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God, Emotion and Impassibility

Volume two of two

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Chapter Four: Emotion, Intelligence and Divine Omniscience

Introduction

The following three chapters have two aims: First, to explore how contemporary philosophy of emotion can inform our understanding of God's emotional life and, second, to indicate how the Augustinian-Thomist distinction between *passiones* and *affectiones* can mediate between two seemingly irreconcilable views in philosophy of emotion. The chapters are structured around three related questions. In this chapter I discuss the relation between emotion and the intellect. Are emotions cognitive and, therefore, potentially rational (and potentially irrational), or are they better understood as feelings that are non-cognitive and arational? Furthermore, do they (as Sarot argues) contribute to our intelligence? In chapter five I focus on the question of whether and how emotions are related to the will. Can we choose to have, manipulate or alter certain emotions, or do they assail us and overtake us involuntarily? In chapter six I look at how we are to understand the relation between emotions and our bodies. Are physiological reactions intrinsic to our emotions, or are they an extraneous feature such that it would be meaningful to speak of an incorporeal being experiencing emotions? These three questions not only engage with some of the main issues in contemporary philosophy of emotion; they also recall the Augustinian and Thomist distinction between emotions that are intellective, voluntary and non-physiological (affections), and those that are non-intellective, involuntary and (according to Thomas) strongly physiological (passions). In addition, the questions of intellect, will and corporeality correspond to three perennial and related problems for the impassibility debate: If emotions are (as they are often thought to be) irrational, involuntary and physiological, how can a perfectly intelligent, omnipotent and incorporeal God experience them? Thus our findings in these chapters tie together the three primary aspects of the thesis:

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Contemporary philosophy of emotion, Augustinian and Thomist philosophy of emotion, and the modern impassibility debate.

Emotion and intelligence in contemporary philosophy

One question that occupies contemporary philosophy of emotion is whether emotions are non-cognitive feelings, sensations or physiological reactions, or whether they are cognitive and/or evaluative beliefs and judgements. It is worth mapping the debate briefly before we go on to discuss the ways in which emotions are, and the ways in which they are not, mental states and activities. The non-cognitive or 'feelings' view emphasises the idea that emotions are 'introspective experiences characterized by a quality and intensity of sensation',[289] and tends towards a strongly physiological view of emotion. The cognitive view, which includes, but is by no means exhausted by, 'propositional attitude' theories, is primarily a reaction against the 'feelings' or non-cognitive view, and stresses the role of cognition and belief in emotion. Social constructionist views of emotion often complement cognitive theories, for they suggest that emotions can be formed and prescribed by a culture, and show how people can assume that their emotional responses are involuntary and 'natural' while in fact, like beliefs, they can be subconsciously produced in conformity to social norms. The opposing, 'naturalist', view that emotional responses are culturally universal[290] often lends itself to the non-cognitive view of emotion, for it suggests that emotions are impulsive feelings common to all humans, and thus distances emotions from culturally specific and culturally influenced judgements and beliefs. However, the social constructionist view does not entail and is not entailed by the cognitive view; nor is

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[289] Paul E. Griffiths, *Emotions*, p. 2

[290] C. Armon-Jones, 'The Social Function of Emotion', in R. Harré (ed.), *The Social Construction of the Emotions* (London: Oxford University Press, 1986), cited Griffiths, *Emotions*, p. 8

there any logical connection between the 'naturalist' account and non-cognitive views of emotion.

