may soon become a point when this really is the rational response.

Why such a position is indefensible is relatively clear. Given the catastrophic impacts climate change will have for future generations if global emissions continue to rise, it is hard to justify a strategy of giving up and pursuing self-interest if there is still some (even miniscule) chance of success. Yet, given the continually shrinking odds of making a meaningful change, we can also see Fiala's point that giving up may eventually become the reasonable option. Here, a response that is likely quite representative of those working on climate change who express hope can be found from Klein. She writes that 'surely the decision about whether to maintain some hope in the face of an existential crisis that is still technically preventable is not just a matter of cold calculation': 'It's also a question of ethics.' [92] As she continues, 'if there is any chance of turning the tide, and if taking action could actually lead to all kinds of ancillary benefits'[93] then we have a responsibility to maintain hope. Klein, like Orr, frames hope as an ethical issue, and argues that giving up is impermissible. What should be picked up on here, though, is Klein's qualification that the crisis must be 'still technically preventable.' As we have seen, although this is currently the case in regards to the most catastrophic impacts of climate change, it won't be for long. So, even Klein's 'ethics of climate hope' has a time limit. However, a response to this is provided by Jamieson, who briefly but explicitly addresses the issue of time running out. He writes that although 'we are constantly told that we stand at a unique moment in human history and that this is the last chance to make a difference… until the world or humanity, comes to an end (literally) there will always

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[91] *Ibid.,* p. 52
[92] Klein, Naomi, *Can Climate Change Cure Capitalism?: An Exchange,* 2015, *The New York Review of Books,* January 8, URL= <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2015/jan/08/can-climate-change-cure-capitalism-exchange/>
[93] *Ibid.*

be a chance to make a difference.'[94] By this, Jamieson is highlighting that it will never be the case that there is no positive change to be made. That is, even under absolutely catastrophic circumstances there are opportunities to make things marginally less absolutely catastrophic. Thus although time is running out to stop catastrophic and irreversible climate change, time will never run out to make some sort of a positive difference, no matter how small that might be in comparison to the enormity of the problem. If ought implies can, it may well become true that we ought not stop climate change from becoming catastrophic and irreversible, and all of the impacts that this will bring, but that we ought still do whatever we can to minimise the negative consequences of such impacts. Completely giving up, then, cannot be justified.

3.2 Preparing the Planet: Towards a Dome World

There is, however, another response which involves giving up hope but seems much more defensible, and which speaks to Jamieson's point that there is always a chance to make a difference. This is that our current context does not suggest that we should completely abandon hope for any sort of future and thus do nothing, but that we should give up on attempting to mitigate climate change when the chances of this succeeding are incredibly small. Rather, all efforts and resources should be diverted to adaptation. Gardiner addresses this view briefly when he refers to the possibility of a dome world.[95] Although he doesn't have a reference for the piece, he recalls reading an article where it was claimed that we needn't despair about climate change because future generations could 'live in massive domes on the earth's surface if they needed to.'[96] This would be a very extreme form of adaptation, but it demonstrates well the issues with this position. There seems something profoundly tragic about the idea that we would give up and start on the path to a dome world scenario, even though, admittedly, it is quite hard to articulate exactly what this tragedy is. Gardiner states that there are several things that are troubling about this claim 'but one that is especially striking is that it is suggesting that the disappearance

[94] *Op. Cit.*, Jamieson, p. 1
[95] *Op. Cit.*, Gardiner, *A Perfect Moral Storm*, p. 43
[96] *Ibid.*

of nonhuman animals and the rest of nature would not be a serious loss.'[97] Another, though, might be the way in which it involves humanity giving up. In particular, there seems something incredibly troubling about humanity giving up in this case because what that fundamentally consists of is giving up on ourselves. That is, climate change is caused by human actions, thus advocating a dome world scenario involves acknowledging that although humans cause climate change, and have the capacity to stop doing so, radically transforming the planet and the way we exist on the planet is a more viable option than changing our own behaviour. This is, clearly, a troubling position.

There are, of course, also less extreme positions that carry a similar sentiment. For example, controversial figure Bjørn Lomborg advocates against dedicating large proportions of the global budget to climate mitigation. Using cost-benefit analysis, he argues that it is not cost effective to devote resources to aggressive mitigation now, and so advocates a method of adaptation coupled with a more gradual reduction of emissions.[98] On the face of it, this argument seems less obviously concerning than the dome world. Yet, recalling the IPCC's warning that adaptation methods can only be of limited effectiveness, we can still see the issue with this position. Firstly, it also appears to guarantee catastrophic consequences for future generations, albeit ones that they may be somewhat better prepared for. Secondly, any strategy that endorses pure adaptation puts us on the path to a dome world scenario, at least theoretically. That is, even if it did not actually take us in this direction, any strategy of pure adaptation suffers from the same tragedy of the dome world. That is, the tragedy of humanity completely alienated from the natural world, and which opts to confront it's own destruction of the planet by transforming it more, rather than by altering its own behaviour. Finally, Jamieson has looked in substantial detail at the ethical complexity of an adaptation only strategy. He gives multiple reasons why mitigation remains important, including that exclusive adaptation is likely to cost more in the long-term; that it guarantees irreversible

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[97] *Ibid.*

[98] Lomborg, Bjørn, *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, 2001, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 305 - 312

losses for non-human species as well as humans; that it increases the possibility of abrupt climate change; and that 'we may come to see people and other living things who are compelled to adapt as morally wronged in virtue of the fact that this has been forced upon them.'[99] Moreover, he suggests that a pure adaptation response would be likely to end in a situation where the polluted pays. By this, he means that rather than the widely endorsed 'polluter-pays' principle, an adaptation only strategy would result in those most severely impacted by climate change (namely, developing countries) having to pay for dealing with it. Looking at history and current responses to natural disasters, reasons Jamieson, there is little reason to think that they would be substantially aided in necessary adaptation measures by richer nations.[100] Thus a strategy which involves giving up hope of successfully addressing climate change in favour of adapting to it, although less obviously abhorrent than giving up completely, also leaves much to be desired.

