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The Emotions of Hope: From Optimism to Sanguinity, from Pessimism to Despair

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Abstract
The concept of hope has become a topic of growing interest across many areas of sociological research and theory, motivated in part by the widening perception of an uncertain future given the deterioration of the social fabric of contemporary societies. Hope has been theorized to be primarily a cognitive assessment of a goal-intention, a state of mind based upon the prospect that some desired objective, outcome, or situation will be realized, and where obstacles, obstructions, and unforeseen circumstances, even fate, can determine success or failure. The cognitivist theory of hope as necessarily involving agency and planning is critically evaluated, and it is argued that hope, while not itself an emotion, is an affect-laden phenomenon. Hope theorists have not systematically investigated the specific emotions that might be involved in hope. To address this lacuna, a sociological theory of the emotions of hope is presented. This conceptualization utilizes basic-emotion theory and the author's hierarchical classification of primary, secondary, and tertiary emotions. As whatever is hoped for is seen with increasing optimism or pessimism, opposite clusters of emotions—the tertiary-level emotions of sanguinity and despair—emerge at the valenced poles of hope, hopefulness and hopelessness. Sanguinity includes in its meaning the primary emotions acceptance, joy–happiness, and anticipation, and the secondary emotions optimism, fatalism and love. But if pessimism ensues from plans unravelling and obstacles becoming unsurmountable, a sense of hopelessness comes to include an opposite set of emotions, consisting of the primary emotions disgust, sadness, and surprise, and the secondary emotions loneliness, disappointment, and shock. Sanguinity is a positive resource, but can become pathological if based on an unrealistic sense of over-confidence. The phenomenological nature of despair is explored in terms of the collapse of one's social resources and social involvements, the demise of one's social world, and a disintegration of self-representation. The ambiguous nature of hope is discussed, as what is hoped for is apt to be abstract and ill-defined, so that the reality of a hope, realized, can differ from what was imagined, and can involve self-deception concerning the sociomoral reality of what has actually happened.

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> Because people are so tenacious in their search for grounds on which to hope, and try to realize the hopeful possibility, despair must be viewed as a terrible state of mind; if one gives up hoping completely, there is nothing to live for. It requires a major effort to sustain sanguinity and action in the place of giving up.
> — Richard Lazarus, 1999: 675

To hope means to anticipate, without certainty, that a desired future event, outcome, or situation will occur or be attained. The word *hope* can apply to a minor event ("I hope it doesn't rain tomorrow") but we focus on the larger concept of hope with respect to important life goals, where obstacles, obstructions, and unforeseen circumstances, even fate, can determine success or failure. Hope's presence is interpreted, in sociomoral terms, as "a sign of health, a fighting spirit, and faith that something good will triumph" (Averill et al., 1990: *v*). Hope, by definition, is an optimistic state of mind that is based on the possibility, or the expectation, of positive outcomes with respect to specific goals, to events and social circumstances, and to one's more general sense of self in relation to the world, or as a precondition for overcoming one's imperfections and acting as a moral agent (Kant [1793] 1998: 6: 38). While objects of want and desire tend to be trivial and materialistic, hope involves important matters subject to some level of personal control, with a reasonable chance of realization, and constrained by norms of public morality (Averill et al., 1990: 9–35).

Hope, as a concept, has both affective and cognitive aspects. Among contemporary theorists of hope, only a handful regard it as an emotion (Averill et al., 1990; Lazarus, 1991, 1999; Ben-Ze'ev, 2000: 473–89; Miceli & Castelfranchi 2015: 162), while most see it as primarily a cognitive phenomenon (Stotland, 1969; Snyder et al., 1991; Snyder, 2000, 2002). Before considering the emotional side of hope, we briefly consider its cognitive aspects. Miceli & Castelfranchi (2015: 161, 163, emphasis partially deleted) offer a three-part definition of the cognitive basis of hope, which requires: (a) "a belief that an event *p* is possible," (b) "the goal that *p* occurs," and (c), "the belief that *p*'s attainment is not (completely) within one' control." This definition of hope stressed uncertainty, both about the occurrence of the event and one' self-efficacy in bringing the event about.

Hope, as understood by Snyder et al. (1991: 287; see also Snyder 2000, 2002) is "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) planning to meet goals." However, everyday understandings of hope, and metaphors expressing hope, do not necessarily include personal agency. One can hope to win a lottery, or to find a true love, without taking any action. Hope is not a sense of personal mastery and successful agency, as Snyder maintains, for it rather "implies one's confrontation with the limitations of one's agency," so that "a distinguishing feature of hope is precisely one's reliance on factors and conditions that might be beyond one's control" (Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2015: 162, emphasis deleted). As Lazarus (1999: 674) put it, "we can hope even when we are helpless to affect the outcome."

Snyder's agency–planning model of hope is not only inconsistent with everyday understandings of hope, it has been empirically tested and found wanting. Tong et al. (2011) measured subjects' dispositions to engage in agency-thinking and pathway-

thinking, both with respect to their specific and concrete goals, and to general issues (such as personal growth). Pathway-thinking was found unrelated to hope. Agency-thinking was related to hope, but the agency items (for both specific and general goals) could not be interpreted as measures of "perceived capacity for executing goal-related actions (as Snyder had proposed them to be)," but rather "an expectation that desired goals can somehow be attained" (Tong et al., 2011: 1209). As Miceli & Castelfranchi (2015: 163) conclude, "as it can be easily seen, little agency is implied in such 'agentic thinking'." And indeed, the agency–pathway model might be more descriptive of Weberian, instrumental, rationality than it is of hope. The conclusion we can draw about Snyder's cognitive theory is that hoping for a goal is different than the plans one might devise to obtain this goal, and that agency might or might not be involved in hoping to attain a goal.

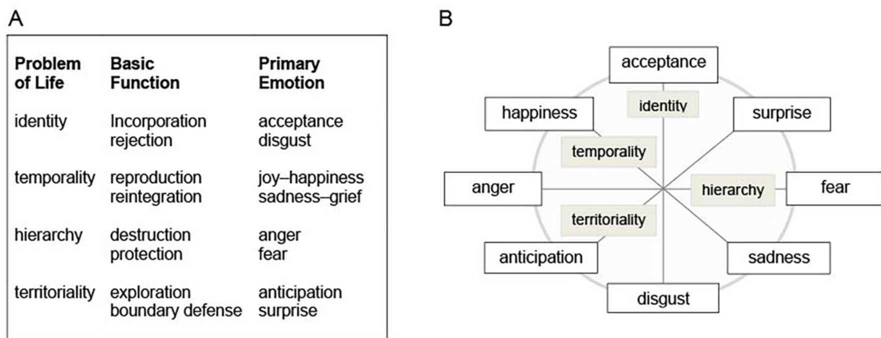
Theorists who see hope as primarily cognitive have also recognized the involvement of emotions. For Stotland (1969), important goals with high probabilities of attainment (high hopes) generate positive affects (joy, pleasure), while important goals with low probability of success generate anxiety or depression. For Snyder et al. (1991: 287), hope is "primarily a way of thinking, with feelings playing an important, albeit contributory role." Accordingly, continued agency–planning interactions promote an outcome expectancy relative to goal pursuits, where unspecified "positive" or "negative" emotions are seen not as causal motivating factors but as consequences of successes or failures; this provides feedback to subsequent agency–pathway dynamics, and can raise or lower one's level of hopeful optimism with respect to further goal-seeking. While acknowledging that feeling and emotion are an aspect of hope, hope theorists with a cognitivist orientation have not systematically investigated the specific emotions involved in hope, hopefulness, and hopelessness.

