

How the 'Present Age' Can Help us Fulfill Our Calling

Contemporary Historical and Philosophical Analyses of "Emotion" applied to John Wesley's Vision of Christian Vocation as "the Renewal of the Heart"¹

Gregory S. Clapper, Ph.D.

Professor of Religion and Philosophy

The University of Indianapolis

gclapper@uindy.edu

For discussion in the Wesley Studies and Early Methodism working group of the 2007 Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies. The Institute's theme is "To Serve the Present Age, Our Calling to Fulfill"-- Ecclesiology, Mission, and Vocation

Not to be quoted without permission.²

At the last Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, I presented a paper analyzing the concepts of Christian calling and vocation: "Christian Conceptions of Vocation and the Human Role in Bringing about the 'New Creation.'" This paper formed the basis for my subsequent book *Living Your Heart's Desire: God's Call and Your Vocation* (Nashville: Upper Room, 2005). Here, I want to take that conceptual groundwork on the nature of Christian vocation and apply it to John Wesley's corpus of writings in order to show how his distinctive vision of vocation can help re-vivify the vocational self-understanding of Wesleyans today.

In this paper, I will make the case that John Wesley saw Christian vocation as the renewal of the human heart. Showing how this can be a viable vocational model today will be aided by considering both new historical research in how affective language has changed over the last 300 years, as well as how contemporary theorists now conceive of emotion.

Hence, to put a slight twist on Charles Wesley's words, it is these historians and theorists of emotion of our "Present Age" who can serve us by showing how it is possible "our calling to fulfill." In this material we will see that the intelligentsia of our culture is just now starting to catch up with John Wesley. In my view, it is time the church did as well.

This paper will be divided into the following three sections:

1. An argument for taking "the renewal of the heart" as the best way to characterize Wesley's vision of the highest calling of the Christian life.
2. A look at how the Christian tradition has spoken about the "heart" and its contents. This section contains:

¹ Parts of this paper first appeared in papers presented to the national meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Atlanta, GA November, 2003, and the national meeting of the Wesleyan Philosophical Society, Kansas City, MO, March, 2006. These papers were subsequently published, respectively, as "Wesley's Main Doctrines and Spiritual Formation and Teaching in the Wesleyan Tradition" in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* Volume 39, Number 2, Fall 2004, 97-121; and as "Is Love an Affection or an Emotion? Looking at Wesley's Heart Language in a New Light," a chapter in *The Many Facets of Love: Philosophical Explorations*, Thomas J. Oord, editor (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007) 75-84.

² Thanks are due to Thomas Dixon and Robert C. Roberts for reading and commenting on portions of this paper. They cannot be held responsible for my views, but they did help me get clearer on a number of matters.

- A) An historical analysis of how affective vocabulary (and the underlying concepts expressed through that vocabulary) has changed over time;
 - B) An overview of Wesley's abridgement of Isaac Watts' *The Doctrine of the Passions*;
 - C) A textual analysis of Wesley's own affective vocabulary and usage.
3. A brief overview of some contemporary emotion theory and how this body of reflection can help us in interpreting Wesley today.

Strictly speaking, numbers 1 and 2 might be seen to be most directly pertinent to this Wesley Studies working group, especially the technical analyses found in parts 2B and 2C. However, I think the historical and philosophical studies that make up the rest of the paper can help us understand how to read Wesley on the heart as he had intended, *not* as his work might be distorted by the filters of intervening fashions in intellectual discourse.

This paper is part of a larger work, and in that larger work I will be showing how Wesley's call for the renewal of the heart can be applied in practical and powerful ways to contemporary ministerial practice, including teaching, preaching, evangelism and providing spiritual direction. Space prevents me from broaching those topics here.

[I understand that this paper is on the long side, but since we are sharing these electronically, I am only using up a few electrons, rather than destroying trees, so I ask your indulgence. As guided by our conveners, I will summarize the main points in a 15 minute overview. Our discussion can focus on any particular sub-section(s) of the paper that the readers find worthy of the group's attention.]

1) The Renewal of the Heart as the Christian's Calling

"Call" is the root meaning of "vocation," as it comes from the Latin word *vocare*, "to call." Many think of God's calling as primarily related to a particular job, but this is a crucial misunderstanding. Our culture has debased the word "vocation" so that it is seen almost exclusively in terms of the way that one earns money, but in the Christian context, our *calling* or "vocation" is not our *career*. Scripture gives us a larger and more empowering sense of "calling."³

This most foundational understanding of "call," then, means that a particular focus of our energy —e.g., a job or career, or particular tasks or duties—can be *consistent* with our calling, or be an *expression* of our calling, but can never be *identical* to it. As Os Guinness has pointed out in his book *The Call*, Christian calling is not primarily a calling to *do something* or *go somewhere*; we are called to *Someone*.⁴ That is what we are to be single minded about-- walking a path, in faith and hope, that leads us to God.⁵

³ For a more detailed analysis, see my *Living Your Heart's Desire: God's Call and Your Vocation* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2005) especially 12-15.

⁴ (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1998) p.43.

⁵ On this point of emphasizing God's call as to a relationship and not primarily to a particular job or location, see not only Guinness's book, but also *The Fabric of this World* by Lee Hardy (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) and *The Way of Life* by Gary Badcock (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), as well as Rowan Williams' essay on vocation in his *Open to Judgement: Sermons and Essays* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1994) 171-177, and *Courage and Calling* by Gordon T. Smith (Downer's Grove: Intervarsity, 1999). Miroslav Volf's book on work makes a similar point, though he urges the

No particular geographical location, state of health, or quality of the job market can hinder us from following that call-- if following that call is our heart's true desire.

It is clear that what was essential to following our call to God for Wesley was a life marked by the "religious affections."

This can be clearly seen in his "Plain Account of Genuine Christianity," (which started out as a letter to Conyers Middleton.) Wesley begins his account not by asking the typically person-*independent* question of "What is *Christianity*?" but instead opens by asking the very person-dependent--and *affection-dependent*-- question: "Who is a *Christian*?" His answer tells us that a Christian is marked by *humility*, that the "ruling temper of his heart" is absolute submission to God and the tenderest *gratitude*, that the Christian is above all marked by *love*, which is productive of *all right affections*, and he has no *fear of dispraise*, for since God *loves him*, human dispraise is not to be feared.⁶

He begins this account of "genuine Christianity," then, by first writing about what the personal enfleshment of Christianity looks like, and he expresses this in terms of the affections or tempers of the heart. Only *after* this is done does he turn to discussing what Christianity itself is. But even at that point, it is crucial to note the very *person- and affection-dependent* way in which he describes "Christianity."

He asks "what is real, genuine Christianity—whether we speak of it as a principle in the soul or as a scheme or system of doctrine?" Seemingly reinforcing his opening reflections on the "true Christian," Wesley here says that Christianity is capable of being seen as a "principle in the soul." But what about Christianity as a "scheme or system of doctrine?" Well, this scheme's primary accomplishment is to "describe the character above recited"—that is, theology's first job is to describe what Christianity looks like when it is enfleshed by describing the affections it engenders.

What comes next for theology? It should "promise this character shall be mine (provided I will not rest till I attain)" and then it should tell us "how I may attain it." He concludes this passage by saying

May every real Christian say, 'I now am assured that these things are so; I experienced them in my own breast. What Christianity (considered as a doctrine) promised, is accomplished in my soul.' And Christianity, considered as an inward principle, is the completion of all those promises. It is holiness and happiness, the image of God impressed on a created spirit, a fountain of peace and love springing up into everlasting life.⁷

Wesley then immediately begins section III of this piece by saying "And this [inward principle or holiness] I conceive to be the strongest evidence of the truth of

abandonment of the term "vocation" altogether in favor of emphasizing the charisms—gifts of the spirit. See his *Work In the Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) p.107ff.

⁶ "A Plain Account of Genuine Christianity," first published in 1753 now found in Outler, ed. *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) pp. 183ff. Unless otherwise indicated, all references to Wesley's Works are to the *Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1984-) referenced as *WJW*. Any references to sermons will list the sermon number followed by the page will be given in parentheses after the quote. References to Wesley's New Testament Notes will be from *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (London: Epworth Press, 1976) (henceforth, *N.T. Notes*), first published in 1756.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 191.

Christianity. I do not undervalue traditional evidence. . . . And yet I cannot set it on a level with this.”⁸

This last statement may sound dangerously close to making irrelevant the historical bases of our faith, giving the appearance, for instance, that the 21st Century arguments between the “Jesus seminar” and people like N.T. Wright are irrelevant. These historical arguments are *not* irrelevant for Christianity today, and Wesley would not have seen them as irrelevant in his time, as witnessed by his many arguments with the deists of his day. But Wesley’s statement that this “inward principle” is the “strongest evidence of the truth of Christianity” helps us see just how central the renewed human heart is to his entire theological vision.⁹ His consistent preference was for a person-dependent definition of Christianity that is describable by the presence of the religious affections.

In his Sermon on “Original Sin” Wesley says, “Ye know that the great end of religion is to renew our hearts in the image of God.” (#44, 185) Albert Outler comments on this passage that this renewal of the heart is the “axial theme of Wesley’s soteriology,”¹⁰ and almost every thinker who has studied Wesley agrees that soteriology is at the heart of his theology. In light of this, and the other evidence here marshaled, I think it is safe to say that the *sine qua non* of the Christian life, the very center of Wesley’s whole theological vision, that concept that shaped his whole theological enterprise, is best conceived of as *the renewal of the human heart*.¹¹

At this point I want to widen our focus out from Wesley and look at the last several centuries of intellectual culture in order to locate, historically and socially, Wesley’s talk of “tempers” and “affections.” Having established that Wesley’s vision of Christianity was all about the renewal of the human “heart” and its “affections,” we will now see how these realities have been variously understood in the Christian and Western intellectual traditions. We can then bring this historical analysis of affective terminology to bear on Wesley’s views. This can then help us decide if Wesley’s “heart

⁸ Ibid., 191.