The question of the extent to which emotions are cognitive is crucial in contemporary philosophy of emotion; as Griffiths remarks, 'The opposition between propositional attitude theories and the feeling theory, and the derivative debates on the rationality and moral status of emotions, have dominated the philosophical literature.'[291] The non-cognitive view of emotions has something in common with Plato's view that passions are in conflict with reason,[292] while cognitive views of emotion have as their precedent Aristotle's view that cathartic emotions (such as pity and fear) have a cognitive as well as an affective aspect,[293] and that anger can be overcome by the re-presentation of the intentional object in a new light.[294] While the cognitive view of emotion was, until recently, a minority view, it has become the predominant view in the recent resurgence of literature – and particularly philosophical literature - on emotion. Representatives of the cognitive school of thought in contemporary philosophy include Martha Nussbaum,[295] who argues that emotions are judgements or evaluative beliefs, and Solomon, who began to argue for the cognitive view of the emotion nearly thirty years ago, when the idea was critically received, but who has continued to argue for (and refine) the idea that cognitive judgements are essential to emotion. [296] The cognitive view is also championed by Ronald de Sousa,[297] who argues that at least some emotions can be assessed for objectivity and thus rationality, Jerome Neu, who argues

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[291] Griffiths, *Emotions* p. 3 *sic*
[292] Oliver Davies, *A Theology of Compassion: Metaphysics of Difference and the Renewal of Tradition* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001), p. 234
[293] Oliver Davies, *Theology of Compassion*, p. 234
[294] *cf.* Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p 233
[295] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 2001, esp. p 35 – 6
[296] Robert C. Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*; also *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co.), 1993
[297] Ronald de Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotion* (London: MIT Press, 1987)

that emotions *are* thoughts[298], and Antonio Damasio,[299] who suggests that emotions are essentially neurological (and thus cognitive) with extraneous (physiological) feelings.

Examples of the non-cognitive view of emotions are characteristic of less recent philosophy of emotion; for instance, William James, who argues that emotions are essentially physiological,[300] and, later, Gilbert Ryle, who supports a feelings view of emotions.[301] However, the non-cognitive view has received support from more recent philosophers. For example, William Lyons argues that physiological changes are essential to emotion,[302] Jesse Prinz aims to resurrect the Jamesian view of emotions as physical feelings incited by primitive physiological responses,[303] and Jenefer Robinson challenges the cognitive view, suggesting instead that emotions are primitive physiological reactions.[304] Other proponents of the feelings view include Daniel R. DeNicola,[305] F.J. Donceel,[306] and Paul T. Young.[307] Sarot argues that (bodily) feelings are essential to emotion and that therefore in order to assert passibilism we ought to hold that God (in some sense) has a body.[308]

Views that straddle the divide between cognitive and physiological accounts of emotion include those of Peter Goldie,[309] who reacts against the perceived tendency to over-intellectualise emotions, and draws attention to the importance of feelings, and the role of intelligibility, appropriateness and proportionality in addition to rationality in

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[298] Jerome Neu, *A Tear is an Intellectual Thing: The Meanings of Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
[299] Antonio Damasio, *Descartes Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain* (London: Picador, 1995); *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness* (London: Vintage, 2000)
[300] William James, 'What is an Emotion?', *Mind* 9 (1884) 188 - 205
[301] Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (1949, rpt. Harmondsworth 1986); 'Feelings', in *The Philosophical Quarterly* 1 (1951), 193-205; 'Sensation' in: H.D.Lewis (ed.) *Contemporary British Philosophy, Third Series* (London 1956), pp 427 – 43; rpt. In Robert J. Swartz (ed.), *Perceiving, Sensing, and Knowing* (Garden City, NY 1965), pp. 187 – 203.
[302] William Lyons, *Emotion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); *The Disappearance of Introspection* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1986); *Matters of the Mind* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001)
[303] Jesse Prinz, *Gut Reactions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)
[304] Jenefer Robinson, *Deeper than Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)
[305] Daniel R. DeNicola, 'Education of the Emotions', in *Philosophy of Education* 35 (1979), 210 – 219 (esp. pp. 211-213)
[306] F.J. Donceel, *Philosophical Anthropology* (Kansas City, 1967)
[307] Paul T. Young, 'Emotion' in Sills (ed.), *International Encyclopedia* V, pp. 35 - 41
[308] Marcel Sarot, *Passibility,* pp. 103-242
[309] Peter Goldie, *Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

emotional life. Similarly, Michael Stocker[310] utilises the concept of 'psychic feelings' to argue that affects cannot be eliminated from our understanding of emotion, while arguing that emotions also have a cognitive aspect. Justin Oakley argues for the cogency of this middle-ground position when he writes that:

> Instead of claiming that emotions are either exclusively bodily or psychic feelings, one may hold that emotions are bodily and/or psychic feelings. That is, the view here would be that emotions are feelings which are sometimes bodily, sometimes psychic, and on some occasions a combination of both.[311]

Philosophy of emotion and divine impassibility

The debate in the philosophy of emotion is interesting for the impassibility debate, particularly where the impassibility debate is defined in terms of whether God has, is able to have, or cannot help but have, emotions. Modern *theological*[312] discussions of divine impassibility have for the most part adopted the rather vague and psychologically dubious view that emotions are neither cognitive nor primarily physiological but are 'psychological' feelings, a default position or assumption which they share with contemporary popular culture. Thus, for many modern theologians, the question about divine impassibility is seen to be a question about whether God is like a person who is purely intellectual but devoid of feeling and warmth and so incapable of real relationships; a God who is rich in IQ but deficient in 'EQ'.[313] But if emotions are in fact cognitive, then the impassibility question has a bearing not only on God's feelings, but also on God's intellect. Moreover, if emotions can be, in De Sousa's terms, 'objective', giving us some information about the way the world actually is, and if

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[310] Michael Stocker (with Elizabeth Hegeman), *Valuing Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

[311] Justin Oakley, *Morality and the Emotions* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 196 fn 31

[312] As distinct from primarily philosophical discussions, such as Marcel Sarot's and Richard Creel's

[313] 'Emotional (Intelligence) Quotient. The problem with the idea of EQ is not that emotions do not reveal to us things about the world, for, as I shall suggest, they can and often do; rather, the problem with EQ as a separate category is that the perceptiveness that arises from emotion is an aspect of 'normal' or cognitive intelligence, and not something distinct from it.

Nussbaum and Mark Wynn are right that emotions might actually give us insight into the way the world actually is *that we cannot get from non-emotional sources*, then the question of impassibility also becomes a question about God's intelligence, wisdom and omniscience.

The cognitive/non-cognitive question is also interesting in terms of our discussion of ancient philosophy of 'emotion' and divine impassibility in the early church, for cognitive views of emotion have something in common with Augustine's view of affects or affections, which are intellective, have significant elements of choice, and are potentially rational (and, therefore, potentially irrational). Non-cognitive views of emotion strike some chords with Augustine's view of the passions, which are involuntary and non-intellective (and thus arational), and which, in Thomas, are also defined in terms of physiology. I do not want to press the parallels too far and over-simplify either Augustinian or modern philosophy of emotion (not least because they assume very different views of what constitutes a human person), but if the concept of emotion is, at least in some contexts, too broad a category to be useful, then the cognitive/non-cognitive and *affectiones/passiones* distinctions may provide us with more discerning concepts with which to approach both the philosophy of (human) emotion, and the theological impassibility debate.

As with the distinction between *passiones* and *affectiones*, the question of whether emotions are cognitive or not is closely associated in recent philosophy of emotion with questions about whether emotions are voluntary, bodily and rational. On the whole, if emotions are seen as being cognitive, they are more likely to be seen as being voluntary to some extent (we can, to some extent, choose whether to adopt beliefs), not intrinsically bodily (except in as far as intellectual activity, for corporeal beings, requires a physical brain), and potentially rational. Accounts that stress the 'feelings' element of emotions take this to mean bodily feelings, and thus see emotions

as essentially physiological, and therefore involuntary and neither rational or irrational (therefore, arational).[314]

Are emotions intelligent?