Specific emotions have occasionally been included in definitions of hope. Lazarus (1991: 282) describes hope as a defense against negative emotions, as "an antidote to despair," as "a yearning for amelioration of a dreaded outcome," and as "fearing the worst but yearning for better." The single sociological treatise on hope, by Henri Desroche (1973), focuses on the role of hope in religion and ideology, but makes no mention of emotion. Addressing these theoretical lacunae, we present a theory of the emotional basis of hope, grounded in a socioevolutionary theory of the emotions and social relations, affect-spectrum theory (TenHouten, 1996, 2007, 2013, 2017a, b, 2021a).

A Socioevolutionary Classification of the Emotions

As a theory-construction strategy for identifying emotions of hope, we conceptualize hope not as a single variable but rather as a bipolar dimension, the positively- and negatively-valenced poles of which can be considered variables, namely *hopefulness* and *hopelessness*. Assuming that basic emotions are positively- or negatively-valenced, we will link specific emotions not to hope per se but rather to the positively- and negatively-valenced and qualitatively different poles of hope.

To this end, we posit the existence of basic, or primary, emotions, which can combine to form more complex, second- and third-order, emotions. Among basic-emo-



Problem of Life	Basic Function	Primary Emotion
identity	Incorporation rejection	acceptance disgust
temporality	reproduction reintegration	joy–happiness sadness–grief
hierarchy	destruction protection	anger fear
territoriality	exploration boundary defense	anticipation surprise

Fig. 1 (A) Fourfold Models of Social Relations, Behavioral Displays, and Plutchik's Psychoevolutionary Model of Existential Problems, Their Opposite Functions, and their Adaptive Reactions, the Primary Emotions; (B) Plutchik's Circumplex, or 'Wheel', of the Primary Emotions, with Distance Between Emotions Indicative of Dissimilarity

tion theorists, the exact identification of the basic emotions remains an unresolved problem. We begin with a behavioral profile, or an 'ethogram', that applies to reptiles and mammals alike (Carpenter, 1961; Greenberg & MacLean, 1978; MacLean, 1990: 100). This ethogram identified four kinds of communicative displays—of *signature*, *courtship*, *submission*, and *territoriality*. Emotions theorist Plutchik (1980a, 1980b) independently developed a psychoevolutionary model of four existential problems of life that are found across a wide variety of animal species, thereby generalizing the Carpenter–Greenberg–MacLean ethogram (see TenHouten 2021a). Plutchik referred to these four existential problems as *social identity*, *temporality* (the cycle of life and death, of reproduction and reintegration of the group following loss of a member), *hierarchy*, and *territoriality*, respectively.

These four problems of everyday life can involve either an opportunity, or a danger and/or threat. Each of the resulting eight situations can motivate a distinct subjective state of mind which activates an intention, together with a motor plan, to carry out an adaptive behavioral reaction. Plutchik (1980b: 144) held that these "eight basic adaptive behavioral patterns," which comprise the primary emotions, can be "found in some form at all levels of evolution, …and are defined in terms of gross behavioral interactions between organism and environment." The resulting psychoevolutionary model is summarized in Fig. 1. Plutchik designed his circumplex or 'wheel' of primary emotions (Fig. 1b), so that the distances between emotions reflect their dissimilarity.

Plutchik's model hypothesizes that each of the eight adaptive reactions to the four existential problems addresses a fundamental problem of life, and thereby serves a necessary function. The pairings of *emotions*/functions are: for temporality, *joy–happiness*/reproduction and *sadness–grief*/reintegration; for identity, *acceptance*/incorporation and *disgust*/elimination–rejection; for hierarchy, *anger*/destruction and *fear*/protection; and for territoriality, *expectancy–anticipation*/exploration and *surprise*/boundary-defense.

The next step in developing this socioevolutionary theory was to link these emotions to sociorelational models. We postulate that Plutchik's four universal problems

of life—identity, temporality, hierarchy, and territoriality—have evolved into four elementary social relations models, as formulated by Simmel ([1907–10] 1971: chs 5–7, 9), Weber ([1921] (1978)), Fiske (1991), and others. Accordingly, problems of identity have developed, in humans, into equality-matching (EM); temporality, into communal-sharing (CS); hierarchy, into hierarchical-ranking (HR); and territoriality, into socioeconomic exchanging (SE) (TenHouten, 2013, 2021a). This enables a set of hypotheses, such as CS– → Sadness and SE+ → Anticipation.

In addition to his well-known model of the primary emotions, Plutchik ([1962] 1991: 117–18) presented a highly tentative model of secondary-level emotions: an inventory of the 24 (non-opposite) pairings, each pairing containing two of the eight primary emotions. Although Plutchik's classificatory model has been ignored, his effort is important. If primary emotions do not mix to form more complex emotions, then the very concept of primary or basic emotions becomes unimportant.

From Optimism to Sanguinity: The Emotions of Hopefulness

> Hope…is not the same as optimism that things will work out for the best, but a belief that some things are worth working toward because they are right, regardless of how they turn out.
> — Kendall Bronk et al., 2009: 502

Optimism

The assessment of progress toward a goal-state involves developing a cognitive judgment, a prediction concerning the likelihood of attaining one's objective, and a process of an increasingly positive feeling of optimism. We do not claim that optimism is an emotion, but we model its affective aspects. Plutchik ([1962] 1991: 118) proposed that "expectancy + joy = optimism, courage, hopefulness, conceit." Courage and conceit would be better described as personality traits than as emotions, and hopefulness is seen as a sentiment that includes optimism. Thus, we can define optimism as a secondary emotion:

Optimism = Anticipation & Joy-Happiness.

The next step toward understanding optimism, a key emotion of hopefulness, is to examine its hypothesised primary emotional components, anticipation and happiness.