3.3 Arming the Future: Geoengineering

Another possible response that is receiving increased attention is geoengineering. The possibility of geoengineering as a suitable response to climate change has been gaining considerable support in recent years, sparked most notably by a 2006 article from Crutzen. In this, Crutzen argues that although, in terms of responses, 'by far the preferred way… is to lower the emissions of the greenhouse gases',[101] because of the very low likelihood of this happening at the pace and level that is required, stratospheric sulphur injections may offer a suitable alternative. Crutzen explicitly states that this is only the case because of the lack of hope of achieving the necessary emission reductions. As he writes: 'currently, this looks like a pious wish.'[102] However, although for Crutzen the decision to advocate geoengineering is a direct consequence of giving up hope that the worst can be avoided by other means, many of the advocates of geoengineering are, arguably, motived not by giving up but by wishful optimism. That is, they expect geoengineering to solve the problem of

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[99] *Op. Cit.,* Jamieson, p. 211
[100] *Ibid.,* pp. 214 - 218
[101] Crutzen, Paul, *Albedo Enhancement by Stratospheric Sulfur Injections: A Contribution to Resolve a Policy Dilemma?,* 2006, Climatic Change, 77, p. 211
[102] *Ibid.,* p. 217

climate change despite limited evidence to suggest that it could, and allow this belief to inform a complacent attitude which delays addressing the problem now. Such wishful optimism clearly lacks justification due to the vices of wishful thinking and optimism previously discussed, however Crutzen's argument is harder to dismiss because it is made not on the basis of wishful optimism but practical necessity. However, the soundness of his position has been examined by Gardiner in his paper *Is "Arming the Future" with Geoengineering Really the Lesser Evil?*, a direct reply to the enthusiasm for geoengineering research inspired by Crutzen's piece. Gardiner admits that 'the "lesser evil" argument can seem overwhelmingly appealing in the case of geoengineering',[103] but challenges it on several grounds. Some of these are pragmatic concerns that relate exclusively to geoengineering, such as if we should advocate such a strategy when other options are still available and that geoengineering would raise profound global governance issues. However, he also considers a concern remarkably similar to that previously raised in relation to the possibility of a dome world scenario. This is what the decision to adopt a geoengineering strategy 'might show about us.'[104] Gardiner questions whether 'pursuing geoengineering may be taken as a sign that we, as a species, have failed to meet a basic challenge and should be saddened and ashamed for that reason.'[105] Thus whilst Gardiner does not rule out the possibility that geoengineering is, or at least as time does on could be, the lesser evil, he also shows how it is no less tragic a response than a dome world scenario. One objection that could be raised here is that geoengineering much more of a 'quick fix' than adaptation. Consequently, whilst an aggressive adaptation strategy would need to start now, signalling that all hope of mitigating climate change has been relinquished, it is thought that geoengineering will work more promptly and so it will only be adopted when it really is the lesser evil and when legitimate hope for an alternative really is lost. This objection does not hold, though, because extensive research and development

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[103] Gardiner, Stephen M., *"Arming the Future" with Geoengineering Really the Lesser Evil?* in Caney, Simon, Gardiner, Stephen M, Jamieson, Dale, Shue, Henry (eds.), *Climate Ethics: Essential Readings*, 2010, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 298

[104] *Ibid.,* p. 303

[105] *Ibid.*, p. 304

would need to be carried out for any geoengineering proposal to become viable. Thus whilst it is true that, unlike adaptation, actual deployment of geoengineering strategies would not need to be started now, extensive research would. This is why Gardiner focuses on research or, 'arming the future', rather than actual geoengineering. However, more extensive research into geoengineering not only involves a diversion of resources, but also, as Jamieson comments, could 'distract us from the basic challenge of reducing carbon emissions'.[106] Geoengineering, in similar ways to aggressive adaptation, also has serious shortcomings as a response strategy.

3.4 The Final, Finest Hour of Humanity

Finally, another alternative is that a lack of hope will not lead to despair but something more positive. This is that although there may be absolutely no hope for tackling climate change, this could lead to acceptance and a particular type of flourishing. This is the position of Jack Miles, who considers the worst case scenario: human extinction. He asks 'what will be the consequences for religion and for the arts, especially literature, if and when we conclude that the effort to produce a sustainable society has definitively failed?'[107] Drawing comparisons with terminally ill patients who find meaning and comfort in the last period of their lives in the knowledge that they will soon die, Miles hypothesises that 'a new kind of religion and a new kind of art'[108] could develop. So, he imagines that 'the last days of the human race may be… our finest hour.'[109] Some may find solace in Miles suggestions, and find in them a way to avoid despair by giving in to it. Most, however, are more likely to side with Orr, who wrote in response, 'to be frank, I am not greatly comforted, although being noble and graceful is better, I suppose, than grousing toward the denouement – if that is what will be.'[110] Moreover, even Miles admits that such projections require much hope themselves: 'we would be fools to predict

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[106] *Op. Cit.,* Jamieson, *Reason in a Dark Time,* p. 224
[107] Miles, Jack, *Global Requiem: The Apocalyptic Moment in Religion, Science, and Art*, 2000, *Cross Currents*, 50:3, pp. 298 - 299
[108] *Ibid.,* p. 299
[109] *Ibid.*
[110] *Op. Cit.,* Orr, *Hope in Hard Times,* p. 296

such a breakthrough but worse fools not to hope for it.'[111] Thus up until the point that the worst is completely inevitable, we should surely direct our hope, and efforts, to a more ambitious goal than that in our final years we will find a way to meaningfully express ourselves.