Rather than attempt an abstract analysis of the cognitive view of emotions, in order to approach the question of whether emotions are intelligent or not I shall examine one recent example of the cognitive view, and analyse some of the criticisms that have been, and might be, levelled against it. Martha Nussbaum, who re-appropriates the Stoic contention that emotions are judgements, argues *contra* non-cognitive accounts that beliefs are a constituent part of an emotion, and thus that emotions are cognitive and intelligent in the same way that beliefs are cognitive and intelligent.[315] Given the identification of emotions with judgements, we might well ask, what makes emotions *distinct from* (other) beliefs and judgements? Why is someone's desire for their beloved an emotion, and their assent to the proposition that it is raining in Brazil not an emotion? For Nussbaum, part of the answer to this lies in the fact that emotions not only have beliefs or judgements as constituent parts (that *x* is the case), but that these judgements or beliefs are value suffused: *That* x *is pertinent to the subject's own eudaimonia.*[316] Judgements are *necessary* for the emotion, and are *sufficient* for the emotion if they have the requisite eudaimonistic evaluative content.[317] In other words, a judgement becomes an emotion when the subject perceives the significance of the object for their own personal flourishing. Emotions are judgements that concern our own values in life, our particular sets of goals, and how we imagine ourselves

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[314] This is more true of psychological accounts of emotion than philosophical ones, particularly where psychology is based on empirical studies of emotion, and philosophical accounts based on personal experiences of emotion (of both the writer and the experiences of those they draw upon.) 'Feelings' accounts of emotion are not necessarily reductive of the human person, though they frequently are.

[315] Nussbaum, *Upheavals,* p. 35 - 5

[316] Nussbaum, *Upheavals,* p. 41

[317] Nussbaum, *Upheavals,* p. 56 - 7

accomplishing our *eudaimonia*. The Stoic idea of emotions Nussbaum adopts involves the idea that 'Emotions contain an ineliminable reference to *me*, to the fact that it is *my* scheme of goals and projects... the evaluations associated with emotion are evaluations from *my* perspective, not from some impartial perspective; they contain an ineliminable reference to the self.'[318] Emotions, though not necessarily selfish or egotistical, are nevertheless localised in the sense of relevant to oneself, one's own goals and values;[319] and it seems to be this localisation and value-laden quality that distinguishes them from other forms of judgement. Thus the desire for the beloved is an emotion not only because the lover believes that the beloved is beautiful, amusing and sensitive (surely they might also believe all these things without experiencing love); they also perceive (for example) that being with the beloved is necessary for their happiness and flourishing, and that being without the beloved is likely to induce *ennui* or dejection.[320] The assent to the proposition that it is raining in Brazil, on the other hand, remains a non-emotional judgement unless the weather in Brazil has some personal significance (for example, if one lives there, or has friends there, or has imaginatively entered into the concerns of farmers in Brazil, for whom the weather is crucial).

Judgements, therefore, are not an external cause of an emotion, but a constituent part of it. But we may well ask, are there other constituent parts of the emotion that are not part of the judgement, so that there is something intrinsic to an emotion that separates emotions from judgements? Nussbaum replies that this question ought to be put to one side, since it is impossible to distinguish between some things that occur contemporaneously with an emotion that are not intrinsic to it, from other aspects that

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[318] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 52

[319] As distinct from localised in the spatial sense, which, as we shall see in chapter six, is used by Sarot.

[320] Not all emotions are localised and subject-specific, or at least not all to the same extent. The emotion of *wonder*, Nussbaum observes, does not seem particularly bound up with the subject's goals, but responds rather to the pull of the object. In wonder, the subject is maximally aware of the value of the object, and only minimally aware, if at all, of the relationship between the object and the subject's own plans (*Upheavals*, p. 54). Perhaps, however, one might respond that being open to the experience of wonder requires that one have some belief in the importance of surprise and wonder to a full and valuable life.

are intrinsic to it. Since we are speaking of living sentient beings for whom having some type of bodily feeling seems to be a necessary condition of waking life, we could assert that the presence of some feeling or other is a *necessary precondition* of an emotion (since it is an aspect of waking mental life for sentient beings). However, this does not mean that we should say that these bodily feelings are part of the emotion itself: A pumping heart may well be a necessary precondition of an emotion, but that does not make it a constituent part of the emotion.[321] Thus bodily feelings might be intrinsic to emotion, but they might also just be something that accompanies emotion, or are caused by emotion.