⁹ It strikes me that Wesley’s understanding of doctrine and its use is consistent with George Lindbeck’s famous view of the regulative role of doctrine: that doctrines are “communally authoritative rules of discourse, attitude and action.” *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984) 18. See also Lindbeck’s assertion that on such a cultural-linguistic understanding of religion, with its correlative regulative view of doctrine, that “apologetics becomes primarily a matter of appropriate communal practice...” 12. Would Wesley, emphasizing the actual renewal of hearts in disciplined community as the goal of Christianity, disagree? With his publication of the lives of “saints” in the *Arminian Magazine*, I think Wesley’s vision was very compatible with Lindbeck’s. Actual renewed hearts enfolded in visible ways was, and is, a most convincing apologetic.

¹⁰ *Works*, 2:185n.

¹¹ For my argument on why “the renewal of the heart” can serve as a better “orienting concern” than Randy Maddox’s “responsible grace,” see my “Wesley’s Main Doctrines and Spiritual Formation and Teaching in the Wesleyan Tradition” in the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* Volume 39, Number 2, Fall 2004, 97-121, especially 100-115. In this regard, I do not see Ken Collins’ proposal to conceive of Wesley’s “axial theme” as “holiness and grace” as much of an advance on Maddox’s view. See Collins *The Theology of John Wesley: Holy Love and the Shape of Grace* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007) 6ff. However, since Collins makes love a major theme of each of his 9 chapters, I think his exposition of Wesley does more justice to Wesley than his meta-conceptual characterization of “holiness and grace.”

religion” is best left as an embarrassing footnote in the history of the church, or if, instead, it is a paradigm with integrity that can produce powerful fruits.

2.) The Question of Terminology Across History: Updating Quaint Language, or Changing Conceptualities?

Wesley’s theology would not be Wesley’s theology without the language of the heart. What I want to look at now are the specific words and concepts that Wesley used to describe the “heart” realities of true Christianity. What was Wesley’s vocabulary of the heart, and is it possible to map that vocabulary onto our current vocabulary?

We have seen that “heart” is used by Wesley as Scripture used it, and as we often use it today—as a metaphor for the essential core of a human being—the home of values, desires, fears and hopes. But we have also seen his use of terms like “affections” that sound foreign and even quaint to our ears. The “foreignness” of these words, though, is something that is indicative of crucial conceptual differences between Wesley’s age and ours. These key issues surrounding the vocabulary of the heart are pointedly raised in Thomas Dixon’s book *From Passions to Emotions: the Creation of a Secular Psychological Category*.¹² Dixon rightly sees that the biggest problem in comprehending what people like Wesley were saying is understanding how our modern concept of “emotion” has blinded us to what Wesley saw as essential to “affections.”

A) The Shift in Vocabulary and Concepts between the 18th and 21st Centuries

In his book, Dixon, formerly a British Academy postdoctoral fellow on the Divinity faculty of Cambridge University and now in the Department of History, Lancaster University, shows that the “emotions” came into being as a distinct psychological category in the 19th century replacing such terms as appetites, passions, sentiments and affections. The domination of this category of “emotion,” Dixon shows, has not been helpful. In fact, the over-inclusivity of this term has blinded us to the tremendous range of mental states that people actually experience. On Dixon’s analysis, it is clear that the typical modern psychological understanding of emotion can distort what we might think Wesley meant by the affections.

Starting his historical survey with a study of passions and affections in Augustine and Aquinas, Dixon shows that Aquinas’ “affect” was equivalent to Augustine’s “affections” and that both were voluntary (movements of the will), active and ascribable both to the angels and to God as well as humans.¹³ Both these thinkers criticized the Stoics, who understood all affectivity as a kind of mistake. Augustine and Aquinas saw the Stoics as failing to distinguish between the virtuous “affections” and vicious “passions.” For these thinkers, the proper *object* of the affection makes all the difference. Dixon quotes Augustine’s *City of God*:

If these emotions (*motus*) and affections (*affectus*) which spring from a love of what is good and from holy charity are to be called vices, then all I can say is that real vices should be called virtues. However, the fact is that when such affections (*affectiones*) are directed to their proper objects, they follow right reasons, and no

¹² (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Hereafter, *From Passions*.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 46.

one should dare to describe them as diseases (*morbos*) or vicious passions (*passiones*).¹⁴

The voluntary nature of the affections was underscored by Aquinas in his *Summa*: “Man does not move immediately because of aggressiveness or desire, he waits for the command of the higher appetite, the will . . . So a lower appetite is not enough for a human motion unless the higher appetite agrees.”¹⁵ Dixon notes the importance of this statement since the will “was implicated in any action, even if it was the result of a passion. . . . Hence while it might suffer passions it was responsible for making the decision to follow or to frustrate those passions.”¹⁶ Affections, then, are actions of the rational soul, while passions were actions of the irrational soul.¹⁷

In short, these medieval theologians introduced a critical distinction between sinful movements of the soul which would target the wrong objects and grow passions, versus the virtuous and potentially godly movements which

were enlightened acts of the higher will—affections. Thus they made some psychological, moral and theological distinctions that were made neither in the classical discourse of the passions (*pathe*) nor in the subsequent discourse of the ‘emotions.’ This was the result of the Christian desire to say both—against the Stoics—that some human feeling or affection is proper and necessary to this life, but also that God, the angels and perfected humans are free from the turmoil and perturbations of sin and the passions. This was the heart of Christian affective psychology.¹⁸

Dixon, in his historical overview, moves from Aquinas to the Age of Reason, and we see here that people like Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley are still using the terminology of the affections as Aquinas and Augustine used them. We see, however, that the roots for a change in conceptuality are starting to be sent out.

According to Dixon, the famous Scot David Hume laid the conceptual groundwork for this change in the 18th century when he wrote of

passions (rather than persons) ‘choosing means’ to achieve desired ends. In fact will, along with reason, was reduced by Hume to one felt impulse among many others. . . . So the two pillars of a classically conceived Christian soul—will and reason—vanished in Humean psychology, to be replaced by a multitude of passions, sentiments, affections, desires or emotions, each the product of the learned associations of certain impressions with other impressions of pleasure or pain in past experience.¹⁹

¹⁴ *City of God*, XIV.9, quoted in Dixon, *From Passions*, 47.

¹⁵ ST ia.81.3, quoted in Dixon, *From Passions* 53.

¹⁶ Dixon, *From Passions*, 53

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 106.

Dixon claims that it is this secular and “scientific” sense of “emotions” as independent impulses or forces that has been the typical meaning for that English term ever since.

Rene Descartes, in his *The Passions of the Soul*,²⁰ was also influential in changing conceptualities. According to Dixon, Descartes understood passions to be a kind of perception, not a movement of the will, as on the classical understanding. Dixon’s analysis is worth quoting at length:

The displacement of the model of movement by a model of perception in understanding the passions was especially significant because of the implications it had in terms of the relative activity or passivity of the soul and the body. On the classical Christian theory, passions were most properly to be understood as passions of the body. The bodily movements and agitations associated with fear, lust, anger and so on were brought about by the self-initiated activity of the sense appetite, which was the lower part of the will. [Dixon here places a footnote to Augustine and Aquinas.] So, classically the passions were actions of the sense appetite upon the rational will and upon the body. Affections were also acts of the will but in this case of the higher or rational will. But if this model of passions and affections as self-initiated movements of the will was replaced, as it was by Descartes, by a model of perception, the assignment of activity and passivity was reversed. So passions became actions of the body and passions of the soul. [Here, Dixon in a footnote quotes Susan James to the effect that for Descartes, then, passions are passive perceptions of bodily motions.] This definition of ‘passions of the soul’ was to have significant theological and psychological consequences, most notably (not in Descartes himself, but ultimately) the disappearance of the will as the locus of human agency, and its gradual replacement by the passions and affections (and later ‘emotions’) themselves and, finally, by the body.²¹

In addition to this change, of course, Descartes is most famous for making the distinction between soul and body more literal than metaphorical. For Descartes, as Dixon puts it, “the difference between the soul-body distinction and the spirit-flesh distinction was dropped.”²² This has had sweeping implications as well, as witnessed by recent scholarly debates about whether Christians need to be metaphysical dualists.²³

²⁰ *Traite des Passions de l’Ame* Descartes’ last work was published in 1649.

²¹ *From Passions*, 77.

²² *From Passions*, 77.