3.5 Recap: The Ethics of Giving Up

Rejecting these other options, we thus return to the hope currently found in the climate movement. If neither giving up hope completely nor putting all efforts into adaptation or geoengineering are defensible, perhaps these expressions of hope do constitute the most appropriate response to our current situation. Even acknowledging that this is wishful thinking rather than hope, this may be preferable to these other options. However if these expressions of hope were in fact nothing more than wishful thinking, although they might still be preferable to giving up completely, it is more difficult to make the case that they are superior to giving up paired with aggressive adaptation or geoengineering. Although we might find the prospect of a dome or geoengineered world horrifying, if the alternative is to pursue avenues which will bring about no good, and thus allow the impacts of climate change to ravage unchecked, they could be justified. So, if we are to advocate a hopeful strategy it must be shown that there is a way to hope in this context, which acknowledges and responds to the reality that we do not have a concrete object of hope. To do this, we can now turn to radical hope.

[111] *Op. Cit.*, Miles, p. 309

4. Radical Hope and Climate Change

4.1 The Crow, Plenty Coups and Radical Hope

In *Radical Hope: Ethics in the Face of Cultural Devastation*, Lear introduces and develops the concept of radical hope through looking at the history of the Crow people, a Native American nation, and their last leader Plenty Coups. Although making no claims about the historical accuracy of his account, Lear uses Plenty Coups' story, as told by Plenty Coups to Frank Linderman, to explore the question: how should one face the possibility that one's culture might collapse? Lear looks at Plenty Coups' account of what happened after the Crow people were moved into a reservation by the white settlers and in particular his statement that 'after this nothing happened'.[112] As history shows that Plenty Coups was very politically active during this time, Lear dismisses the possibility that his statement is about being depressed or inactive, and instead interprets it in terms of cultural devastation, as an end of happenings. He suggests that Plenty Coups was 'witness to a peculiar form of human vulnerability':[113] 'if our way of life collapsed things would cease to happen.'[114] Moreover, he suggests that this is a possibility for all people and cultures, as a result of being cultural beings in an unstable world. So, Lear examines Plenty Coups to explore the question of how we should live with this vulnerability. Thus it is an ethical inquiry 'into how one should live in relation to a peculiar human possibility',[115] with an ontological dimension (because 'if we are going to think about how to live with the possibility, we need to figure out what it is.')[116]

Lear goes to great lengths to show that the devastation that he is concerned with is not simply about the end of a culture. It is, rather, 'a peculiar form of devastation':[117] 'what we have in this case is not an unfortunate occurrence, not even a devastating occurrence like a holocaust; it is a breakdown of the field in which occurrences

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112 *Op. Cit.,* Lear, p. 1
113 *Ibid.,* p. 6
114 *Ibid.*
115 *Ibid.,* p. 7
116 *Ibid.*
117 *Ibid.,* p. 31

occur.'[118] It was not only that the Crow way of life changed or ended, but that it became unintelligible. Once they moved to the reservation, all of the traditions, practices, actions, roles, character traits and habits that made up the Crow way of life could no longer happen or be understood. Lear's question, then, is what the response to this ought to be.

Ultimately, Lear argues that Plenty Coups embodies a courageous response to this predicament, and that this response can be understood as displaying what he labels radical hope. Plenty Coups co-operated with the white settlers more than any other Native American leader, but Lear suggests that this was not a display of fear or cowardice, but of hope and courage. As he explains 'in order to survive – and perhaps to flourish again – the Crow had to be willing to give up almost everything they understood about the good.'[119] The Crow had no hope of survival as traditionally understood, or of going on as they had done before. However, rather than abandoning hope completely, Lear suggests we can view Plenty Coups as adopting a different hope, borne out of 'some conception of- or commitment to- a goodness that transcended one's current understanding of the good.'[120] This good is, however, indeterminate. Lear explains further:

> *The commitment is only to the bare possibility that, from this disaster, something good will emerge: the Crow shall somehow survive. Why that will be or how that will be is left open. The hope is held in the face of the recognition that, given the abyss, one cannot really know what survival means.*[121]

The survival that Lear is referring to is not 'mere biological survival',[122] but survival in a meaningful sense as the Crow. So, 'radical hope is hope that is maintained in the face of the recognition that the very concepts with which one has hitherto framed one's hopes may themselves become (or perhaps have become) unintelligible as

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[118] *Ibid.,* p. 34
[119] *Ibid.,* p. 92
[120] *Ibid.,* p. 92
[121] *Ibid.,* p. 97
[122] *Ibid.,* p. 93

ways to live.'[123] Radical hope, then, is a hope for goodness and beyond survival, without knowledge of what this goodness will look like, how it will be achieved or even the concepts needed to understand such goodness.