Anticipation

The ability to predict the future generates an anticipatory intentionality of the mind, based both on emotion and reason; this can be turned into *acts*, episodes of brief duration, and *actions*, episodes of longer duration, "stretching out into the cared-about, and hoped for, futures, in an effort to attain objectives, carry out plans, and

realize intentions" (TenHouten, 2005: 87; 2018). Our acts and actions are necessarily based on imperfect judgments and anticipations. Our most primordial temporality is based on an anticipatory resoluteness; it is futural and ahead of itself insofar as we not only contemplate the realization of objectives and aims but also imagine the consequences that follow from success and failure in such striving (Heidegger, [1927] (1962)). Anticipatory resoluteness, then, is the basis for effort to bring about a hoped-for future. According to Plutchik, the primary function of anticipation is exploration of the environment with the intention of securing resources, attaining objectives, and realizing goals.

The human brain is an anticipatory device (Castelfranchi, 2005; Pezzulo & Castelfranchi, 2007; Kelly et al., 2019). The mind is organized to anticipate, build, and work on internal representations of the world; these are not current perceptions, but a 'simulation' of perception which enables anticipation of upcoming stimuli, or of effects of a current or antecedent event, or of a possible action to be taken. Miceli & Castelfranchi (2015: 3) assert that this "precisely is intelligence: not the mere ability to exhibit complex adaptive behaviors…, but the ability to solve a problem by working on an internal representation of the problem, by acting upon 'images', 'schemata', or mental models, by simulating events and actions, and by anticipating possible solutions." The main purpose of the human brain, then, is to produce a future.

Happiness

While joy and happiness can be seen as aspects of the same emotion, a difference between them is relevant to our topic. Joy is an emotion related to present experiences, highly pleasant, and characterized by outward signs of gratification. The highest levels of joy have been associated with temporally-compressed ecstatic states of mind, often accompanied by sublime and ineffable feeling. Happiness is a state of well-being and contentment, which is a background baseline sentiment (Ben-Ze'ev, 2000: 450). As the most general positive emotional sentiment, happiness includes an evaluation of significant aspects of life, and of life as a whole. The happy person evaluates his or her overall situation in life as basically right and good (Averill & More, 2000).

While we can view optimism as an anticipation of joy involving the heated excitement of an impending peak experience, optimism as an anticipation of happiness is a calm and cool emotion, typically directed toward the long-term welfare of the self or of close others. The coolness of hope in large measure derives from the temporal distance of the futural hoped-for object or objective. It is not a source of excitement to hope for a long, productive, and happy life, for progress toward such goals requires not immediate action but sustained effort, sacrifice, and self-discipline.

Acceptance

Acceptance can be broadly understood as an emotional state with a corresponding behavioral component. It can be extrojected, as an individual engages in feelings and actions expressing his or her acceptance of another person or a situation; or it can be introjected, which can involve assessment of another person's feelings of acceptance

of oneself, or it can reflect acceptance of one's personal identity and place in the world. While usually existing as a global feeling about another or oneself, acceptance can also find manifestation in the mind as an acute emotional experience, which can be a sudden recognition that one wishes to incorporate another person as a social intimate, or that another is making gestures indicating a wish for intimacy with oneself. Present theory links acceptance, and its opposite rejection/disgust, as the adaptive reactions to positive or negative experiences of identity, and on the sociological level, of equality–matching social relationships. Thus, while mutual acceptance between two individuals is a matter of social equality, social rejection of one individual by one or more others can become a painful, damaging experience of social inequality, and a felt experience of social inferiority, especially if rejection takes the form of abuse and mistreatment (TenHouten, 2013: 165–6).

Primary–Secondary Emotions of Sanguinity

Sanguine individuals are cheerful and confident about their future, yet have a high tolerance for risks and uncertainties, which are seen as inevitable, even desirable, in progressing toward a goal. Sanguinity, then, is "a disposition toward hopefulness or confidence of success" (Barke, 2009: 355), or being undeterred by risk and uncertainty about the actual value of what is sought. Sanguinity, at its fullest level, can be described as a state of bliss, a feeling of fullness, an anticipation of a desired, meaningful future (Scheler, [1913–16] 1973: 92, 329–30) in which one's life goals will be reached, happiness attained, as the self gains the full experience of itself.

If challenges are successfully negotiated, obstacles overcome, and progress toward an idealized future remains on track, one's self is enhanced. Plutchik saw this as an emotional reaction to the positive experience of "identity." The resulting emotion, acceptance, refers to self-acceptance, the perceived acceptance of one' self by others, and the incorporation of what is valued or sought. These emotions, we propose, merge to form a tertiary-level emotion, which is marked by 'eager hopefulness' and by being 'confidently optimistic', which satisfies dictionary definitions of sanguinity. Thus, we define

$$Sanguinity_1 = (Anticipation\ \&\ Happiness)\ \&\ Acceptance$$

and

$$Sanguinity_2 = Optimism\ \&\ Acceptance.$$

Optimism and Acceptance

The sanguine individual welcomes a challenging situation, or a competition, with optimism and self-confidence, and is inclined to accept any challenge, and to hopefully persevere in a quest where success is improbable, or even impossible. A certain level of over-optimism characterizes most people, which, fueled by our neurochemistry, is evolutionarily adaptive, a gift of brain evolution that enables us to imagine a

future state of affairs, then strive to attain it (Tiger, [1979] 1995; see also Aspinwall & Leaf 2002; Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2015: 168–70). While the sanguine individual is prone to optimism, this optimism is buttressed by an *acceptance* of the reality that goals cannot always be reached, that setbacks and failures cannot be avoided, and rather than be discouraged, and give up on one's goals and objectives, one can continue valuing, and seeking, these goals, and, if necessary, develop alternatives. The sanguine individual, then, is not easily discouraged. Optimism, as a sentiment (and possibly as a personality trait) is excluded from hope by Miceli & Castelfranchi (2015: 167) on the ground that hope need not be "a trait-like anticipatory orientation," but only concerning "a specific desired event." But it is human nature to be overly optimistic, and, as Tiger has shown, this perceptual bias enhances our chances of attaining goals, whether they be general or specific.