²³ Wesley scholars know that Wesley was exposed to Cartesianism through Malebranche via John Norris. This raises questions about Wesley’s occasional use of “spiritual sense” language. Dixon acknowledges such language in Jonathan Edwards’ work, though he emphasizes that Edwards’ understanding of affective reality remains basically indebted to the more classically Christian view. Dixon sees this “sense” language as evidence for the growing influence of Descartes and Locke. See *From Passions*, 80. My own assessment of Wesley’s use was that while such spiritual sense language can be found, it is basically used to describe a hypothesized, theoretical reality that is most clearly and concretely manifested through the presence of the religious affections. See my *John Wesley on Religious Affections*, 57-8 and note 13, 65. On the topic of how “spiritual senses” have been understood in the Christian tradition, especially in ways that pre-date Descartes, et al, see Elizabeth Dryer’s *Passionate Spirituality: Hildegard of Bingen and Hadewijch of Brabant*, (New York: Paulist Press, 2005) especially Chapter Two “Passion in the Christian Tradition” where she references the historical work of, among others, Bernard McGinn, Karl Rahner and

Later German thinkers such as Immanuel Kant's in his *Critique of Judgment* and his *Anthropology*, and Arthur Schopenhauer in his *The World as Will and Representation*, take a slightly different tack to the question of human nature, but to the same effect of throwing out the classical view of rational affections. These thinkers describe a tripartite model of the soul, where in addition to understanding and will, a third faculty of feeling (*Gefühl* or *Empfindung*) was added. Now the groundwork was laid for theories that could picture passions and emotions as both irrational and involuntary. They could be "seen as alien powers rather than movements integral to the self."²⁴

This came to explicit fruition later in the 19th century in the work of the Scot Thomas Brown, whom Dixon dubs "the inventor of the emotions."²⁵ (Dixon claims that the cumulative work of Hume, Brown and Thomas Chalmers led to "The Scottish creation of 'the emotions'" –the title of Dixon's fourth chapter.) In his vastly influential *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, Brown propounded that the first subdivision that needs to be made in his subject matter is between "our intellectual states of mind and our emotions."²⁶ Ever after this, finding the intellectual component in affectivity—something assumed in the classical view of "affections"-- will be impossible, as emotions and the intellect have been ruled separate by definition.

The upshot of this is traced by Dixon through the rest of the 19th century, through William James into the dominant contemporary psychological view, which he characterizes as being in the Hobbesian-Humean non-realist tradition. Dixon says that there were two important elements to this way of conceptualizing the will:

First, the non-realist taught that 'will' was a word used to describe not a power or faculty, but a feeling. Secondly, the non-realist taught that, just as there was no faculty or power of 'will', so there were no other autonomous faculties, and certainly no autonomous self, 'having' sensory impressions, feelings and ideas. All that really existed for the non-realist was the stream of impressions, feelings and ideas themselves. For Brown these were characterized as 'sensations', 'emotions' and 'thoughts.' For James they became the 'stream of consciousness.'²⁷

The difference in terminology, then, between "emotion" talk and "affections and passions" talk was more than a mere verbal difference, more than an updating of quaint language. The realities that these words seek to identify are quite different from one another. As Dixon puts it, the verbal difference led to "a difference in doctrine."²⁸

Hans Urs Van Balthasar. I see Randy Maddox as endorsing my metaphysically minimalist reading of Wesley's use of the term "spiritual senses," seen especially in his reference to Nancy Murphy's "A non-reductive Physicalist Account of Religious Experience" in *Whatever Happened to the Soul?* ed.s Warren Brown, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998), 143-148. Maddox's reference is found in his essay "A Change in Affections: The Development, Dynamics, and Detachment of John Wesley's Heart Religion," in Richard Steele, ed. *"Heart Religion" in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 2001) 27, n. 36.

²⁴ Dixon, *From Passions*, 97.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 109.

²⁶ Quoted in Dixon, *From Passions*, 98.

²⁷ Dixon, *From Passions*, 250.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 250.

“Emotions” from the 19th century onward came to be associated with positivist and reductionist theories, where they are seen as involuntary—“mini-agents in their own right, rather than movements or actions of a will or self...non-cognitive states...to be contrasted with intellectual judgments and thoughts...aggregates reducible to physical feelings: they were ‘worked up’ from bodily sensations.”²⁹ At its most extreme, this view sees all “emotions” as epiphenomena, pseudo-realities that have no significance in themselves, bothersome ephemera that only distract from, or inhibit, proper intellectual functioning.

This history, then, makes it clear that such an inherited understanding of affectivity—something that many assume to be “obvious” or simply the unquestioned received wisdom to be taken for granted—makes it almost impossible to understand what Wesley meant when he called for a “religion of the heart.” How can irrational mini-agents, unlinked to intellect or will, ever be responsive to such a call to be patterned, shaped and expressed according to the vision of the Gospel (or according to *any* blueprint for that matter)? Is it any wonder that Wesley’s heart religion is, even in the movements and denominations that he helped into being, often ignored in favor of either speculative metaphysics or a simple call to social action? Further, is it any wonder that people these movements and denominations are waning, and their members are searching for something will fill the emptiness at their center?

In his look at the “age of reason,” Dixon chose to examine two groups of 18th Century texts, which he terms the “revivalists” and the “British moralists.” While my concern here will be mainly with the ideas represented in the former group, whom Dixon sees as represented by Jonathan Edwards and Isaac Watts, it is noteworthy that Wesley was certainly acquainted with the ideas represented in the second group of thinkers: Joseph Butler, Francis Hutcheson, Thomas Reid—all influenced, according to Isabel Rivers, by Lord Shaftesbury.³⁰ This latter group’s emphasis on humanity’s natural virtuosity, along with their high regard for the powers of unaided reason and natural religion, led Wesley into more debate than agreement with them.

I have written some about the relation between Edwards and Wesley,³¹ and the topic is covered more fully in Richard Steele’s fine study ‘*Gracious Affection*’ and ‘*True Virtue*’ according to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley,³² so here I want to look one particular work of the other revivalist that Dixon takes as representative of the age—Isaac Watts’ *The Doctrine of the Passions Explained and Improved*.³³

B) Wesley’s Abridgment of Watts’ *Doctrine of the Passions*

Because of the place of prominence that Dixon gives to Watts in his history, as well as the fact that no systematic study of Wesley’s abridgment of this piece has yet

²⁹ Ibid., 251.

³⁰ *Reason, Grace and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England 1660-1780, vol. II Shaftesbury to Hume* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) referenced by Dixon, p. 68, n. 18.

³¹ See note 13.

³² (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1994).

³³ *The Doctrine of the Passions Explained and Improved: or, A Brief and Comprehensive Scheme of the Natural Affections of Mankind* (Coventry: Luckman) First published 1729. The edition I consulted was the 3rd edition of 1739, the one, given Wesley’s description as being “177 pages,” was the one Wesley used for the basis of his abridgment. See Wesley’s *Journal* for Feb. 17, 1769 volume 22, *WJW* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993).

been done, I decided to compare the original to the abridgement to see what this might tell us about Wesley's own affective conceptuality and vocabulary. In his *Journal* for Feb. 17, 1769 Wesley remarked:

I abridged Dr. Watts's pretty *Treatise on the Passions*. His 177 pages will make an useful tract of four and twenty. Why do persons who treat the same subjects with me write so much larger books? Of many reasons, is not this the chief? We do not write with the same view. Their *principle end* is to get money: my *only one, to do good*.³⁴ [emphasis his]

When I examined the footnote in Wesley's *Journal* attached to this entry, however, a question was raised in my mind. The citation—number 33—reads:

“Isaac Watts, *Treatise on the Love of God and on the Use and Abuse of the Passions* (London, 1729). JW's abridgement was never published separately but was serialized in nine parts in the *Arminian Magazine* (1782), as ‘An Account of the Passions or Natural Affections, extracted from Dr. Watts.’

What raised a question was the apparent mismatch between the original and the abridged titles—especially given the fact that Watts published *two* different texts in 1729, both with the term “Passions” in the title. One of these was *Discourse on the Love of God and its Influence on all the Passions...* and the other *The Doctrine of the Passions...* When I queried Richard Heitzenrater about this, he searched the electronic data base of eighteenth century texts available to him, the ECCO (Eighteenth Century Collections Online), and found that the citation in Wesley's *Journal* in the *WJW* was incorrect and that the text Wesley abridged was the *Doctrine of the Passions* and not the *Discourse of the Love of God*.³⁵

(One other correction for the record—Wesley's abridgment was not completed in the 1782 *Arminian Magazine* as the note in *WJW* indicates, but carried over in two extracts into the 1783 edition—pp. 31-33 and 89-90.)

Now to the substance of the abridgement.

As Wesley noted, the original he worked from was 177 pages and he did in fact reduce it to approximately 24 pages, serialized in 11 parts. The original contained 24 sections and Wesley retained parts of 12, though they are unnumbered in his abridgement. In broad overview, Wesley retained considerations of a number of particular “passions,” such as admiration or wonder, hope and fear, desire and aversion, love and hatred, and elided most of Watts' rules to subdue, prevent, moderate and overcome a variety of vicious passions, such as anger, pride, scorn, malice, unreasonable fears, immoderate sorrow, and excessive love to creatures.

Since my interest focuses particularly on affective vocabulary, I will not comment here in depth about each feature of Wesley's abridgment, but will try to give a few overarching orienting remarks. Given my interest in vocabulary, it is unfortunate that

³⁴ Volume 22 of the Abingdon edition of *The Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993).

³⁵ In the Preface to Watts' *Doctrine of the Passions* (third edition) he mentions that these two books were joined in the first edition (p. V.), however it is clear that Wesley's abridgement makes no use of the *Discourse on the Love of God* ... so it cannot be that he has used that first edition as his source.

Wesley retained no part of section I which focuses on “The various senses of the Word” [passion] Here I will simply note that Watts, in the original, states “But in this Discourse we take Passion and Affection to mean the same thing, and to extend to any of these powers or principles in human nature, which were just mentioned; such as love, joy, etc.”³⁶ It is clear that Wesley wanted to reinforce the essential equivalent use of “affection” for “passion” in this text, seeing Wesley’s abbreviated title for the book. Each serial installment of Wesley’s abridgement is titled “An Account of the Passions, or Natural Affections: extracted from Dr. Watts.”