4.2 The Source and Legitimacy of Radical Hope

Having established what radical hope is, two further points must be examined before the potential relevance of radical hope to climate change is explored. The first is where this radical hope comes from, the second is whether or not it is legitimate. To start with the former, Lear frames this as an issue of moral psychology. He describes how Plenty Coups' radical hope was borne out of the traditional Crow practice of dreaming. Dreams, in the Crow culture, were a source of knowledge believed to be from God. As was an established practice among the Crow, as a young boy Plenty Coups had gone into nature to dream and then returned to recount the dream to the rest of the Crow. The Elders then interpreted the dreams, and these interpretations were viewed with authority given their divine origin. As a young man, Plenty Coups had a dream that was interpreted by an elder as follows:

The dream of Plenty Coups means that the white man will take and hold this country and that their spotted-buffalo will cover the plains. He was told to think for himself, to listen, to learn to avoid disaster by the experiences of others… The meaning of this dream is plain to me. I see its warning. The tribes who have fought the whiteman have all been beaten and wiped out. By listening as the Chickadee listens we may escape this and keep our lands.[124]

Noting this dream already partially addresses the question of whether Plenty Coups' radical hope was legitimate, as we can see clearly that he had a reason for hope and why co-operating with the settlers was not, for him, giving up. Lear explains that 'the chickadee is a traditional Crow bird-icon that stands essentially for the virtue of

[123] Lear, Jonathan, *Response to Hubert Dreyfus and Nancy Sherman*, 2009, *Philosophical Studies*, 144, p. 86
[124] *Op. Cit.,* Lear, *Radical Hope,* p. 72

learning from others.'[125] So, on the basis of this traditionally sourced knowledge, Plenty Coups was radically hopeful that this advice would ensure that the Crow survived, even though how this would happen or what this would look like was not known. Lear calls Plenty Coups' ability to do this 'imaginative excellence.'[126] He used imaginative excellence to creatively utilise this dream as a resource from which the Crow could draw to maintain radical hope even as all aspects of their culture were devastated.

In the final chapter of the book, Lear directly explores the legitimacy of radical hope. To do so, he also distinguishes it from wishful optimism. Considering what would make this radical hope justified, Lear states that 'if we can make the case that this stance was a manifestation of courage, we could presumably come to see how radical hope can be… a legitimate response even to a world catastrophe.'[127] To determine whether Plenty Coup's response can be understood as courageous, Lear reasons that 'for this hope to count as a constituent of courage, rather than as mere wishful optimism, we must see it as facilitating the capacity to respond well to reality.'[128] To show that it did, Lear again refers to the dream, arguing that even if we do not accept the divine origin of the dream like the Crow do, we can see it as representing the feelings and anxieties of the Crow at the time, borne out of the circumstances with which they were faced. Drawing on this, and the dream's instruction that 'after an inevitable devastation, the Crow will survive and hold onto their land if they make the best use of their own skills to learn from others',[129] informed the Crow's cooperation strategy. So, 'in this way the dream helped them to face up to this new reality and to deal with it in imaginative, resourceful yet steadfast ways'[130]: it was a 'hopeful-yet-realistic response.'[131] Although in this incredibly uncertain time the Crow did not have a concrete object of hope for which to strive, drawing on the resources that they had (from the dream interpretations),

[125] *Ibid.,* p. 80
[126] *Ibid.,* p. 118
[127] *Ibid.,* p. 115
[128] *Ibid.,* p. 135
[129] *Ibid.*
[130] *Ibid.,* p. 137
[131] *Ibid.,* p 140

they adopted a strategy that was genuinely (radically) hopeful. It was not wishful thinking because it did not ignore reality. Rather it was informed both by the advice from this dream, the historical circumstances and (as advised in the dream) the example of others. It was not optimism because it was not passive: Plenty Coups was an active political negotiator throughout this period, continuously responding to the challenges presented to him. Moreover, Lear contends that history supports this interpretation because, ultimately, this strategy delivered a good result: the Crow kept their land to some extent, and although they suffered tremendous and tragic loss, they fared remarkably better than all of their contemporaries. The outcome, although far from perfect, was probably the best possible given the circumstances. Lear acknowledges the other options – giving in to despair or going down fighting – and suggests that both of these would have likely led to the complete annihilation of the Crow, as it did for others. Whilst giving up entirely would have been wholly understandable, and going down fighting would have also been courageous in a different sense, Plenty Coups' response was evidence sensitive and thus brought the best possible results. The Crow not only survived, but have survived in a particular sense as the Crow, 'transmitting their values and memories of their traditions to another generation.'[132] So, 'this was not merely wishful optimism but a sustained thoughtful engagement with the world that, in terrible circumstances, yielded tangible positive results.'[133] Plenty Coups was not only able to harbour and sustain radical hope, but he was also able to utilise this hope to facilitate a courageous response to the cultural devastation that the Crow faced.

4.3 Towards a Philosophy of Radical Climate Hope: Existing Accounts

Having established what radical hope is, the sort of context in which it manifests and the purpose that it can serve, it is already somewhat evident why it may be an appropriate form of hope in the context of climate change. Because in our current context an appropriate object of hope cannot be identified, radical hope provides another way to respond: we cannot have a concrete object of hope, but we can hope for some form of good for humanity that, at present, we do not have the

[132] *Ibid.,* p. 144
[133] *Ibid.,* p. 143

conceptual means to understand. This is not necessarily to suggest that we are going to experience cultural devastation on the same level as that experienced by the Crow. It is, though, to suggest that the cultural, societal and environmental changes we are facing are of such gravity, and that our current context is so unstable and uncertain, that any hope we harbour must be radical. It is not surprising, then, that the relevance of radical hope to climate change was quickly recognised in several different fields. Orr invokes radical hope in his work about hope, suggesting the example of the Crow as a useful metaphor when thinking about the changes to our ethics that will be necessary in confronting the future.[134] Given the strong element of moral psychology in Lear's book, it has also appealed to the *Climate Psychology Alliance*. They held an event on this topic in April 2015, [135] and their chair Paul Hoggett also wrote a piece for *The Ecologist* in which he invokes radical hope as the appropriate hope for the climate movement. [136] Jonathan Gosling and Peter Case have also looked at the application of radical hope to climate change in organisational studies. Their central normative point taken from the book is that we should be thinking about the sort of societal changes that are in store for us and that we need alternatives to 'the predominantly rational and techno-scientific hegemony of approaches'[137] currently being adopted to do so.