Fatalism and Happiness

Fatalism, in and of itself, is a feeling of powerlessness, of a low expectancy that one's hopes and goals can be controlled by the self. Control is rather "vested in external forces, powerful others, luck, or fate" (Seeman, 1972: 472; see also TenHouten 2016: 88–90, 109). Fatalism, per se, cannot be seen as an emotion, but we conceptualize its affective aspect as a secondary-level emotion. Fatalism is a special kind of resourcefulness, which has been modeled as a mixture of anticipation and acceptance and their associated functions of exploration and incorporation, respectively. On the functional level, resourceful individuals are able to go into and explore their environment, locate resources, and then incorporate these resources. Fatalism, we propose, is a resourcefulness wherein resources are hoped to be gained not by one's own efforts but by some external, possibly ineffable, agent (TenHouten, 2007: 85–8, 2016). If we define

$$Fatalism = Anticipation \;\&\; Acceptance,$$

then by substitution into $Sanguinity_1$, we derive

$$Sanguinity_3 = Fatalism \;\&\; Happiness.$$

The Greeks and other ancient civilizations viewed happiness fatalistically, as controlled by gods, spirits, and demons. Herodotus used the term *endaimon* (and e*ndaimonia*) to indicate a flourishing, favored, lucky life. Good fortune was attributable to one's beneficent *diamon*, a guardian spirit acting as an emissary of the gods, and potentially pointing one's life in a divine direction. A *diamon* could be capricious, however, so happiness resulted from good luck but was fraught with uncertainty. The happy, fortunate and blessed person was one who had successfully negotiated life's perils and was positioned to die with honor, grace, and dignity, perhaps splendidly in battle, ensuring that one's blessing could never be taken away, one's story not forgotten (McMahon, 2006). At the dawn of Western Civilization, happiness was thus seen not only as a feeling or emotion but also as a characterization of an entire life,

the reward for having taken responsibility, as much as possible, for one's own fate (TenHouten, 2013: ch. 10).

Anticipation of Love

Love is a state of mind, a social relationship, and a potent emotion. The notion of hope has been described as something that happens between persons, as a relational process inspired by love (Marcel, 1962). When faced with difficult situations, acts of support and encouragement from close others can enhance an individual's ability to 'make it through' troublesome situations without losing hope. Plutchik ([1962] 1991: 117) defined love as a secondary emotion: "joy + acceptance = love, friendliness." Ignored by emotion researchers, this definition was neither followed up nor discussed by Plutchik, and is both insightful and problematic. First, "friendliness" is better seen as a personality trait or form of behavior than as an emotion. Second, "joy" can be expanded to include happiness. Thus, love can be viewed as a secondary emotion (TenHouten, 2021b):

Love = Joy–Happiness & *Acceptance*.

It follows from substitution in Sanguinity_1 that

$\mathit{Sanguinity}_4 = \mathit{Anticipation}$ & *Love*.

A sanguine person is characterized as optimistic, cheerful, confident, and passionate, a person anticipating love, prone to falling in love. While the term *sanguine* means 'cheerfully optimistic', the term *sanguinary* has historically meant bloodthirsty, a notion that traces to medieval physiology and its model of the four humors (blood, bile, phlegm, black bile), believed to form a person's temperament and mentality. If blood was the dominant humor, it was believed, one would have a ruddy face, a disposition to courage, hope, and a propensity to fall in love (TenHouten, 2007: 261–62n16).

The interpretation of the sanguine individual as open to, even anticipative of, finding love is an expression of a romantic ideal. This idealization, an illusion of a mystical unity with a sublime object, can be directed toward a putative supernatural entity, or an attractive potential mate. On this level, the positive experience of temporality, of wishing for such a love, incorporates not a feeling of happiness, but rather of joy, as one's temporality is no longer spread out into the past and the future, but is rather compressed in a feeling of being fully alive. This feeling of sanguinity, a self-confident feeling that one will find, and then possess, a love object, is a fragile state of mind; one will experience fear of possible rejection and exposure to disillusion as the ordinariness of the other becomes apparent in face-to-face interaction. In the real world, an attractive other will provide competitors that can potentially result in disillusionment, dejection, and resignation. At least in the four-temperament theory, however, the sanguine individual is indeed ready to fight and bleed for the object of his desire.

From Pessimism to Despair: The Emotions of Hopelessness

If one's emotions are consistent with an objective and rational assessment of our capabilities and energy level, and plans for goal-attainment are sound, then the emotion of sanguinity can be adaptive. Yet, human beings have evolved brains that bias the emotions of hope to create over-optimism, clouded visions of love objects, and fantasies of luck and fate (Tiger, [1979] 1995). We can easily become attached to unrealistic goals, to a vision of the future that fails to recognize the actual difficulty of attaining important goals, and the potential degradation of one's character through the commission of impure acts which might be necessary in securing a hoped-for position, situation, or resource. While over-optimism has been adaptive for the human species, it can be destructive for individuals, because the time and energy expended in quest of distorted fantasies of a fundamentally unattainable better life are not only wasted, but can become an obstacle to flourishing. The realization that one's life-goals have become unattainable can make it difficult to sustain a sense of self that permits negotiation of one's place in the world. A sense of hopelessness, a catastrophic collapse of the self, and the experience of a deep pessimism that leads to despair, can result.

Long a concern of philosophy and social theory, despair has become topical in contemporary fields including psychiatry, psychology, emotions research, affective neuroscience, and the social and behavioral sciences. Researchers typically do not identify despair as a specific emotion, and it is often conflated with depression; only Plutchik ([1962] 1991: 118) made an effort, albeit half-heartedly, to define despair in terms of other, more basic, emotions. Plutchik rather implausibly proposed that "fear + sorrow = despair, guilt." According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to despair is to lose, to be without, or to give up, hope. The emotion despair differs from the feeling of hopelessness, for in despair the ground of hope reveals itself as groundless: With no recourse, with all paths closed off, the abandonment of hope becomes ultimate and decisive. The hopeless individual abandons particular endeavors, but the despairer gives up altogether. Despair grips the individual in existential terms, but also "goes deeper than the vital sphere, for it becomes a matter of *spiritual* being" (Steinbock, 2007: 449).

What people hope for does not always come to pass. If an individual perceives a positive outcome as increasingly unlikely, there will be movement from optimism to pessimism. To explore the dark side of hope, of a growing sense of hopelessness, we first define and describe the emotional aspect of pessimism; we then propose that the key emotion of hopelessness is despair, the opposite of sanguinity.

Plutchik ([1962] 1991: 118) defined "sorrow + expectancy = pessimism." We slightly modify the terminology of his definition:

Pessimism = Anticipation & Sadness.