While this might at first appearance seem to blunt the classical distinction between affections and passions, discussed above, when the author/abridger desired to make distinctions reminiscent of this classical passion/affection distinction, this is often done by supplying adjectives for clarification, such as “vicious passions” (*AM*, 1783, 31) or “unruly affections” (*AM*, 1783, 33)

With regard to the meaning of the basic terms, though, Wesley does include part of section II, which Wesley titles “A General Division of the Passions.” In this, Watts/Wesley says:

The passions are wont to be described as mere inward sensations. But since there are some of them that include acts of Volition, or some outgoings of the Will as well as perceptions of the Mind, such as Desire, and Aversion, I chuse (sic) rather to describe the Passions in general, as sensible commotions of our whole nature, both soul and body.” (*AM*, 1782, 202)

Here we can see Watts/Wesley wrestling with the medieval distinction, pointed out by Dixon, between those movements of the lower animal, bodily nature, typically called “passions,” and the higher movements of the soul, typically called “affections.” There is a realization here that it is, in the end, better simply to refer to “passions/affections” as commotions of our whole nature.

While Watts/Wesley does not elaborate on why he took this approach, one can say, from the remove of the 21st Century, that this approach has the virtue of avoiding dubious speculations about what part of us was moved—body??—soul??—lower will??—higher will??—while also emphasizing that at least some of our affective life touches on our most central human elements, whether we call those elements the mind, the soul or the heart. Watts/Wesley goes on in the next paragraph, in fact, to emphasize the cognitive dimension of the heart by emphasizing that the heart is the “seat of the Passions...”, the residence of the “intellectual spirit” and that “in Scripture as well as in heathen writings [heart] is used to signify the Soul itself.” (*AM*, 1782, 202)

Watts organizes the subject of the whole book through a scheme of three “ranks” of passions, each of which is distinguished according to their objects. The first rank is admiration, love and hatred. The second rank is the diverse kinds of love and hatred. These first two ranks Watts calls “primitive,” while the third rank, which flow from complacence and displicence, he calls derivative. The passions/affections which make up the various members of these ranks are spelled out in the following 9 sections of Watts’s

³⁶ *The Doctrine of the Passions, Explain’d and Improv’d, or, a Brief and Comprehensive Scheme of the Natural Affections of Mankind...* Third edition, London, 1739, 3. References to Wesley’s abridgement will be to the page number in the *Arminian Magazine* (*AM*).

original text. While the “three rank” structure is not made clear at all points in Wesley’s abridgement, the discussion of the particular passions/affections that make up the ranks constitute the vast majority of the material that Wesley retains in his abridgement.

Since the three rank structure, and the derivations of some affections from others, is not an ongoing or consistent feature of Wesley’s work, I would not say this work had a major formative influence on Wesley. It is clear, though, that he found Watts’ particular reflections on individual affections, and their various roles in the Christian life, to be capable of being put to good use for what we today might call spiritual formation. Thomas Dixon characterized Watts’ overall work (and, in my judgment, the work Wesley abridged is representative of Watts’ work) in this way:

It is one of my contentions in this book that Watts’ view, that Christian approaches to reason, passions and affections have traditionally been characterized by balance rather than by simple extremes, is in a large measure justified. The joint goals of rational understanding and voluntary love, which formed the bedrock of classical Christian psychology, as long as they were seen together, provided a framework within which ungoverned rationalism and wild enthusiasm were equally unlikely to take hold.³⁷

I think Dixon’s characterization could equally well apply to Wesley, and their generally compatible views can be seen in this abridgement. With this abridgement as an opening into the issue, then, let us now take a more in-depth look at the affective terminology that John Wesley used in his own work.

C) Affections, Tempers and Dispositions in Wesley’s Writings

For John Wesley, the heart was where true religion took root. The heart is the home to the affections. However, Wesley does not refer to heart-realities exclusively in terms of the “affections.” Wesley also uses language that includes “tempers,” “dispositions,” “feelings,” and (though rarely) even “emotion.”³⁸ I want to examine recent claims that there are important conceptual and theological issues at stake with Wesley’s use of these various terms.

Two recent interpreters of Wesley have asserted that there is an important difference in the way that Wesley uses the terms “affections” and “tempers.” Ken Collins in his article “John Wesley’s Topography of the Heart: Dispositions, Tempers and Affections”³⁹ says that while “disposition” and “temper” are used interchangeably by

³⁷ *From Passions*, 75. Wesley, of course, is renowned for trying to steer between these two extremes, as seen in the title of Henry Rack’s fine biography *Reasonable Enthusiast* (London: Epworth Press, 2002).

³⁸ While I will not be focusing on his use of “emotion” in what follows, a few comments about that term might be in order. Wesley uses “emotion” primarily to indicate a general sense of arousal or interest, e.g. *Journal* for Tues. May 6, 1760 “I had much conversation (at Carrickfergus) with Monsieur Cavenac, the French General, not on the circumstances, but the essence, of religion. He seemed to startle at nothing; but said more than once, and with emotion, ‘Why, this is my religion: There is no true religion besides it!’” *Works* 21:259; and, again from his *Journal* for May 2, 1741 “A few of our brethren and sisters sitting by, then spoke what they experienced. He told them, (with great emotion, his hand trembling much,) . . .” *Works* 19:192. In one instance he puts “emotion” in apposition to affection. In defining zeal he says of the term “When it is figuratively applied to the mind it means any warm emotion or affection.” Sermon 92, “On Zeal,” *Works*, 3:311.

³⁹ *Methodist History* 36:3 (April 1998) 162-175. Hereafter, *Topography*.

Wesley throughout his writings,⁴⁰ it is “a mistake to identify tempers and affections.”⁴¹ Collins says that for Wesley the affections are more “ephemeral” than the tempers, the tempers more “foundational.”⁴² While Wesley’s work nowhere contains such an explicit and self-conscious theoretical distinction between these two terms, Collins appeals to Wesley’s comment in his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* on 1 Thessalonians 2:17 where Wesley refers in one section to “transient affections” and in the following sentence to “standing tempers, that fixed posture of his soul.”

Similarly, Randy Maddox (whom Collins quotes on this subject) sees the “affections” and the “tempers” as separable,⁴³ with reference to this same passage in Wesley’s *N.T. Notes* quoted in Collins. But I think it is problematic to lay so much conceptual weight on this one quote.

Throughout Wesley’s writings, “calm” and “standing” are not fixed characterizations of “temper” in Wesley’s work, as “transient” is not a fixed characterization of “affection” in his usage. In my view, this very fact probably prompted Wesley to insert those adjectives in this passage in order to make clear his meaning here simply because he usually did not always observe such a distinction.

The digitized version of the Bicentennial edition of Wesley’s *Works*⁴⁴ contains all of his sermons, the standard collection of hymns and Wesley’s *Journals* and *Diaries*. Using the search feature of this software, one finds that in these documents Wesley used “affection” or “affections” a total of 297 times, while he used “temper” or “tempers” a total of 401 times, so temper(s) is the more common term. However, looking at the times when “affections” and “tempers” are found in the same record gives a sense of the lack of a consistent distinction between these terms in Wesley’s usage.

In “Sermon on the Mount, VIII (#28, 613) we find this passage: “If thine eye be thus 'single', thus fixed on God, 'thy whole body shall be full of light.' 'Thy whole body'—all that is guided by the intention, as the body is by the eye. *All thou art, all thou dost: thy desires, tempers, affections; thy thoughts and words and actions.*” (Emphasis mine) Notice in the italicized passage that Wesley describes all “thou art” by “thy desires, tempers, affections” just as he describes “all thou dost” by “thy thoughts words and actions.” Desires, tempers and affections describe who we are—our heart. It is the reality collectively described by these terms that is who we are—not the tempers that are the “foundational” understanding for the other terms.

In “On Sin in Believers” (#13, 327) Wesley speaks about the growing Christian, saying “his old desires, designs, affections and tempers and conversation . . . these . . . become new . . . yet, not wholly new. Still he feels, to his sorrow and shame, remains of the old man, too manifest taints of his former tempers and affections.” Here if “tempers” are always the springs or generators of affections, we should expect to have him speak of remaining tempers tainting current affections, but we do not. The terms are all jumbled together.

⁴⁰ *Topography*, 165.

⁴¹ *Topography*, 167.

⁴² *Topography*, 171-2.

⁴³ See his *Responsible Grace*, 69-70 and, most recently, his article “Shaping the Virtuous Heart: The Abiding Mission of the Wesleys” in *Circuit Rider* July/August 2005, Vol. 29, No. 4, 27-28.

⁴⁴ (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005)

In “The new Birth” (#45, 194) we see his common equivalence between holiness and the Image of God stamped on the heart. He equates both of these with the “whole mind which was in Jesus Christ all heavenly affections and tempers mingled together in one.” (Wesley goes on to make clear that the “one” is love.)

In “Sermon on the Mount, X” (#30, 651) Wesley describes chapter 5 of the book of Matthew:

In the fifth chapter our great Teacher has fully described inward religion in its various branches. He has there laid before us those *dispositions* of soul which constitute real Christianity; the *tempers* contained in that holiness ‘without which no man shall see the Lord’; the *affections* which, when flowing from their proper fountain, from a living faith in God through Christ Jesus, are intrinsically and essentially good, and acceptable to God. (emphasis mine)

Lest someone might interpret this to mean that “dispositions,” “tempers” and “affections” might be the “various branches of inward religion,” I want to make clear that Wesley had previously (in the first of his series of thirteen sermons on the Sermon on the Mount) spoken of Chapter 5 of Matthew as setting out the “sum of all true religion” that are “laid down in eight particulars” (# 21, 474). These “eight particulars” are, of course the Beatitudes. That provides the context for understanding the first sentence in the quote above where Wesley refers to Mathew 5 as describing “inward religion in its various branches.” The *Beatitudes* are the various branches of true religion.