Furthermore, we should resist the urge to restrict the cognitive dimension of emotion to being just one aspect of emotion and so introduce physiological feelings and movements to emotion because judgement, according to Nussbaum, is dynamic rather than static and, as such, can house not only reason but also the 'disorderly motions' of emotion.[322] Thus, 'The recognizing and the upheaval... belong to one and the same part of me, the part with which I make sense of the world.'[323] It is tempting to think that Nussbaum's argument risks becoming another semantic one: Ought judgement to be defined in terms of impartial and disinterested thought processes, or can judgements also include subjective, partial and value-suffused states? To go down this path, however, is to miss the point that, according to Nussbaum, the emotional is rooted not in some other, non-intellective part of the human person, but in the same cognitive part of ourselves in which are also seated non-evaluative and impartial beliefs and judgements. Emotions, then, are for Nussbaum distinctly *cognitive* states, and not founded in some non-intellective 'other' aspect of the human person.

Having defined emotion as judgement, and judgement as assent to an appearance, we are left with the question, is the emotion the act of assenting to an

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[321] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 56 - 7
[322] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 45
[323] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 45

appearance itself, or is it a state that results from the act?[324] Nussbaum argues that this issue is not particular to emotion, but that it applies to all kinds of judgement and belief. Judgements of all sorts are dynamic in that they change over time, and while they may initially be the act of acceptance of an appearance, there are continual acts of acceptance which become a part of our cognitive make-up. Thus judgements – including emotions – have a two-fold character: They are both the act of assent, and the state or states that arise from that act. There is a related question about why, if emotions are judgements, there is a diminution of the emotion while the judgement remains the same. In order to sharpen and clarify the question Nussbaum rephrases it: Is the difference between a person's calmed state in t2, and their affectively-intense state in t1 (at the outset of the initial event), a cognitive difference, or a non-cognitive difference?[325] Nussbaum argues that it is in fact a cognitive difference, and in four different respects. First (taking Nussbaum's experience of grief at the death of her mother as a case study), as the mourning progresses the grief is likely to become a background emotion rather than a situational emotion: As things change and the subject gets used to the lack of their beloved, fewer situations bring the object's death to mind. Second, the process of mourning is an experience of repeatedly encountering cognitive frustrations and reweaving one's cognitive fabric in consequence: As a result of mourning 'I no longer have the belief that I will see my mother at Thanksgiving dinner; I no longer think of the end of a busy day as a time when I can call her up and enjoy a long talk; I no longer think of a trip abroad as an occasion to buy presents from her; I no longer expect to make happy plans to celebrate her birthday.'[326] Third, there is a change of judgement: At t2 the judgement becomes 'This person *was* an important part in my life/flourishing.'[327] Fourth, it is common (though not necessary) in grief to focus on the

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[324] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 46
[325] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 80
[326] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 80
[327] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 82

object in perceptual imagination, but imagination fades in the object's absence. As a result, the emotion's content shifts: 'it is because I no longer see my mother before me that I no longer make her such an important part of my life'.[328]