As well as these evocations of radical hope in other fields, there have also been more substantial analysis of radical climate hope from a philosophical perspective. Indeed it is striking that, despite the lack of philosophical work on climate change and hope, several philosophers have already written about applying radical hope to climate change. Allen Thompson, Kenneth Shockley and Williston have all identified radical

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134 *Op. Cit.*, Orr, *Hope is an Imperative*, p. 321
135 Climate Psychology Alliance, *Radical Hope & Cultural Tragedy Conference,* [Webpage], URL= <http://www.climatepsychologyalliance.org/radical-hope-cultural-tragedy-conference-18th-april-2015-2/>, accessed 5/6/15
136 Hoggett, Paul, *Embracing 'Radical Hope' In Our Right to Save the Earth,* 2015, *The Ecologist*, April 5, URL= <http://www.theecologist.org/blogs_and_comments/commentators/2814968/embracing_radical_hope_in_our_fight_to_save_the_earth.html>
137 Case, Peter and Gosling, Jonathan, *Social Dreaming and Ecocentric Ethics: Sources of Non-rational Insight in the Face of Climate Change Catastrophe*, 2013, *Organization*, 20:5, p. 706

hope as an appropriate form of hope in the context of climate change, given the huge environmental and societal changes we face and the difficulty of identifying an appropriate object of hope in this context. Their focuses, however, are different. Thompson focuses on how the 'dominant world culture of consumerism'[138] is vulnerable to collapse and how this will effect what we understand as environmental virtues. Thompson distinguishes between virtues of the transition and of the future, where the former is the virtues we require during the period of radical change and the latter are those required after this change has taken place, when we must become accustomed to a radically different way of life. For the transition, he suggests that environmental virtues will manifest as environmental activism and engaging imaginative excellence to not only think about alternative lifestyles but also actually change our own lifestyles. Thinking about the future, he argues that environmentalism itself will need to be revived, as the autonomy of nature, often seen to be an important grounding of environmentalism, will no longer be possible in the anthropocene. Thompson should be credited with first identifying the relevance of radical hope for climate change. However, although useful in highlighting the importance of activism in this context, and exploring other forms of the good life outside Western consumerist culture, because of his focus on environmental virtues it is of limited utility in thinking about how we ought to respond the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change.

Williston has noted this narrowness of Thompson's argument and attempted a more ambitious philosophy of radical climate hope,.[139] He focuses on how climate change threatens our capacity to flourish as moral agents, in particular because of how it allows us to harm vulnerable (future and distant) people without feeling like we are doing anything wrong. He therefore suggests that our hope should be that 'the world we are creating will not be utterly hostile to human flourishing'[140] ('as

[138] Thompson, Allen, *Radical Hope for Living Well in a Warmer World*, 2010, *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics*, 23, p. 43
[139] *Op. Cit.*, Williston, p. 183
[140] *Ibid.*

competent moral agents')[141] but because we cannot know how such a world will look, 'that hope will necessarily be radical.'[142] He then identifies three features of radical hope that are particularly relevant to climate change which indicate how radical hope might manifest itself in our current context. Firstly, Plenty Coups' radical hope involved a strong political uptake. In our context, this suggests a similar point to Thompson's about the need for political activism. Secondly, Plenty Coups was aware that strategy was risky. In our context, this is pertinent because all possible response strategies involve risk. Given that risk is inherent to every option, radical hope can provide us with the courage to confront this, rather than shrink away from it into inaction. Finally, Williston suggests that the strategy adopted by Plenty Coups highlights the importance of 'knowing what aspects of our culture to preserve in the face of threat.'[143] Just as the Crow were forced to give up their entire way of life, but retained their identity as the Crow, Williston suggests that we must reflect upon what elements of our culture should or can be preserved during cultural upheaval. These are all undoubtedly useful suggestions with interesting implications for radical climate hope. However, despite adopting a broader focus than Thompson, Williston's account also does not give much indication of how to respond to our current predicament beyond maintaining radical hope and being politically active.