In the second sentence of this quote are the three appositional clauses, set apart in series by semicolons, each containing the key words I have italicized. Here we see the *dispositions*, the *tempers*, and the *affections* all being elucidated by the Beatitudes. In his subsequent exposition of this Scripture chapter, though, there is never a sense that some beatitudes are tempers, some are affections and some are dispositions. The context seems to make clear that these are parallel terms used to characterize the Beatitudes taken as a whole, that they are essentially equivalent phrases, as their being listed in series implies. If Collins is right that “dispositions” and “tempers” name the same reality (see above), it would be hard to deny that these three terms are all used equivalently here.

In “Walking by Sight and Walking by Faith” (# 119, 55) alluding to Colossians 3:2 “set their affections on [phroneite—mind ye] things above” (that he had just quoted), Wesley says “. . .They regulate all their tempers and passions, all their desires, joys and fears by this standard.” Again we see no attempt to make a theoretical distinction--tempers and affections are lumped in with desires, joys and fears.

This Scripture passage from Colossians, where “affections” is itself the biblical term, raises the noteworthy point that the King James Version (which was, of course, the standard text of Wesley’s day) contains at least 7 instances of affection or affections and only one of temper or tempers, and the use of temper has nothing to do with inner dispositions.⁴⁵ The use of temper is in Ezekiel 46:14 and it is used in the sense of flour being “tempered” with oil (NRSV uses “moisten”). On the other hand, two of the KJV uses of “affections” are found in key passages of the New Testament where affections are clearly motivating energies, not simply reactive felt responses: Romans 1:24 “gave them

⁴⁵ The digitized version of the King James Version is included in the digital edition of Wesley’s *Works* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005)

up unto vile affections” [epithumiais] and Galatians 5 “crucified the flesh with the affections [pathamasin] and lusts [epithumiais].”

Far from seeing tempers as the generators of affections, Wesley often lumps them together and sees both as the product of something else. In “On Pleasing All Men” (#100, 426) he says that we should let truth and love “be the springs of all your affections, passions, tempers; the rule of all your thoughts.” In “Thoughts on Dissipation” we again see “tempers” used not in a sense of generating affections, but as a product themselves:

This disunion from God is the very essence of human dissipation; which is no other than the scattering the thoughts and affections of the creature from the Creator. . . .foolish desires and tempers are not so properly dissipation itself, as they are the fruits of it, the natural effects of being unhinged from the creator. . .⁴⁶

It is possible to make a case that there is one other passage (aside from the comment on 1 Thessalonians above) where Wesley seems to make a distinction between these two words. In the Preface to his *N.T. Notes*, he says

Luther says ‘Divinity is nothing but a grammar of the language of the Holy Ghost.’ To understand this thoroughly, we should observe the emphasis which lies on every word, the holy affections expressed thereby, and the tempers shown by every writer. But how little are these, *the latter especially*, regarded! though they are wonderfully diffused through the whole New Testament, and are in truth continued commendation of him who acts, or speaks, or writes.⁴⁷ [emphasis mine]

The main problem with using this for finding a distinction between affections and tempers, though, is that it is not clear that “the latter” refers to tempers (making the affections the implied “former”). I think it is indeed more plausible to interpret the “latter” as being *both* affections and tempers, with “the emphasis which lies on every word” being the implied “former.” Given his common use of the terms as equivalents, I think the interpretation which sees them as being used in apposition makes the most sense here.

Another example of Wesley using these terms as rough equivalents can be seen in his *Journal* where he is speaking about how the new birth is not an outward thing: “A change . . .from earthly and sensual to heavenly and holy affections—in a word, a change from the tempers of the spirits of darkness to those of the angels of God [as] they are in heaven.”⁴⁸

Maddox depicts “affection” as a category of “temper” in this way:

Wesley’s various discussions of particular tempers appear to distinguish between those that are stable orienting dispositions and those that are responsive motivating affections; included among the former would be humility, meekness,

⁴⁶ *Works*, Jackson ed., Volume XI, 526.

⁴⁷ *N.T. Notes*, 9-10.

⁴⁸ *Works*, 19, *Journal* for September 13, 1739, 97.

and simplicity; among the latter would be joy, hope, gratitude, fear holy mourning, and peace.⁴⁹

The problem with this is that humility for Wesley is just as “motivating” as joy or gratitude, and similarly, peace and hope are as “orienting” as meekness. One could say that meekness motivates us to put others before self and peace orients us to the world in a particular irenic way. Because of the logical structure of emotions shown by such contemporary philosophers of emotion as Martha Nussbaum and Robert C. Roberts (characterized below) I think it is better to see *all* affections/temperaments as taking their orientation from targeting certain objects, and hence all are “orienting”—if we have these affections it is because we have been oriented in a certain way. Similarly, the religious affections typically dispose people to behave or act in certain ways; hence they are all “motivating” as well.

Wesley published a dictionary, and though it contains entries for neither “affection” nor “temper,” the word “temper” does appear at least four times, in the following entries:

Constitution, a form of government, a temper of body, a disposition.

Equanimity, evenness of temper.

Genius, a good or evil spirit, temper, talents.

Qualify, to make fit, temper, appease.⁵⁰

But without a contrasting definitional use for “affection”—especially a definition that would define affections as conceptually related to, and/or differentiated from, temperaments, these passing uses cannot help in coming to clear understandings of Wesley’s usage. The evidence for the distinction that Collins and Maddox want to see is also ambiguous at best in the most influential dictionary of Wesley’s day, Samuel Johnson’s famous *A Dictionary of the English Language*, first published in 1755.⁵¹

Meanings of “affection” at all associated with our interests are found in the first five meanings in this reference book where it is defined variously as 1. The state of being affected by any cause, or agent; 2. Passion of any kind; 3. Love; kindness; good-will to some person; 4. Good-will to any object; zeal; passionate regard; 5. State of the mind, in general. Compare these to the relevant meanings of “temper:” 1. Due mixture of contrary qualities; 2. Middle course; mean or medium. 3. Constitution of body. 4. Disposition of mind. 5. Constitutional frame of mind.

Here we see that while “temper” can mean a disposition of mind or a constitutional frame of mind, affection can likewise mean the state of the mind in general.

⁴⁹ Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 132.

⁵⁰ *The Complete English Dictionary*, published in 1753, the Preface for this appears in *Works*, Jackson ed. Vol. XIV, 23-4. I did not have direct access to this work, but the information I share about it comes from Professor Richard Heitzenrater of Duke University, shared in personal correspondence. He gathered this information from a search of the text on ECCO (Eighteenth Century Collections Online), which he says “might not be absolutely complete but should be taken as representative.”

⁵¹ Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language on CD-ROM*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) edited by Anne McDermott. This has both transcriptions of the original text and images of the original pages of the two most influential editions of Johnson’s dictionary, the First (1755) and Fourth (1773). The entries for affection and temper (as a noun) are the same in both editions, with the exception of an additional definition of affection “used by Shakespeare sometimes for affectation” in the fourth edition.

If one were to look up affection and temper in today's standard English dictionary, the *Oxford English Dictionary*, one could see evidence for the distinction between these two terms that Collins and Maddox want to find in Wesley's writing, but I think this shows that perhaps these two were a bit anachronistic in projecting this distinction back onto Wesley.

In his often loose terminological usage, I think Wesley is no guiltier of conceptual confusion than most of us are today when we want to refer to what we have experienced, but are chary to use words that might be misunderstood, so we lump many terms together. This can often be heard when people speak loosely about "feelings and emotions," or when people write about "spiritual and emotional health" or "spiritual/emotional experiences." I think because of the conceptual confusion that has come from inter-mingling over time of various conceptual and linguistic traditions (the complexity of which is shown by Dixon's historical study), we do not have a very good, commonly accepted, and stable vocabulary for these realities.

In reading Wesley, then, it is truer to the material to at least assume a rough equivalence of the terms "affections" and "tempers" in Wesley's usage rather than to see an important distinction between the terms. I admit that it would be a great conceptual help for all in the Wesleyan tradition if the affection/temper distinction were observed by Wesley as these interpreters suggest. He needed such a distinction, and I think that the distinction he was groping for is best made today by the distinction between a "feeling" and an "emotion," where a feeling is a transitory awareness of the deeper, more stable character-defining "emotion." However much we might wish for that, though, such a distinction is not reflected in Wesley's writings.

Henry Knight⁵² and Richard B. Steele,⁵³ as well as Mark Horst⁵⁴ all agree with the view of this paper on the essential conceptual equivalence of "tempers" and "affections" in Wesley's work. It should be noted, though, that there is even some reason to see "affection" as the more important piece of vocabulary when trying to understand Wesley's "heart religion," even if Wesley did use it less frequently than "temper." This is Dixon's historical argument, explicated above, which emphasizes that "affection" does have an important history in the Western philosophical and theological tradition, based on the cognitively charged Latin understanding of *affectio*, which finds detailed explication in the thought of Augustine and Aquinas.⁵⁵

Even more relevant for our purposes is the fact that Jonathan Edwards, perhaps the most respected theologian of the 18th century, used "affections" as the term of choice for these heart experiences, having written a *Treatise on Religious Affections*, which John Wesley abridged, recommended and published.⁵⁶ Indeed, the influence of Edwards

⁵² See his *The Presence of God in the Christian Life: John Wesley and the Means of Grace* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1992). Noted in Collins *Topography*, 170.

⁵³ See his *Gracious Affection" and "True Virtue" According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1994). Note especially his subject index which includes no entry for temper, 419.

⁵⁴ See his *Christian Understanding and the Life of Faith in John Wesley's Thought*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1985. Randy Maddox in his *Responsible Grace* acknowledges Horst's views as differing from his, 288 n32.

⁵⁵ See *From Passions*, especially Chapter Two "Passions and Affections in Augustine and Aquinas," 26-61.