That optimism and pessimism both refer to an imagined future outcome or state of affairs is clear from their sharing of the primary emotion, anticipation, or expectancy (Carver & Scheier, 2001). While the other primary-emotional component of optimism, happiness, is at the positive pole of Plutchik's "temporality" dimension, its opposite, sadness, is at the negative pole of this dimension, so that optimism and pes-

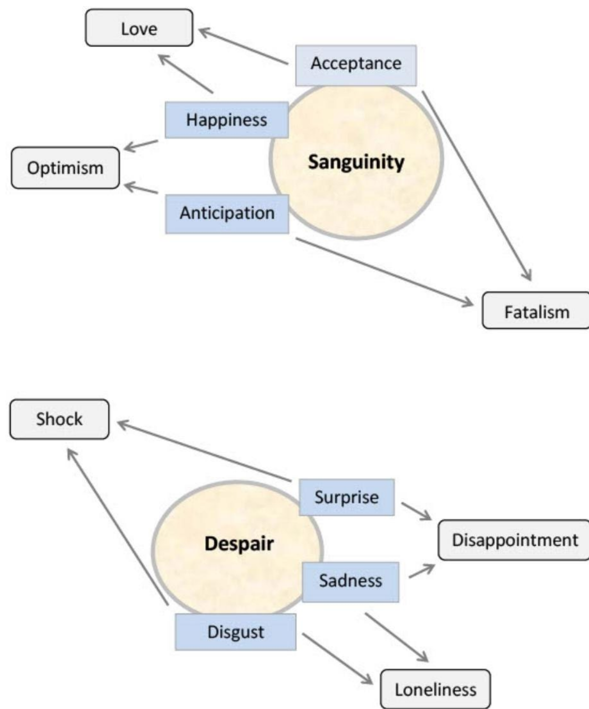


Fig. 2 The Opposite Primary and Secondary Emotion Components of the Tertiary Emotions of Hopefulness and Hopelessness, Sanguinity and Despair

simism are half-opposites. Optimism and pessimism, then, are the positive or negative emotions experienced when one's goals are assessed as probable or improbable. As one's hoped-for image of the future becomes increasingly problematic, there is movement along the temporalty dimension, from happiness to sadness. A parallel process occurs along the territoriality dimension, as there is movement away from the positive exploration of territory, from a positive sense of anticipation. As an increasing sense of pessimism leads to a conviction that the hoped-for future is no longer possible, one's hoped-for future changes from one of anticipation and exploration to surprise and boundary defense; this is the prototypical adaptive reaction to the collapse of one's territory, of one's boundaries of the self.

While sanguinity is comprised of three positively-valenced primary emotions—acceptance, happiness, and anticipation, despair's primary emotions are the opposites of these—disgust, sadness, and surprise, respectively (TenHouten, 2017a: 94–9). Accordingly, we define

$$Despair_1 = Surprise \ \& \ Sadness \ \& \ Disgust.$$

Moreover, while the secondary emotions of sanguinity are love, optimism, and fatalism, those of despair are the opposites of these—loneliness, disappointment, and shock, respectively. Sanguinity and despair are opposites, as illustrated in Fig. 2.

As a first step in elaborating the meaning of despair, we consider its primary-emotion components.

Primary Emotions of Despair

Surprise as Reaction to the Violation of Territory

The emotions anticipation and surprise function to explore and expand one's territory, and to defend territorial boundaries against encroachment and penetration. In despair, the negative experience of territoriality refers not only to the physical environment, but also to the social world and to the self. The self's estrangement from the social world lies at the root of despair. In addition to feelings of emptiness, the individual in a state of despair is apt to experience the body as a "prison house in which one is helplessly confined, escape from which is passionately desired…. It may be experienced not as part of the self at all, or if it is, not experienced as essential self, but disposable self-part" (Maltsberger, 1993: 149).

In a despairing state, the constriction of territory, invoking a mechanism of boundary-defense, extends to cognition. Suicidal individuals, for example, think in a rigid manner, a cognitively constricted kind of 'tunnel thinking', living "in a continuously narrowing world with fewer and fewer options available for solution…. The person desperately clings to what he or she has and rejects any new possibilities" (Weinberg, 2000: 806). This narrowing of cognition thus functionally implicates both surprise (in boundary defense) and disgust (in rejecting possible solutions).

Sadness and the Narrowing of Temporality

Plutchik (1980a, 1980b) identified "temporality" as one of four existential problems, and joy– happiness and sadness-sorrow as its valenced primary emotional reactions. Sadness is the reaction to loss: the separation of the false, inauthentic self from the genuine or authentic self; the loss of one's place in the social world, of one's future, and a resulting temporality confined to a narrow present. Despair involves temporality as the erosion of time and the inevitable contraction and end of one's existence. This contraction of temporality involves loss of the past and the future, and contributes to the loss of one's engagement with life and the world; it can be thought of as a condition in which a normal sense of time, a temporality *stretched* into both the past and the future (Heidegger, [1927] (1962): 423), is lost; the result is a life encapsulated in a present, so narrowed that it is nearly empty. For the despairer, "[t]hrough the experience of being abandoned to myself, I experience being abandoned to the present," so that in this dreary condition, "[n]either the future nor the past offers anything to the present" (Steinbock, 2007: 44).

As the likelihood of goal-attainment, or of retaining what one has acquired, shifts from optimism to pessimism, there is a shift of the constituent primary emotions. The brain's "seeking-system" (Panksepp, 1998) becomes less activated; the emotion of anticipation is drained of its vitality, reduced to a mere expectation, largely a negative cognitive assessment. As one's prospect of a successful and rewarding future dims, happiness turns into sadness. Sadness, grief, and at the extreme, clinical depression, have been described as core features of despair (Cowling, 2004; Bürgy, 2008; Ghaemi, 2013). A self-estranged, despairing person feels miserable, melan-

cholic, despondent, gloomy, and sad. Sadness is a reaction to loss, and in despair it is the quality of one's life that is seen as lost.

Disgust, Rejection, and the Erosion of Social Identity

One of Plutchik's four problems of life is identity; the positive and negative experiences of identity trigger the primary-emotions/associated-functions of acceptance/incorporation and disgust/rejection. Disgust represents an affective reaction to the negative experience of one's identity, of the self. One aspect of self-estrangement is the loss of the self's place in the social world; the despairing individual experiences a break from social involvements and social relationships. In self-estrangement, and in the affective reaction of despair, there can be a contraction, even a collapse, of one's social being.

Adams (2011: 333, drawing on Kristeva 1982), has described self-disgust as the "abject self," or "self-states of relentless despair," in which individuals feel unlovable, unworthy, and in utter despair that their situation can ever improve. To feel such hopelessness is to plunge into a black hole of meaninglessness and non-existence; this is not only a feeling of emptiness but is an "implosive, centripetal pull into the void" (Grotstein, 1990: 257) in which one despairs of being helped or soothed. In despair there is "the experience of abandonment as ultimate and decisive," together with a global withdrawal from the self-affirming ground of hope, as this grounding (or foundation) comes to be experienced as "impossible and grips me at the level of my life" (Steinbock, 2007: 447–48).

Primary–Secondary Emotions of Despair

Given the above definition of despair as a combination of three primary emotions, it follows that despair, like the tertiary emotion sanguinity, can be further conceptualized, in three ways, as mixtures of each of these primary emotions with the secondary emotion formed from the other two primaries. We first consider the combination of disgust and the secondary emotion formed from surprise and sadness, which is hypothesized to be disappointment.