Kenneth Shockley has picked up this shortcoming of current accounts of radical climate hope. Although he is yet to publish on the subject, Shockley has spoken at academic conferences and events, endorsing the need for radical hope[144] in the context of climate change but also suggesting that there is a gap in Thompson's argument.[145] He suggests that this is incomplete because it does not provide an

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141 *Ibid.,* p. 179
142 *Ibid.,* p. 183
143 *Ibid.,* pp. 181-182
144 Shockley, Kenneth, *Sustainable Hope* [Lecture], 2014*, University of Buffalo Undergraduate Academy for Sustainability*, March 7, Transcript URL= <http://fellowships.buffalo.edu/pdfs/PBK-keynote.pdf>
145 Shockley, Kenneth, *Living Well Wherever You Are: Radical Hope and the Good Life in the Anthropocene*, 2014, *The International Society for Environmental Ethics 11th Annual Meeting: Environmental Philosophy and the Anthropocene Epoch*, June 18, Transcript URL= <https://iseethics.files.wordpress.com/2014/05/shockley-ken-living-well-wherever-you-are.pdf>

account of what we are hoping for. Not misunderstanding Lear's contention that a defining feature of radical hope is that we can't know exactly what to hope for, Shockley contends that we must have some object of hope, even if this is indeterminate. To serve this function, he suggests the capabilities approach. Shockley thinks that capabilities are a suitable object of hope because they do not specify what the good life would look like, but they do delineate the freedoms necessary for a good life to be realised. Thus combining the capabilities approach with radical hope, argues Shockley, is a way to account for the problem that hope needs an object, but that in our unstable times we have no such concrete object. Moreover, Shockley suggests that this also remedies the limitation of existing accounts of radical climate hope: 'while attitudes like radical hope provide an invaluable mind set, the connection to policy supported by such attitudes is less clear.'[146] According to Shockley, combining the capabilities approach with radical hope enables radical hope to inform policy. Although he is yet to expand on exactly how the capabilities approach can inform policy responses, or what policy responses this could dictate, this could provide useful insights that directly answer the question of how we ought to respond to the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change. The issue with Shockley's argument, however, is that it is not clear whether pairing the capabilities approach with radical hope actually adds anything to the latter. The object of radical hope, as defined by Lear, is some form of good although what this form will be is unknown. Thus by adopting the capabilities approach, what Shockley adds is a label and some criteria to this. Whilst some, especially those who already endorse the capabilities approach, will find this a welcome addition, it is not necessarily required. Nonetheless, Shockley's account is crucially important because it recognises that for radical climate hope to be legitimate it should not only encourage a political response, as indicated by Thompson and Williston, but also contribute to the actual content of that response, just as it did for Plenty Coups.

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[146] Shockley, Kenneth, *Reacting and Responding to Environmental Change: The Environmental Problem and What To Do About It* [Webpage], URL= <https://sites.google.com/site/kennethshockley/home/research-interests/emp-outline>, accessed 25/6/15

4.4 Recap: Radical Hope and Climate Change

Radical hope and the already existing accounts of radical climate hope provide us with the beginning of answers to our questions about hope, and so the starts of a philosophy of climate hope. By addressing the concerns about an object of hope, radical hope provides an appropriate response to current context. What's more, in line with what was indicated by looking at the philosophy of hope, Lear's account of radical hope also shows the normative advantage of hoping: it can facilitate the best response, and so play a decisive role in bringing about the best possible outcome in tragically difficult circumstances. Radical hope can be seen as congruent with, rather than in denial of, reality, because it admits that the change will be monumental, so much so that even what we understand as survival may change. It is not, then, wishful thinking. However, we can easily see how such a conviction could collapse into optimism. That is, if we say that we cannot know how humanity will come to experience good but nonetheless radically hope that it will, it might seem to encourage a complacent attitude where no responsibility is taken for shaping the future. This is why Lear's explication of the justification of radical hope is of crucial importance: radical hope is made legitimate through the way in which it facilitates a courageous response to awful and uncertain circumstances. Thus radical hope is not only a hope for an indeterminate good, but also hope that is actively employed to pursue the best possible outcomes. Thompson and Williston have therefore both suggested that on an individual level, radical hope should manifest as political involvement. However, they give little indication as to the strategy that such activism should aim to advocate. Shockley has therefore quite rightly suggested the need for more indication of how radical hope can actually inform our response. So, it should be considered if and how it could do that. Equally, existing accounts of radical hope do not offer suggestions for how to hope, or how we can foster the imaginative excellence Plenty Coups was able to develop through his commitment to his dreams. Finally, then, we can turn to these two questions.

5. Radical Hope and Climate Courage: Facilitating a Response

5.1 Responding with Radical Climate Hope

In beginning to answer the questions of how radical hope can facilitate a courageous response to our current predicament and what resources we can draw on to find and sustain such hope, two points will be made. One is a smaller point about insights we may take from Lear's book for climate ethics. Secondly, directly answering the question of how we ought to respond to our current reality, the larger point is how radical hope can inform such a response, and how this differs from all strategies borne out of wishful thinking or giving up. Whilst both of these points require much further research and elaboration, considering them briefly serves to show how radical hope could be employed to courageously respond to the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change.

5.2 Lessons for Climate Ethics

In regards to the lessons from Lear's book for climate ethics, this comes not only from content but also style. That is, any reader of Lear's book is immediately struck by its narrative, almost literary style. Donna M. Orange writes that it is 'lyrical and profoundly thoughtful';[147] Dreyfus describes it as 'poetry'.[148] It is reasonable to suggest that for many the depth and impact of the book is contributed to by the poetic, lyrical nature of Lear's prose. As Sherman comments, 'narrative and anecdote, dreams and interviews, are part of the case study': 'This is not philosophy in an armchair, but rather, philosophy in the field.'[149] *Radical Hope* is a very 'applied' form of ethics in the sense that Lear uses and analyses a 'textured historical context'[150], and draws upon a variety of sources to do so. But this style is quite unlike