⁵⁶ This work was first published in Boston in 1746, Wesley's abridgement first appeared in his collected *Works* (volume 23, 177-279) 1773, reprinted in 1801, and later appeared in the second edition of his

on Wesley was so strong that Albert C. Outler has said that Edwards was a "major source" of Wesley's theology, and that Wesley's encounter with Edwards's early writings was one of four basic factors that set the frame for Wesley's thought.⁵⁷ If "affection" was the more important term in theological history, and it was the preferred choice for one of Wesley's greatest influences, there is good reason to see Wesley's heart religion through the historically-hued paradigm that this term offers, even though Wesley used "temper" more often.

One thing that becomes very clear from all of this historical and textual analysis is that if we are to understand what Wesley meant by "heart religion" we must bracket what our modern world has invited us to believe about "emotions" and try to see them as Wesley did, through the conceptualities that gave rise to the terminology of "passions" and "affections." Fortunately, we have powerful allies in this task, namely many contemporary philosophers and theologians who have recognized the conceptual bankruptcy of the Brownian, physicalist view of emotion and have labored in helpful ways to re-envision what "emotions" truly are. Of most interest for our interests in this study is the fact that their re-visioning of the "emotions" leads to a view very consistent with what Wesley meant by the "affections."⁵⁸

3.) Contemporary Theoretical Inquiry into the Nature of Emotion

The number of philosophical studies of emotion published in the last few years has mushroomed to such an extent that even a listing of bibliographic resources could fill an entire volume in itself.⁵⁹ My purpose here is not to try to compile such an exhaustive list, but to give a sense of a few of the important common themes and arguments that mark this recent body of reflection. My focus will be on several thinkers who emphasize what might be broadly characterized as cognitive theories of emotion. These views are

Christian Library (volume 30, 307-376) 1827. See Frank Baker's *Union Catalog* entry number 294 for the complete publication history.

⁵⁷ *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) 16. The other three factors, according to Outler, were his Aldersgate conversion, his disenchantment with Moravianism and his vital reappropriation of his Anglican heritage.

⁵⁸ I should note here at the end of this section on the conceptual change that has taken place in the last 200 years that Randy Maddox has given his version of the change specifically in Methodist theology from the time of Wesley through the 19th century. See his "A Change of Affections: The Development, Dynamics, and Dethronement of John Wesley's Heart Religion" in *Heart Religion in the Methodist Tradition and Related Movements* edited by Richard Steele (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2001). Maddox focuses on the influence of Thomas Reid and his "decisionistic rational control" model of moral psychology as one of the prime reasons Methodists strayed from Wesley's vision of heart religion, 23-25. Interestingly, Dixon shows great familiarity with Reid's work, but he sees Reid as one of the defenders of the "cognitive affection" view that Dixon saw Wesley holding: "The cognitive view was used here by Reid in defence of Christianity and in opposition to Hume's anti-Christian reductionism." Dixon, *From Passions*, 96. Maddox is probably right that the shift from Wesley's views to Reid's is a real one, but Dixon's larger point is also true—if everyone still believed as Reid, our views of "emotion" would be a lot closer to Wesley's "affections" than to reductionistic views—either those of Hume or their contemporary counterparts.

⁵⁹ See, for example, the bibliographies in Martha Nussbaum's *Upheavals of Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 715-734 and Robert Solomon, ed. *Thinking about Feeling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2004) 279-292. See also the lists of references in Jerome Neu, *A Tear is an Intellectual Thing: The Meanings of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) 315-330, and Paul E. Griffiths *What Emotions Really Are* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) 259-276.

especially noteworthy for having emerged in contradistinction to the irrational mini-agent view of emotion that we saw in the 19th and early 20th Century views.

In looking at the work of contemporary thinkers Martha Nussbaum, Robert C. Roberts and Paul Lauritzen, I will be able to show how several contemporary thinkers from different perspectives have come to evaluate emotion in common ways, and, further, have applied their analyses to morality and religion. This will lead us to a few final thoughts about how Wesley's vision of Christianity as "heart religion" could be seen through a new lens that these thinkers provide, and perhaps provide a powerful and fresh, yet ancient, model for theologizing and spiritual formation.

Martha Nussbaum's *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*

Martha Nussbaum is Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago with a joint appointment in the philosophy department, the law school, the divinity school and the college. In 2001 her thick and detailed study of emotion *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* was published.⁶⁰ Her multi-disciplinary faculty position is reflected in the wide range of her book, which draws widely on philosophical and psychological reflection, as well as literary works and aesthetic theory. The title of the book comes from a quote from Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* which I reproduce here:

It is almost impossible to understand the extent to which this upheaval agitated, and by that very fact had temporarily enriched, the mind of M. de Charlus. Love in this way produces real geological upheavals of thought. In the mind of M. de Charlus, which only several days before resembled a plane so flat that even from a good vantage point one could not discern an idea sticking up above the ground, a mountain range had abruptly thrust itself into view, hard as rock -- but mountains sculpted as if an artist, instead of taking the marble away, had worked it on the spot, and where there twisted about one another, in giant and swollen groupings, Rage, Jealousy, Curiosity, Envy, Hate, Suffering, Pride, Astonishment, and Love.⁶¹

Nussbaum is taken by this description of emotions as "upheavals of thought," but she is at pains to avoid any idea that emotions should primarily be seen as *impediments* to clear thinking. It is not as if the flat plane of a barren landscape would be the desired goal from which emotions deter us. On the contrary, for Nussbaum, the emotions are "essential elements of intelligence."⁶² Emotions are the medium through which we discern what it is we truly value. Parsing out the reason that emotions contain allows us to understand, as her subtitle indicates, the "intelligence of emotions."

Nussbaum says about emotion's role in philosophy and ethics what I think John Wesley would say about emotion's role in theology:

emotions are suffused with intelligence and discernment, and if they contain in themselves an awareness of value or importance, they cannot, for example, easily be sidelined in accounts of ethical judgment as so often they have been in the

⁶⁰ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) Hereafter, Nussbaum, *Upheavals*.

⁶¹ Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, vii.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 3.

history philosophy. Instead of viewing morality as a system of principles to be grasped by the detached intellect, and emotions as motivations that either support or subvert our choice to act according to principle, we will have to consider emotions as part and parcel of the system of ethical reasoning. We cannot plausibly omit them, once we acknowledge that emotions included in their content judgments that can be true or false, and good or bad guides to ethical choice.⁶³

But to say this much about emotions is not to say that we must give emotions a privileged place of trust, or regard them as immune from rational criticism

for they may be no more reliable than any other set of entrenched beliefs. There may even be special reasons for regarding them with suspicion, given their specific content and the nature of their history. It does mean, however, that we cannot ignore them, as so often moral philosophy has done.⁶⁴

Nussbaum's book is divided into three main sections: "Need and Recognition;" "Compassion;" and "The Ascents of Love." It is the first section, where she lays out her theory of emotion that will be most pertinent to our interests. As the title of this first section implies, Nussbaum sees emotions as judgments that relate our own need for happiness (understood in the classical, "eudaemonistic" sense of the term) to the variety of objects that present themselves to us.

As Nussbaum puts it, emotions are "intelligent responses to the perception of value."⁶⁵ As she sees them, emotions are "appraisals or value judgments which ascribe to things and persons outside the persons own control great importance for that persons own flourishing."⁶⁶ Her view thus

contains three salient ideas: the idea of a *cognitive appraisal* or *evaluation*; the idea of *one's own flourishing* or *one's important goals and projects*; and the idea of the *salience of external objects as elements in one's own scheme of goals*. Emotions typically combine these ideas with information about events in the world; they are our ways of registering how things are with respect to the external (i.e., uncontrolled) items that we view as salient for our well-being.⁶⁷ (emphasis hers)

As Nussbaum makes clear, her theory has its antecedents in the ideas of the ancient Greek Stoics. This may surprise some familiar with the popular stereotype of "stoic" people as having no discernible affective life. But while Nussbaum endorses the Stoics view that emotions involve evaluations, she rejects their normative view that the evaluations involved in emotions are all false.

In fact, Nussbaum takes the reader through several stages of refinement on the Stoic view, including denying the Stoic position that animals have no emotions, making

⁶³ Ibid., 1.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁶⁵ Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 1.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 4.

allowances for the social construction of emotions, and limning a developmental view of how adult emotions are closely related to formative experiences in infancy and childhood. For this latter view, she borrows much from current psychologists in the “object-relations” tradition (though she also draws deeply from the work of the great French novelist Marcel Proust whom she calls “in some ways the most profound object-relations psychoanalyst of all.”⁶⁸) Before her theoretical musings are through, Nussbaum’s remarkable analysis also turns to music which she sees as a source of “non-linguistic cognition.”

I will make no pretense to covering all of these themes in depth as Nussbaum does over 700 pages. I want to focus on her view that emotions are cognitive evaluations. It will perhaps best illustrate what she means by this if we clearly understand what Nussbaum sees as the “adversary” to her cognitive-evaluative view. This is the position that sees emotions as

non-reasoning movements, or unthinking energies that simply push the person around, without being hooked up to the ways in which she perceives or thinks about the world. Like gusts of wind or the currents of the sea, they move, and move the person, but obtusely, without visions of an object or beliefs about it. In this sense they are ‘pushes’ rather than ‘pulls.’ Sometimes this view is connected with the idea that emotions derive from an ‘animal’ part of our nature, rather than from a specifically human part—usually by thinkers who do not have a high regard for animal intelligence.⁶⁹

Nussbaum maintains that though this view of emotion is grossly inadequate, it has been very influential, especially in some scientific circles. (With Dixon’s historical analysis, we can see how this “adversary” view came to be.)