The Disappointment of Experiencing Rejection/Disgust

Plutchik ([1962] 1991: 118) proposed that "surprise + sorrow = embarrassment, disappointment." This speculative definition's inclusion of embarrassment would appear to be mistaken. Embarrassment is closely related to mild shame (Keltner & Buswell, 1996) and shame, in turn, can be defined as a combination of fear and sadness; shame can be seen as the opposite of an angry joy, which defines pride (TenHouten, 2007: 182–90). Disappointment, however, is, as Plutchik suggested, a subjective response following a *surprising* experience of a favorable outcome that was anticipated, intended, planned, or hoped for, but did not materialize. After removing embarrassment from Plutchik's definition, it is proposed that

Disappointment=Surprise & Sadness.

By substituting this definition into the formula for Despair_1, it follows that,

$\textit{Despair}_2$*=Disgust & Disappointment*.

As stated by Hearn et al. (2012: 2, 6), "[d]espairing persons are depressed about disappointments, failures and missed chances in life." In describing one such case, they observe that, "[t]his person shows the disappointment, resignation, and ineffectiveness characteristic of the despairing group." The individual in a state of despair rejects social involvement in part as a way to avoid the disappointing outcomes that are a normal and inevitable aspect of social life. This recipe for despair is described in depth by Craib (1994: 168), who observes that the "false self" encouraged in late modernity is a "'disappointed' self," insofar as efforts to establish a social identity on the basis of social roles and social categories is bound to be incomplete. When anticipated outcomes do not materialize, disappointment can be intense, and when combined with giving up or seeing no way forward, can lead to despair (Michaelis, 1999).

The linkage between disgust and disappointment can also be seen in the concept, *tedium vitae*, a kind of boredom and despair that expresses a disgust with life, where existence itself seems contaminated, and which is, metaphorically, a black bile of melancholia, even nausea, together with a disappointment that life has offered only a self-conscious sense of malaise. This orientation to life can reveal the suffering despairer as something of a poseur, who does not fear disgust with the disappointing, even sickening quality, of being, but rather embraces it; this sense of moral disgust experienced in despair is essentially a self-loathing. As Miller (1998: 29) observes, "Nothing escapes disgust with life, for when appearances suggest there is no cause for despair the melancholic disposition has the talent to expose the pleasant and desirable as a set-up or a sham."

While despair can include disappointment, there is a difference between them. When one is disappointed, one's anticipated future world comes to be seen as unattainable or unactualizable. One despairs in the face of an inexorable threat impeding an ongoing project, making it impossible to actualize a desired future. "When disappointed one loses a virtual world; when in despair one believes that one's ongoing world has been lost" (Goldsmith, 1987: 135). Disappointment is milder than despair, for in despair the world becomes menacing, frightening, and unbearable, so that disappointment comes to augmented by a rejection of, and disgust for, a world that has become unlivable.

A Collapse of Social Territory: Surprise and Loneliness

Loneliness is typically associated with an absence of attachment figures, a sense of not belonging, and a deficiency, or breaking, of close social relationships (Blai, 1989; Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008). In order to define loneliness, we consider love, the joyful acceptance of and/or by an other. The opposite of love combines the opposite of joy, sadness–grief, and the opposite of acceptance, disgust/rejection. Plutchik ([1962] 1991): 118) asserted that, "sorrow+disgust=misery, remorse, forlornness." While

this definition is not incorrect, we prefer a broader term, loneliness, which incorporates feelings of misery, a sense of remorse, and a forlorn state of mind. When a valued relationship is terminated at the initiative of a significant other, sadness will be felt at the loss together with a feeling of rejection, as if one had been treated as an object of disgust (TenHouten, 2007: 111). The despairing person is apt to have lost the social support of close others, a contraction of social territory. Surprise is the boundary-defending reaction to loss of social territory; we see this aspect of despair derives from a loss of social engagement. The resulting mental pain, or psychache, can become intolerable and lead, for example, to suicide (Shneidman, 1993: 51–57). Stravynski & Boyer 2001). Loneliness, in the form of social and physical isolation, creates despair among prisoners in solitary confinement (Toch, 1992: 48–54, 118–30). Despair would appear to be an intervening variable between social isolation and suicide, in which one lacks satisfactory personal contact with others, thereby feeling "the despair of being alone" (Hacker, 1994: 313), and feeling separated from the social world.

Thus, we see that, in despair, there is a place for both surprise and loneliness. But how are these two emotions related in the experience of the despairer? Insight into this subtle relationship can be gleaned from Farber (1976), who saw that the despairing individual's world has become filled with stale, tedious, lifeless routines from which he or she yearns to escape. The unexpected and the mysterious nature of coincidence have vanished from view, if not from experience. If a visit with friends is contemplated, it is no longer possible to imagine such an interaction offering even momentary relief (Farber, 1999: 197). Thus, no reason can be seen for even making such a visit, no reason for seeking conversation. If by chance an unexpected social interaction takes place, even with a stranger, and the despairing individual manages to somehow cut through his self-absorption, he will disown or conceal the moment rather than question his dismal certainty, cagily protecting this state of mind from life's intervention. Even if the despairer finds moments of relief in exposure to the real world, there is a good chance that the certainty of his despairing logic and prescriptive maxims will soon reassert themselves, so that submission to despair is again activated, and the despairer seeks once again to sever remaining world-binding relations (Farber, 1999: 198). That conversing with a confidant is of little use to the despairer was described by Kierkegaard ([1849] 1954: 200), who explained, "If he talks to someone, if to one single man he opens his heart," he will only feel deflated and let down. Here, too, we see a linkage between loneliness and boundary defense, so that this very act of opening one's heart through talking about one's despair, rather than defiantly maintaining silence, in itself adds depth to one's despair, as there is an agonizing self-contradiction of being in the hopeless situation of needing the help of a confidant yet not being able to be with one (Gee et al., 2011: 323).

A Shocking, Saddening Loss

A third primary–secondary emotional combination joins sadness/loss to the mixture of surprise and disgust, namely an unexpected, revolting, degrading, even shocking experience. Elsewhere (TenHouten, 2007: 88–90) it has been proposed that

$Shock = Surprise \ \& \ Disgust.$

Given this definition of shock, it follows by substitution of our initial definition, $Despair_1$, that

$Despair_4 = Sadness \ \& \ Shock.$

Traumatic experiences share “their suddenness and unexpectedness” (Koch, 2000: 301), that is, their surprisingness. Many traumatic events involving a sudden and unexpected loss induce shock in an individual, leading to a reaction through which despair can arise. Examples of such saddening, shocking events include: an accident resulting in a paralyzing spinal cord injury (Lohne, 2009); the unexpected death of a spouse (Carr, 2004); a traumatic late-term pregnancy loss (Cowchock et al., 2010); an emergency amputation of a cancerous leg (Judd, 2001); the realization that an intimate other’s disgust-inducing betrayal has induced a traumatic disappointment (Tribiano, 2002).