[147] Orange, Donna M., *Book Review: Radical Hope by Jonathan Lear*, 2008, *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, 25:2, p. 368
[148] *Op. Cit.*, Dreyfus, p. 67
[149] *Op. Cit.*, Sherman, p. 74
[150] *Op. Cit.,* Lear, *Radical Hope,* p. 8

that which we are accustomed to finding in applied ethics. This is not to detract from the more traditional, analytical style that currently dominates climate ethics. It is rather to suggest that parallel to these crucial efforts, a deeper and more sustained engagement with a more literary, narrative style could be of benefit to climate ethics. Stephen Siperstein, who also invokes radical hope, has examined the role of the arts in the discussion about climate change. He looks at the psychological and emotional effects of climate change and argues that the literary and cultural arts are vital to addressing these, and in particular that we should 'turn to literature and the arts not for answers, but for hope.'[151] They are two ways in which the creative arts could serve this function. One, particularly through utopian literature, would be to provide positive images of possible futures, and so indicate possible paths that could be taken to get there. Another, through other fiction and the arts more generally, is to train us to be more imaginative and flexible in our thinking on the topic, with the aim that this in turn will better equip us to think about, and respond to, the future. The former could serve as a resource from which we can draw valuable insights and hope; the latter could help us with developing the imaginative excellence to do so. A figure who demonstrates the potential of literature in this respect well is Margaret Atwood. Her recent fiction on climate change- or, as she calls it, everything change- has hope as a strong theme and aim.[152] Equally, Kathryn Yusoff and Jennifer Gabrys have argued that thinking imaginatively is particularly important in thinking about and developing appropriate adaptation measures.[153] Of course, this alone does not imply that ethics needs to engage in the arts, only that the arts should engage with climate change. In recent years, there has already been some recognition of this, and substantial attempts at it.[154] However, the power of Lear's book shows the value of

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151 Siperstein, Stephen, *Climate Change Fiction: Radical Hope from an Emerging Genre* [blogpost], 2014, URL= <http://eco-fiction.com/climate-change-fiction-radical-hope-from-an-emerging-genre/>

152 Finn, Ed, *An Interview with Margaret Atwood*, 2015, *Slate*, Feb 6, URL= <http://www.slate.com/articles/technology/future_tense/2015/02/margaret_atwood_interview_the_author_speaks_on_hope_science_and_the_future.single.html>

153 Gabrys, Jennifer and Yusoff, Kathryn, *Climate Change and the Imagination*, 2011, *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 2, pp. 516 - 534

154 For examples, see Simms, Andrew, *Why Climate Action Needs the Arts*, 2015, *The Guardian*, June 3, URL =

doing in ethics in a more literary way. The potential force of doing this also seems to have been recognised by Jamieson, who in September 2015 will release his first narrative book, entitled *Love in the Anthropocene.*[155] Co-written with a novelist, the book promises to marry 'the vision of a philosopher with the vision of a novelist in a compact exploration of what it means to be living in the anthropocene.'[156] So, projects like these could begin to answer the question: how can we hope? Through engaging more meaningfully in the creative arts, avenues to hope in a legitimate and radical way just might present themselves.

5.3 Informing a Response

The larger question is if and how radical hope can inform a policy response in our current context. For, as Lear made explicit, what makes radical hope justified is when it contributes to a genuinely courageous response that brings positive results in exceptionally difficult circumstances. So, endorsing radical climate hope should also be to this effect. Of course, Lear makes this analysis retrospectively, which is not a luxury we have. Given the immense uncertainty of the situation we are faced with, we cannot say with absolute confidence that there is one route that will bring the best results. If we could, of course, radical hope would not be needed. However, in a similar way to Plenty Coup's decision to neither give up completely nor go down fighting, a convincing case could be made that we should pursue a radically hopeful and evidence sensitive strategy that avoids the pitfalls of the alternative responses previously discussed. According to Lear, Plenty Coup's radical hope enabled him to pursue a creative strategy involving serious adaptation but also in which the Crow were able to continue as the Crow. We can draw a comparison with possible responses both to the adaptation, mitigation and geoengineering debate and also in regards to our cultures and societies more generally. To start with the former, this would suggest a joint strategy that admits the need for adaptation, and even

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<http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jun/03/why-climate-action-needs-the-arts>

[155] Jamieson, Dale and Nadzam, Bonnie, *Love in the Anthropocene*, forthcoming 2015, New York: Or Books

[156] Johnson, Kate, *Love In the Anthropocene Sold to Or Books*, 2014, *Wolf Literary Services News*, December 18, URL= <http://wolflit.com/love-in-the-anthropocene-sold-to-or-books/>

perhaps further consideration of geoengineering, whilst also not giving up on the chance of some mitigation even when the prospects seem grim. Much more would need to be said to work out how such a strategy would be put together, and how resources should be distributed between these possible responses. If Shockley is right, the capabilities approach could offer one way to do this, but it is likely that various other theories or methods could also prove useful, including much of the existing climate ethics literature. On the more cultural level, it suggests the need to be ready and willing to adapt our societies and lifestyles creatively and courageously.