As a way of making clear her own view of emotion Nussbaum narrates her own grief over her mother’s death. By paying close attention to this narrative, Nussbaum both makes clear her own cognitive view of emotion and shows the “adversary” theory to be bankrupt. Nussbaum sees at least four ways that the emotions stirred up by her mother’s death are unlike the “thoughtless natural energies” of the adversary’s view. First, they are *about* something: they have an object.

My fear, my hope, my ultimate grief, all are about my mother and directed at her and her life. A wind may hit against something, a current in the blood may pound against something: but they are not in the same way *about* the things they strike in their way. My fear’s very identity as fear depends on its having some such object: take that away and it becomes a mere trembling or heart-leaping. The identity of the wind as wind does not in the same way depend on any particular object against which it may pound.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Ibid., 7.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 24-25.

⁷⁰ Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 27.

This leads to her second point, that the object is an *intentional* object, by which she means that this object figures in the emotion as it is seen or interpreted by the person whose emotion it is.

Emotions are not *about* their objects merely in the sense of being pointed at them and let go, the way an arrow is released toward its target. Their aboutness is more internal, and embodies a way of seeing. My fear perceived my mother both as tremendously important and as threatened; my grief saw her as valuable and as irrevocably cut off from me.⁷¹

Her third reason why emotions are more than unthinking bodily experiences is that emotions embody beliefs about the object—often very complex beliefs. Nussbaum quotes Aristotle (who, of course, is the same source that so informed Aquinas and his cognitive understanding of affectivity) to show that in order to have fear, one must believe that bad events are impending and that I am not entirely in control of warding them off. In order to have anger, I must have an even more complex set of beliefs: “that some damage has occurred to me or to something of someone close to me; that the damage is not trivial but significant; that it was done by someone; probably, that it was done willingly.”⁷² She goes on to point out that these beliefs are essential to the identity of the emotion: “the feeling of agitation all by itself will not reveal to me whether what I am feeling is fear or grief or pity. Only an inspection of the thoughts discriminates.”⁷³

Her final point on showing the inadequacy of the reductionistic “adversary” view concerns one particular aspect of the intentional perceptions and the beliefs characteristic of an emotion:

“they are concerned with value, they see their object as invested with value or importance. . . [this value is] of a particular sort. It appears to make reference to the person’s own flourishing. The object of the emotion is seen as *important for* some role it plays in the person’s own life. . . . Another way of putting this point . . . is that emotions appear to be eudaimonistic, that is, concerned with the person’s flourishing. . . . emotions look to the world from the subject’s own viewpoint, mapping events onto the subject’s own sense of personal importance or value.”⁷⁴

It is this framework for understanding emotions that allows Nussbaum to call hers a “cognitive” view. By cognitive Nussbaum means “nothing more than ‘concerned with receiving and processing information.’ I do not mean to imply the presence of elaborate calculation, of computation, or even of reflexive self-awareness.”⁷⁵

If these aspects of affectivity are accepted at face value, and I think Nussbaum presents a compelling case, then the reductionistic, non-cognitive, Brownian view of the “adversary” theory must be rejected and the cognitivity of emotions must be acknowledged. Before moving on to some of the other pertinent thinkers that can help us

⁷¹ Ibid., 27.

⁷² Ibid., 29.

⁷³ Ibid., 29.

⁷⁴ Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 30-33.

⁷⁵ Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 23.

frame an understanding of Wesley's heart religion, I want to consider one point raised by Nussbaum's analysis.

Part of Nussbaum's book is concerned with the course of development of particular emotions in the infant and child, including shame, love and disgust. This raises a set of distinctions that I think are useful to think about, distinctions first made apparent to me in a systematic way by the philosopher G.D. Marshall in a little article called "On Being Affected," though Nussbaum does not refer to it. In this piece, Marshall distinguishes between the object of an emotion, the occasion of an emotion and the cause of the emotion. Allow me to illustrate how these three differ one from another and then I will come back and show the pertinence of this distinction for Nussbaum's developmental point.

I will take Marshall's own example of delight to illustrate the distinction: "The object of one's delight, for example, may be a certain piece of music, the occasion, a particular performance of the work, the cause, whatever it is that has made one like this sort of music at all."⁷⁶ One might think of a parallel example using this same analysis, say, the emotion of anger. We might say that a particular politician is the *object* of one's anger, seeing the politician speak on television is the *occasion* for experiencing the anger, and the *cause* of the anger is the reason why one disagrees with that politician's decisions.

I give Marshall's analysis, and the two examples to illustrate it, in order to show that one need not accept Nussbaum's psychoanalytic theory about the development ("cause") of any particular emotion in order to accept her larger view of the cognitiveness of emotion. That is why I have chosen not to outline her theory on that point in any depth. With regard to the cause of particular emotions, I think Marshall's relaxed sense about causation, reflected in his statement that "whatever it is that has" caused a particular emotion, is specific enough of a way to refer to the cause of particular emotions for most of our purposes. The relative truth of Freudian or object relations theory as regarding how any particular emotion is first caused, does not necessarily qualify our considerations of the object-relatedness of emotion or the cognitiveness of emotion, and it is those points that will be most salient when we come back to consider Wesley's views.⁷⁷

Robert C. Roberts' *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology*

Martha Nussbaum is explicit in her book about her conversion from Christianity to Judaism. For her, Judaism gives the moral sphere more centrality and autonomy, and she considers the Christian doctrine of original sin as making it seem impossible for humans to become, and be, good.⁷⁸ She allows for possible exceptions for Thomistic conceptions of Christianity, and I would hasten to add that Wesleyan exceptions should be added to her qualified rejection of Christianity on moral grounds. Nonetheless, she writes from a consciously non-Christian view.

Robert C. Roberts, on the other hand, is Distinguished Professor of Ethics at Baylor University and, while a philosopher by profession, has written several works from

⁷⁶ "On Being Affected" in *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 77, No. 306 (Apr., 1968) 243.

⁷⁷ For a recent discussion of the cause of emotions in regard to developmental stages and Wesley's own context, see Keth Haartman's *Watching and Praying: Personality Transformation in Eighteenth Century British Methodism* (New York: Rodopi, 2004).

⁷⁸ Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 549-551.

an explicitly Christian point of view.⁷⁹ While his book, *Emotions: an Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology*,⁸⁰ is a philosophical approach taken with the goal of clarifying certain aspects of ethics, he obviously sees no contradiction between his understanding of ethical responsibility and his Christian faith. What is of most interest to me in this book, though, is how Roberts and Nussbaum agree on many of the key questions concerning the nature of emotion.

Roberts lists 12 facts that any general “account” of emotion must take account of. Note here that Roberts prefers to speak of an “account” rather than a “theory.” An *account*, for him, can be a series of discussions that test a certain paradigm, while a *theory* of emotion would be a special kind of account that “purports to specify the necessary and sufficient conditions for anything’s membership in the class emotion.”⁸¹ An account, then, he sees as being better suited to the subject of emotion—a number of particular features of emotion can be viewed together to form a paradigm for the concept, without pretending to be the last word on the subject.

Just as I did not elaborate all of Nussbaum’s ruminations on emotion, I will not do so for Roberts’ 12 facts. But for our purposes, it is important to show that like Nussbaum, Roberts holds that emotions are not the same as feelings (see his points 1 and 2⁸²). Related to this, Roberts takes seriously the attacks from those who want to reduce psychology to biology and neuro-physiology, and he has an extended critique of one of the recent attempts in this genre, Paul Griffiths’ *What Emotions Really Are: The Problem of Psychological Categories*.⁸³

Also like Nussbaum, for Roberts, emotions typically take objects (see his points 3 and 4⁸⁴). Again paralleling Nussbaum, Roberts sees emotions as crucial for morality (hence his subtitle “An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology”), and he makes this explicit in his point 8 where he claims that many types of emotion are motivational “in the sense that they involve the desire to perform characteristic types of action. . . .”⁸⁵ Finally, Roberts sees cognitivity as undeniably present in emotion, especially as seen in his summary definition of emotion as “concern-based construals.”⁸⁶

It should be pointed out that Roberts sees his emphasis on “construals,” as opposed to Nussbaum’s “judgments,” to be of great importance, since judgments necessarily involve assent, while construals do not. Roberts thinks it is better to think of emotions as a kind of appearance, impression or “construal” that is *supported* by judgment than to think of emotions themselves as judgments.⁸⁷ Without denying the importance of these distinctions for Roberts’ own paradigm-forming program, I think what is most crucial here is that these two major contemporary theorists of emotion insist that the cognitive dimension of human consciousness is alive and very much active in the

⁷⁹ See, for example, *The Strengths of a Christian* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984) and *Spirituality and Human Emotion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982).

⁸⁰ (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) Hereafter, *Emotions*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 60-81 and 65ff.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 14-36.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 61-2.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 64ff.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 83-106.

experiences we call emotions.⁸⁸ Such a picture is very much in line with the views of Augustine and Aquinas, Edwards, Watts and Wesley, and is in marked contrast with current “common sense” that sees all emotions as necessarily irrational.

At this point allow me to shift gears a bit from these philosophers whose concern is to show the importance of emotion for ethics, to a contemporary writer who takes the affective dimension seriously for specifically theological purposes.

Paul Lauritzen’s *Religious Belief and Emotional Transformation*

There are a number of writers on religion who have written recently about themes that touch on religious experience in one way or another, including philosophers of religion speaking about the relative veridicality of different types of religious experience, or commenting on the variety of religious experiences and reflecting on some of the implications of these experiences.⁸⁹ But aside from these philosophers of religion, a relative few, but a growing number, of scholars of religion are writing about emotions *per se* and their normative role in the life of the believer.

First to be mentioned should be my mentor, Don E. Saliers of Emory University who has written on these matters in many places, including *The Soul in Paraphrase*.⁹⁰ But in a way that bears directly on our present concerns, Paul Lauritzen of John Carroll University has brought the concern for theological normativity to the analysis of emotion in ways that can shed light on Wesley’s attempts to do so two centuries ago.