The linkage of sadness and shock is obvious from the several examples of shocking losses, social and physical. Sadness is the prototypical adaptive reaction to loss, and a shocking loss therefore results also in sadness. In despair, it is a capability of the self, or the autonomy and control of the self by itself that is lost. Farber (1999: 204) describes the explosive activity of the despairing individual as apt to “persist until the despairer’s excesses become so outrageous to himself that a sudden and shocking realization of his own behavior “plunges him to real self-loathing.” It is at the point of being shocked by one’s own self-destructive behavior that the despair one feels can no longer go unacknowledged. At some point, there is the possibility of hoping for personal renewal and self-illumination; but if this possibility eludes the despairer, “he will now discover that this self-loathing has landed him in the bleakest, most naked realm of despair. The rush has subsided, leaving his despairing mind increasingly at the mercy of suicidal machinations” (Farber, 1999: 204) so that only the arrangement of the details of self-destruction needs to be completed, the dramatic act of self-destruction to be staged. In this “impregnable but wholly convincing world…, every detail fits and every incident reinforced his decision. Each of these deaths has its own inner logic and unrepeatable despair” (Alvarez, 1972: 145).

Discussion

Hope has long occupied philosophy and theology. It has served as an inspiration for various kinds of millenarianism—including Judaism, Islam, and early Christianity, and infused Enlightenment thought, Romanticism, and Marxism (Desroche 1973). These movements have sought moral perfection or the attainment of a just society, admirable goals, yet all too easily deflected or perverted in practice, and subject to self-deception. Kant (1793) understood hope as beginning with a desire to overcome evil and attain moral perfection, but warned that the result can be but the surface appearance of perfection which hides a darker reality. The things and situations we hope for exist as mental abstractions, and when we succeed in attaining what has

been an object of hope, it can become a model of the real without reality, a mere simulacrum, self-deceptively hiding the truth that what one had hoped for, as it actually turns out, contains in its corrupted form the very evils that motivated hope in the first place (Baudrillard, [1981] (2006)). Thus, there is a deep ambiguity in the notion of hope, making of it both a blessing and a curse, a noble impulse, but one that easily escapes and, in unique ways, inflicts ill in the world (Snyder, 2000: 3–5). It is not unusual that what individuals hope for is based on insufficient knowledge, is empty of content, or is imagined only in vague outline. Insofar as the one holding such empty hope remains unaware of, or ignores, obstacles and difficulties, and expends time and energy with no result, hope can become irrational and self-destructive. While hope itself is not an emotion, it is an affect-laden phenomenon that involves two clusters of emotions hypothesized to emerge at the poles of hope, hopefulness and hopelessness. Following Lazarus (1999: 675), we have identified these emotions as sanguinity and despair, which can be linked to the concept of the self. These two tertiary emotion merit further commentary.

Sanguinity

The optimistic individual, full of hope, develops a positive view of the potentialities of the self, imagining that life-goals can be attained, and that one can be optimistic that ambitions for the self can be realized. On the affective level, this hopefulness is crystallized as a quality of being sanguine, at its maximum, as an experience of bliss. We have identified three primary–secondary emotion combinations that can emerge as expressions of sanguinity: (i) An optimism about the future acceptability of the self; (ii) a conviction that one is destined, or fated, to find joy and happiness in the future; and (iii), the sanguine individual anticipates finding and experiencing love.

Our realities include both our everyday lived experience, and our imagination and our dreams. It is the world of our awakened dreams that gives us our hoped-for, imagined future. This can take us to our occupation or profession, to finding a mate, to our fate, to our hereafter. The world of our dreams can be more significant than that of our mundane existence. We have an evolved capability to envision attaining future goals, either through our own efforts, or, we can believe, with the aid of mysterious, ineffable entities or forces. It is our vision of the future that gives us hope of transcending the mundane and necessary world of labor, motivated by an idealized future in which we can hope to experience success, victory, or liberation (Desroche [1973] 1979: 12–21). Motivated by the brain's seeking system, and fueled by self-confident optimism, we are energized to imagine lofty goals and to work toward them with enthusiasm.

However, an excessive, unrealistic level of sanguinity, fueled by over-optimism, can become pathological, which is apparent from brain research. While the right cerebral hemisphere (RH) (of the right-handed adult) tends to be pessimistic and dysphoric, it is realistic about its standing in the social world. The left hemisphere (LH), in contrast, is ever optimistic yet unrealistic about its shortcomings. Following right hemisphere injury or stroke, the intact LH becomes "crippled by naïve optimistic forecasting of outcomes," seeing itself as always being the winner (Schutz, 2005: 11). Children with RH brain deficit disorders accept impossible challenges, make

grossly inadequate efforts, overlook danger in situations, and are stunned by poor outcomes (McGilchrist, 2010: 84–5). One highly intelligent professional who had a tumor removed from his right frontal cortex was asked to role-play as a medical health advisor; he appropriately advised medical retirement for this patient, but when asked to apply this insight to his own situation, he was unable to do so (Stuss, 1991). Fueled by an overly optimistic view of one's situation and capabilities, sanguinity based on an unrealistic assessment of one's situation, or a denial of reality, can indeed become dysfunctional.

Despair

The individual prone to despair is one whose self is estranged from itself and cannot establish a stable identity, with significant affects encapsulated in the psyche. One's social world becomes constricted to the point of social isolation or social alienation, such that the level of estrangement from one's family, peers, or society is so great that a search for meaning becomes impossible. Wherever he or she might go, a deeply self-estranged individual cannot shed despair, and comes to participate in social situations only in a stilted and artificial way, avoiding meaningful interactions with others, in some cases claiming a disability or disorder that justifies self-absorption, perhaps hoping for the tolerance that a true invalid with a real physical or mental problem might expect. Filled with a false pride that blocks true humility, the despairer turns to the logic of his or her now-isolated will, and becomes concerned with certainties, in which even the certainty of hopelessness can, paradoxically, appear as a form of hope, promising to make reasonable what is unreasonable, namely, hopelessness itself. Clinging to thoughts of suicide as a potential act that expresses power, and appears to be a clear vision that condemns the world while denying its absurd repression of the harsh truth about his life, a sentiment of hopelessness is kept at bay, but only at the expense of exposure to the social world and of meaningful discourse with others. Such a rejection of the social world is, on the surface, an affirmation of self, but this affirmation of a self with godlike pretentions amounts to a radical rejection of being (Marcel, 1960: 194). Seeing suicide as an act of courage, the despairer's plans for self-destruction are apt to include solicitude for those who will be most damaged, so that, for example, he or she will not spoil an important holiday or disturb important business, which becomes a substitute for the guilt felt toward these others, and to humanity in general.