It should, however, be considered whether this account is much different to the hope already found in the climate movement. After all, most climate campaigners and ethicists already endorse a joint strategy of adaptation and mitigation, and are at least considering the possibility of geoengineering. There are a few responses that should be made to this objection. Firstly, although it is true that many do already advocate this strategy, it remains the case that at present mitigation still dominates the discussion. Although Jamieson describes how, despite some people viewing adaptation as the "neglected option",[157] adaptation is actually explicit in the UNFCCC, the public discourse is much more focused on mitigation. For example, the biggest climate campaigns are still focused almost exclusively on reducing fossil fuel consumption.[158] Thus endorsing radical hope is useful in showing that more focus should be put on other strategies and that admitting the need for this does not constitute giving up, and so climate campaigners should not fear endorsing it. Equally, though, radical hope also offers legitimacy to the view that, as time progresses, and so climate change becomes more dangerous and permanent, we

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[157] *Op. Cit.*, Jamieson, p. 208

[158] See, for example, Greenpeace's climate campaign: Greenpeace International, *Climate Change Campaign* [Webpage], URL= <http://www.greenpeace.org/international/en/campaigns/climate-change/>, accessed 5/6/15; 350.org's self-description: 350.org, *What We Do* [Webpage], URL= <http://350.org/about/what-we-do/>, accessed 5/6/15; and Climate Reality's mission statement: Climate Reality Project, *Our Mission* [Webpage], URL= <http://climaterealityproject.org/our-mission>, accessed 5/6/15; Friends of the Earth's climate campaign: Friends of the Earth, *Climate Change Campaign* [Webpage], URL= <https://www.foe.co.uk/campaigns/climate_change>, accessed 25/5/6

should still not give up entirely on mitigation efforts. In the same way that Plenty Coups could not know that his efforts to retain some semblance of Crow culture would eventually meet some success, but kept faith in spite of this, so too we cannot know that mitigation efforts, after a certain point, will bring real gain, yet we can radically hope that they will. So, this strategy is distinguished from all of those previously discussed that involved giving up. This also implies that as time goes on, the practical difference between a strategy supported by radical hope and one without such hope will be more pronounced. Finally, this radical hope and creative adaptation also applies on a cultural and societal level. Here, too, adopting radical hope can make a practical difference, because it is sadly the case that creative, imaginative visions of future society and culture are sorely lacking. Particularly because of the technology optimists identified by Gardiner, there is a real reluctance to engage with questions about what a truly sustainable good life, and thus a sustainable and just society, might look like. So, a radically hopeful strategy will differ from a strategy of wishful thinking because it necessarily involves the recognition that huge changes to our societies and way of life are inevitable. Radical hope can also offer us the courage to confront this.

Conclusion

In conclusion, although hope is rarely discussed within climate ethics, it is a crucially important topic in the context of the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change. This is because science tells us that time is running out to stop climate change from becoming catastrophic and irreversible, and the political context which we are in gives little reason to think that this challenge will be met in time. This predicament therefore creates an acutely urgent moral problem, which is further complicated by the uncertainty that surrounds the climate change problem. In this unstable context genuine hope, as distinguished from wishful thinking and optimism, is important because it is a prerequisite component of any legitimate response, both in terms of justification and motivation. That is, a response cannot be justified if there is no hope of it delivering positive results, and if it is perceived that there is no chance of the hope being fulfilled then no one will be motivated to pursue that response.

Looking at the climate movement, it is surprising to find that expressions of hope abound, particularly in recent years. However, there have been few attempts to establish what hope amounts to in our current context, or if it can be justified. It is therefore not apparent whether such expressions are hope or just wishful thinking. Taking some insights from contemporary philosophers who have written on the subject of hope, we can see that for hope to be properly distinguished from wishful thinking it requires an object that is perceived to be realisable. To be valuable, and so distinguished from optimism, hope should also involve an active attempt to realise this object.

The problem is, however, that in our current context it is not clear whether such a hope is possible. As the likelihood of successfully addressing climate change continues to decrease, identifying an achievable object of hope becomes difficult. Given this, it might be thought that the only appropriate response to the decreasing likelihood of successfully addressing climate change it is to give up on it. Giving up,

here, could take many different forms, but it has been shown that all of these are also problematic from an ethical perspective. This presents us with a somewhat impossible predicament, where neither hoping nor giving up hope can be justified.

One way to approach this situation presents itself through looking at the concept of radical hope, which in turn gives us some indications of what appropriate responses to our current predicament could be. Radical hope, as defined by Lear, is a hope for a good that transcends ones current understanding of the good, but nonetheless, despite being indeterminate, can be drawn upon to facilitate a courageous response to cultural devastation. Although we are not necessarily facing cultural devastation on par with the Crow, given that in the context of climate change we do not have a concrete object for which we can justifiably hope, radical hope therefore provides us with a possible alternative. Several philosophers and thinkers from other fields have consequently noted the relevance of radical hope for our current context, and suggested ways that radical climate hope could manifest. However, these only go so far in showing how radical hope can be utilised to deliver a legitimate response to our current situation, and what such a response would look like. Although much more research would be required to show this convincingly, it has been suggested that from a position of radical hope a convincing case could be made for a joint mitigation and adaptation strategy, which simultaneously refuses to give up on the former whilst showing that the latter does not constitute giving up. It also suggests that the reality that our societies and way of life will change drastically should be confronted, and could even contribute towards the geoengineering debate. Equally, a further suggestion is for how climate ethicists should respond to this predicament, and it has been suggested that they could, like Lear, experiment with a more narrative style of ethics.

So, in terms of providing a start to a philosophy of hope for the climate movement, existing literature on the philosophy of hope paired with radical hope offers the following suggestions. We should hope, for without hope there is no chance of averting the worst, but we must hope for something and there must be some chance of this hope being realised. Given our current reality, and the difficulty for hoping for

anything concrete in these unstable and uncertain times, the most appropriate, legitimate hope we can have is for an indeterminate good, which we are not currently able to fully comprehend but that involves humanity surviving and thriving nonetheless. Of course, we will never know if this radical hope was truly justified. Those of us who harbour radical hope now will not, unlike Plenty Coups, be the same people to see this hope realised, or dashed. This does not, though, count against radical hope. It only further highlights the need for it.

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