In his 1992 book *Religious Belief and Emotional Transformation: A Light in the Heart*⁹¹ Paul Lauritzen sets out to establish that religious beliefs can, in fact, transform emotions. In order to do this, he had to fight many of the same conceptual battles that our two philosophers, Nussbaum and Roberts, had to fight.

Leaning on the work of philosophers Robert Solomon and especially Charles Taylor, Lauritzen criticizes the purely physicalist approach to emotion of the natural sciences, where emotions are reducible to sensations, because this approach seeks to eliminate the role that self-understanding plays in human life: “. . . to understand human life apart from subjective properties is just to understand it apart from self-understanding.”⁹² But for Lauritzen, the importance of self-understanding is central and non-negotiable for Christians.

⁸⁸ For a fuller listing of contemporary philosophers who support a cognitive view of emotion with references to their work, see 22-3 n. 2 of Nussbaum’s *Upheavals*.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Louis Pojman, *Philosophy of Religion: An Anthology* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 2003), especially Section II “The Argument from Religious Experience,” and Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). One of the most promising philosophical texts that addresses affectivity and religion is William J. Wainwright’s *Reason and the Heart: A Prolegomenon to a Critique of Passionate Reason* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). In this text, Wainwright makes the case on philosophical grounds that “. . . (under the right circumstances) passion, sentiment and affection may be necessary conditions of using our cognitive faculties correctly.” 154. On this last theme, see also *Emotional Experience and Religious Understanding* by Mark R. Wynn (University of Exeter) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), as well as *The Spiritual Dimension* by John Cottingham (University of Reading), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁹⁰ (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), revised edition published by the Order of St. Luke, Akron, Ohio, 2002. See also the work of Richard Steele, especially his “*Gracious Affections*” and “*True Virtue*” *According to Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1994), as well as that of Henry Knight III especially his *The Presence of God in the Christian Life* (Metuchen: Scarecrow Press, 1992) and Brooks Holifield’s *The History of Pastoral Care in America* (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1983).

⁹¹ (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1992). Hereafter *Religious Belief*.

⁹² Lauritzen, *Religious Belief*, 36.

Calling on Hauerwas' and MacIntyre's emphasis on the importance of narrative, Lauritzen points out that narratives shape character "because they provide categories of self-understanding. . . .before I can answer the question 'What am I to do?' I must answer the question 'Of what story am I a part?'"⁹³ When the Christian narrative provides us with the self-understanding, for instance, that we are sinful yet redeemed, our faith is informing our self-understanding in fundamental ways and our self-understanding, "in turn, gives form and substance to our emotions."⁹⁴

This inescapable cognitive dimension of emotion is brought out even more explicitly when Lauritzen speaks about the "intentional" character of emotions.

"... emotions are almost always about something. We are rarely, if ever, simply proud, angry or afraid. Rather we are angry *at* someone, proud *of* something, afraid *of* something or someone. . . . And when we ask about the object of anger, we are asking about the beliefs or judgments that make anger an appropriate response in a particular situation."⁹⁵

All of this leads Lauritzen to offer the following definition of emotion:

What then is an emotion? I suggest that we define an emotion as an experiential complex, shaped by social norms, that consists of such diverse elements as pronounced physiological activity, expressive bodily responses, feelings, desires, beliefs and evaluative judgments. Further, I suggest that we treat the cognitive components of the complex, beliefs and judgments, i.e., those components that embody self-understanding, as the keystone holding these various elements in place, for two reasons: (1) belief and judgment not only accompany the bodily responses characteristic of emotions, but cause them; and (2) without appeal to evaluative judgment we have no way of distinguishing emotional states, one from another.⁹⁶

While Lauritzen's formulation is not as guarded and qualified as, say, Roberts' (e.g., Lauritzen's suggesting that bodily responses are a part of all emotion where Roberts said that this relationship holds only in some cases, and since even new-born infants experience certain emotions, one cannot necessarily say that all emotions are shaped by social norms), we see here many of the key features of emotion emerging that we saw in the formulations of both Nussbaum and Roberts, especially the key role that belief/evaluative judgment play in emotion.

Lauritzen sees the power of narrative to shape distinctive communities, and the power of communities to shape self-understandings, and self-understandings shape emotions. Following this logic, one could expect that distinctive communities can be expected to have distinctive emotions. This is precisely what Lauritzen goes on to show.

In his fourth chapter, "The Emotions of Anger and Resentment," Lauritzen like Nussbaum and Roberts both, refers to imaginative literature for examples of how beliefs

⁹³ Ibid., 31

⁹⁴ Ibid., 30.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 55.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 65.

shape emotion (which makes sense, given his emphasis on narrative.) He picks four “angry episodes” from Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* to show how Western social norms governing anger and resentment can be evinced. The examples include incidents where the protagonists’ anger was justified (e.g., when directed at injustice), as well as when it was not justified (e.g., when a person’s truculence was misinterpreted as being directed at the protagonist.) Tying these incidents together, Lauritzen summarizes by saying that in our culture, “The expression of anger is an accusation of wrongdoing.”⁹⁷

Confirmation of this generalization about anger is also seen by Lauritzen in several anthropological studies. Lauritzen consulted field work on how the Taita people of Kenya deal with anger, and he also summarized some work done on Canadian native people. One of his most interesting findings was the evidence which confirmed his view of anger as related to wrongdoing among these Canadian natives.

Anger is apparently rarely found in adults found among the Utku Eskimos. The anthropologist studying them who observed this also had a theory which fits Lauritzen’s view. According to this anthropologist, the Utku rarely get angry because they live in a society where one of the controlling concepts is *ayuqnaq* which translates as “fatalism, an attitude of resignation to the inevitable.”⁹⁸ If everything is fated and whatever happens is inevitable, then how could someone truly see something as “wrongdoing?” The Utku’s understanding of their world and themselves is definitively shaped by their beliefs—and their emotions, or lack of same--are the inescapable result.

Conclusion: A Few Summary Insights

As these representative thinkers have shown, there is a remarkable convergence in recent theorizing about the nature of emotion. The idea that emotions are purely sensory experiences that happen outside of the input or control of cognitive capacities must surely be rejected. The cognitive dimension of emotion can be seen in their intentional, or what we might say their *transitive*, nature: they take objects. These objects are typically defined by certain beliefs, judgments or construals. Not only that, but these belief-related experiences we call “emotions” function as motivations to act in certain ways, in other words, they function as dispositions to behave. Following Lauritzen’s linking of specifically metaphysical beliefs with our own self-understandings which lead to specific emotions, we could say--like Wesley—that if we truly believe that all humans are created in the image of God and all are sinful but absolutely loved, we should be motivated to love one another as God has loved us, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Freud and Marx showed that history - both personal and societal - can distort what we call "reason." Wittgenstein went beyond these insights and showed that in fact "reason" *required* history, i.e., a pre-existing community of shared language and practice. Wittgenstein's insights into reason can be found *mutatis mutandis* in Wesley's insights into the religious affections. The affections require society, community, and reason for both their formation and their expression. The church conveys the story of God's action and provides the liturgical means for forming the affections which the story engenders. And the church and the wider community are the arena for the actions to which the affections dispose the believers. The religious affections for Wesley were fundamentally relational.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 86.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 88.

That is why it made sense for Wesley to say that if one did not have the religious affections, one was not a mature Christian. If you don't love God and your neighbor, you have not really understood what it means to have your sins forgiven or to be graced with freedom—in short, you have not fully understood the Gospel. Wesley, in other words, (to quote Dixon's characterization of Edwards) "consistently reminded his flock of their obligation to be affected."⁹⁹

The contemporary church will never convincingly hear this message, though, if Nussbaum's "adversary" view of emotion is left unchallenged. How can we be expected to practice a life of the affections if our "emotions" are uncontrollable mini-agents that are not tied up with a deep sense of who we are and are split off from our intellect and our will? No wonder "heart religion" is typically misunderstood, if not shunned, even in the churches that claim Wesley as a spiritual guide!

There are a few signs surfacing that the church is struggling to rise out of the bankruptcy of our current "emotion" language, and it these sometimes include going back to ancient, biblical language.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a very real issue in most U.S. churches today because of so many troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and trying to assimilate back into their congregations. Recently, the General board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church sent out two resources to at least some of their officially endorsed chaplains. Both of these books feature prominently in their titles the word "soul." These are *Healing the Soul: A Self-guide to our Own Healing*¹⁰⁰, and *War and the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*.¹⁰¹

In these books, the terms "soul" and "spirituality" figure prominently, and "emotion" almost not at all. (The latter resource, which has a 9 page-long index, does not even have an entry for "emotion.") These are written especially for military men and women and it seems a good hypothesis that "soul" was chosen as avoiding the connotations of irrationality, passivity and being out of control that emotion has come to carry with it. While "soul" and "spirituality" have ambiguities and conceptual problems of their own, people do seem to resonate with the global, all-encompassing nature of these terms—the very all-encompassing reality that Wesley and scripture conjure when the terms "heart" and its "affections" are used.

In light of this, what the church needs is to re-vivify practices such as teaching, preaching, evangelism and spiritual direction in such a way that the very real human realities named by "heart" and "soul" can once again be re-shaped by the Gospel without apology and with the highest intellectual and theological integrity. Wesley's vision of the Christian's calling as the renewal of the heart, when properly re-interpreted, can contribute much to this joyful task.

⁹⁹ *From Passions*, 95.

¹⁰⁰ A 7 CDROM set with accompanying journal (Irmo, S.C: Virtual Life Solutions, 2006).

¹⁰¹ (Wheaton: Quest Books, 2005).