Following failure upon failure, without the psychological cushion of even a bit of sanguinity, goal-seeking can be abandoned, and, bereft of hopes and dreams, one can sink into a dark state of despair. The despairing individual, lacking the resources necessary for productivity and creativity in seeking goals and anticipating future potentialities (Erikson, [1950] 1963), has lost his or her future. Self-estrangement means living without authenticity, without a "true self" (Winnicott, 1965). It is the future that is the nexus of authenticity, in that self-confident individuals can project themselves into the future and strive to become what they might, which Shahar (2011) calls "projectuality." Without a future seen as containing meaningful possibility, into which to project oneself, an individual becomes self-estranged and risks sinking into a state of despair. It can be enlightening to have, through exertion, the past and the

present "compressed" in a heightened experience of the present (TenHouten, 2005: 70, 85–8, 116–17, 185). But if the past is being lost and the future is beyond one's concern, then life in the present is experienced merely as a kind of "mindlessness" in which little effort is made to notice what is going on around oneself. This kind of detachment has been linked to accidents, poor job performance and burnout, interpersonal difficulties, health problems, and memory loss (Langer, 1997). To have a future means an anticipation, an orientation of hopefulness, for something good to happen. For the individual whose social world has been fractured, and with the development of what Erikson ([1950] 1963) called the "basic mistrust" of despair, there will develop an inability to desire, and to have hopes, so that nothing good can be seen in the future (Hernández-Tubert, 2011: 28).

Like all other emotions, despair is potentially adaptive, for it can serve a necessary function within processes of social and psychological change and life-challenge, and can exist in a dialectical relationship to hope, for example, within a therapeutic relationship (Hernández-Tubert, 2011; O'Hara, 2011; Harvey & Smedley, 2010; Gee et al., 2011). Whereas hope is an act of desiring to attain a goal, of having confidence, of believing or trusting in someone or something, when hopes are dashed or shown to be but false hopes, the resulting state of mind is apt to become one of despair, which involves loss (the source of sadness), of having one's social resources collapse and of being left without recourse. While despair is often seen as a state of being to be avoided, existentialist philosophers, and especially Jaspers ([1948] 1970) and Kierkegaard ([1849] 1954), have seen despair not as a pathology but rather as an unavoidable, fundamental aspect of the human condition, a capacity for existential suffering that makes humans a unique animal species. Obviously, pathologies in family and community groups can result in hoping to attain unrealistic, inappropriate, and unstable goals together with a pathological loss of hope. It is not surprising that successful therapies addressing low-hope/goal-unstable individuals involve socially supportive experiences of participation in group activities.

Despair appears to be a deep emotion, where depth is based on "proximity to the self and is experienced by the whole of our being" (Cataldi, 1993: 173). In Max Scheler's ([1913–16] 1973) "depth stratification," the deepest emotions are bliss and despair. Bliss can be seen as the existential limit of sanguinity. These emotions, sanguinity–bliss and despair, address "the core of the person. We can only 'be' blissful or in despair. We cannot in the strict sense of the word, 'feel' bliss or despair…nor can we even feel 'ourselves' to be blissful or in despair…. [T]hese feelings are *not* expressed at all, *or* they take possession of the whole of the self." Because bliss–sanguinity and despair reflect our moral values, they become metaphysical, even religious, self-feelings. It is largely for this reason that despair has been of such keen interest to existentialists, psychiatrists, and theologians.

Emotion Classification and Time-Frames

In the present emotion classification, we have used six of the eight emotions identified by Plutchik as primary. This basic-emotion theory premise, that emotions are adaptive reactions to prototypical problems of life that are widely shared in the animal kingdom, is actively opposed by social constructionists (Averill, 1980; Harré, 1989).

Many psychological constructionists do not regard emotions as natural kinds (Barrett, 2006), arguing that emotions lack an evolved basis in brain structure (Lindquist et al., 2012). Opponents of basic-emotion theory hold that a hierarchical classification of emotions is, for these and other reasons, not possible. The only way to refute the claim that emotions cannot be classified is to classify them. In this article we have defined and made use of six primary emotions (leaving out only anger and fear) and seven secondary emotions (optimism, fatalism, love, pessimism, loneliness, disappointment, shock), and have defined and interpreted the two tertiary-level emotions of hopefulness and hopelessness, sanguinity and disgust. These fifteen specifically-classified emotions are the basis of our theory of the emotions of hope.

Research in the Sociology of Hope

The study of hope began in the ancient world, and has long been of concern to theology and philosophy. Hope theory has been developed in psychiatry (Menninger, 1959), in clinical and social psychology—especially in the 'positive psychology' movement (Snyder & Lopez, 2002), and has found application in the nursing profession (Farran et al., 1995). The last few decades have witnessed a flourishing of psychological and sociological studies of hope. This research has largely been carried out by social psychologists interested in the development of hope in the socialization process. Children develop a sense of hope both for themselves—fueled by the development of personal ambitions, and for the good of others, of the primary group and of the community. Successful socialization results in a conjuncture of meaningful and sociomorally appropriate goals, realistic life plans, and adequate social relations, all of which contribute to the development of a cohesive self. Together with theory development, there has emerged a rich inventory of scales and measures of hopefulness and hopelessness available for the survey researcher (Farran et al., 1995; 121–226).

From a standpoint of developing a sociology of hope, cross-cultural studies are important because they extend the conceptual reach of inquiry to include culture. In their methodological inquiry into the concept of hope, Averill et al., (1990: 71–89) found that, in addition to the historically changing conceptualization of hope in Western civilization, there are at present also profound differences across cultures. They demonstrate this with a comparison of the notion of hope in countries where, according to their data, and consistent with their social-constructivist standpoint, hope is considered an emotion (USA, Australia, Puerto Rico, Japan) and where it is not (Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka).

Hope, as a topic in research and theory, nearly spans the discipline of sociology. Indeed, in contemporary sociology, hope has emerged as a topic for theory and research in fields as diverse as environmental sociology (Lueck, 2007), political sociology (Blöser et al., 2020), the sociology of health and medicine (Farran et al., 1995; Petersen & Wilkinson, 2015), the sociology of work (Alacovska, 2019), the sociology of education (Dineen, 2020), the sociology of religion (Riis & Woodhead, 2010), and the sociology of emotions (Meisenhelder, 1982). There is no field of human endeavor in which social actors will not be found hoping for, and seeking, the future attainment of personal goals, moral perfection, or the attainment of a more

just and sustainable world. Given that we are living in difficult and uncertain times, it has become challenging to sustain a sanguine outlook on life, and the evidence of an increasing sense of hopelessness, and its associated existential despair, is reflected in an increasing sense of personal and collective vulnerability, in substance abuse, in suicidality, and beyond. Hopefully, the science of sociology will devote time and energy to the development of theory and research on the important topic of hope.

Declarations

Conflict of interest The corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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