On Nussbaum's account then, emotions could be defined solely by their evaluative-eudaimonistic thought content, and in this respect Nussbaum's view comes close to the propositional attitude theories of emotion. However, as Nussbaum recognises, propositional attitude theories provide a rather reductive account of emotion that do not take into account the fact that experiences of emotion tend to contain, in addition to the evaluative-eudaimonistic content, perceptions of the object that are highly concrete and rich with detail.[329] For example, grief is not just an abstract judgement that someone has gone or died with the localising element that this someone is relevant to oneself in some way, but, rather, a very rich particular: 'Even if its propositional content is, 'my wonderful mother is dead', the experience itself involves a storm of memories and concrete perceptions that swarm around that content, but add more than is present in it.'[330] As a result, emotions usually have a connection to imagination, and to the concrete picturing of events in imagination – and this differentiates emotions from other, more abstract judgements. Typically emotions have a sensory richness, though there is no way of making this a part of the definition of emotion – an emotion remains the cognitive acceptance of a certain content, usually accompanied by relevant acts of the imagination.[331] Thus Nussbaum's cognitive account of emotion allows far more scope for the rich, subjective, and experiential nature of emotions than is given by the more simplistic and potentially reductive propositional attitude theories.

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[328] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 84
[329] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 65
[330] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 65
[331] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 66

Is Nussbaum right that emotions are essentially judgements, capable of the intelligence and rationality we might attribute to other human judgements and beliefs? Robert C. Roberts criticises Nussbaum's idea of emotions as judgements as she articulates it in her earlier works, 'Love's Knowledge' and 'Therapy of Desire'. Roberts' objection to the idea of emotions as judgements focuses in large part on the idea that judgements are propositional[332] while, in his view, emotions involve appearances but often occur in the absence of a judgement, where judgement is defined as (propositional) assent to that appearance.[333] Judgements are propositional, emotions are not. Furthermore, emotions generally assert something about a situation, its character (what kind of situation it is), and its importance to the subject. However, what the emotion 'says' is not always agreed to by the subject of the emotion, and so the emotion is not the subject's judgement. Thus, 'Speaking metaphorically, we might say that the *emotion* makes a judgement (a proposal about reality); but this 'judgement' is just an appearance or *phantasia*.'[334] The subject's judgement often coincides with the emotion's 'judgement', but, equally, often it does not. This makes emotions unlike judgements, and closer to other perceptions: Usually people believe what they see and hear, but sometimes they have reasons not to. For example, in the case of the optical illusion of a straight stick in a bucket of water looking bent 'Our perception tells us that the stick in the water is bent (this is how we perceive it), but we judge otherwise, disagreeing with our eyes. Similarly, I may know that my anger is unjustified – not a correct perception of my situation. In that sort of case, it is wrong to say that my anger is *my* judgement. We might say that it 'has a mind of its own.''[335] The emotion's 'judgement' may not be identical to the subject's 'judgement', and this makes emotions more like perceptions or appearances than like judgements or assents to the appearance.

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[332] Robert C. Roberts, *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p. 85
[333] Roberts, *Emotions*, p. 89
[334] Roberts, *Emotions*, p. 89
[335] Roberts, *Emotions*, p. 89

In response to Roberts' objection it is worth noting first that Nussbaum argues that the idea of emotions as evaluative judgements and as cognitive requires a broader account of cognition than that of propositional thought or thought suitable for linguistic formulation, and opts instead for a definition of cognitive as 'concerned with receiving and processing information', and not necessarily calculation, computation, or even reflexive self-awareness.[336] By extension, in response to Roberts, we might say that judgements are not necessarily propositional: We may make judgements that are sub-conscious and pre-linguistic. This seems to be the case when, for example, I see a large heavy ball come hurtling towards me and judge that I ought to move two feet to the left in order to avoid being hit by it. I have made a judgement – that the ball is large and heavy and I am likely to get hurt if it coincides with my body, and that, since I judge that not getting hurt is important for my personal flourishing, I also judge that moving out of the way would be a prudent course of action. I have also judged where the ball is likely to fall (currently it is set to fall where I am standing), and made calculations about where I will be safe and where I can get to in time (I can get two feet to my left before the ball lands, and this ought to be sufficient for me to avoid the ball). Yet none of these judgements are propositional: At the conscious level I simply perceive the ball, feel apprehensive, and move two feet to my left, before I have registered any of these things consciously, let alone articulated them linguistically (either 'in my head' or out loud), though I may make some expressive but non-propositional noise. Thus Roberts' objection to the idea of emotions as judgements is not conclusive, for it presupposes that judgements are propositional, whereas, I suggest, in fact they may not be. This of course makes the idea of emotions as judgements far closer to Roberts' idea of emotions as perceptions or appearances, for we may have judgements without *propositionally* assenting to an appearance.

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[336] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 23

The other aspect of Roberts' objection to Nussbaum that we discussed above is that people often find that, figuratively speaking, their own judgement conflicts with their emotion's 'judgement'. This seems to be particularly the case with fear. Someone who is scared of flying may still feel terrified in a flight simulator, despite the fact that they know that they are not really at a great height and are not at risk of falling or crashing, and someone who is scared of snakes may still run away when they see a grass snake, despite their knowledge that the grass snake is not venomous and is in fact shy and retiring. To give some other examples, someone may still feel guilty for drinking alcohol despite the fact that they rejected their parentally-inculcated belief that alcohol consumption is sinful some years ago; someone may feel anger for the broken arm inflicted upon them by a child's careless play, despite their judgement that the child is too young to be morally culpable, and someone may feel humiliation or embarrassment when they fall over in the snow despite the fact that they judge that the incident would not lessen others' regard for them. Thus, Roberts argues, emotions cannot really be judgements, because our judgements often conflict with our emotions.

Roberts' objection to the judgement theory of emotion is not conclusive because, I suggest, he presupposes that rational people cannot and do not hold contradictory beliefs and judgements simultaneously, and this presupposition does not accurately reflect the complexity of the human mind and the many beliefs and judgements that occur at different levels of the human mind. Thus, while part of the person who is scared of flying judges that he is in a flight simulator and not at a great height, the optical illusion of flying is enough to make another part of him believe at every moment that he is in fact flying, that he is at risk of crashing or falling from a great height. (He may, perhaps, be less frightened than he would in an actual 'plane, since one belief may modify the other.) In the case of the person who has embraced alcohol consumption despite the prohibitions of his puritanical parents, we may suppose

that while at the conscious level he has justified his alcohol consumption in the light of, say, its biblical precedence and monastic associations, or the positive health benefits suggested by modern science, or an atheistic rejection of the irrational moral norms based on religion, at a less conscious level he still assents to the judgement that has been inculcated into him that alcohol consumption is sinful, or that the consequences of drinking it are ruinous.

That normally rational people can hold conflicting beliefs and judgements is shown by the death scene of Lord Marchmain in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, in which the lapsed Catholic Lord Marchmain receives absolution before he dies, and the recalcitrantly a-religious Charles, who narrates the event, prays before Marchmain's death-bed. At the beginning of the scene Marchmain's mistress tries to persuade Marchmain to see the priest, while Julia remains indecisive and Charles obtains the support of the doctor to oppose the priest's visit. But then:

> Julia, who had been standing still and silent, suddenly moved.
> 'Thank you for your advice, doctor,' she said. 'I take full responsibility for whatever happens. Father Mackay, will you please come and see my father now,' and without looking at me, led him to the door.
> We all followed. Lord Marchmain was lying as I had seen him that morning, but his eyes were now shut; his hands lay, palms upwards, above the bed-clothes; the nurse had her fingers on the pulse of one of them. 'Come in,' she said brightly, 'you won't disturb him now.'
> 'D'you mean...?'
> 'No, no, but he's past noticing anything.'
> She held the oxygen apparatus to his face and the hiss of escaping gas was the only sound at the bedside.
> The priest bent over Lord Marchmain and blessed him. Julia and Cara knelt at the foot of the bed. The doctor, the nurse, and I stood beside them.
> 'Now,' said the priest, 'I know you are sorry for all the sins of your life, aren't you? Make a sign, if you can. You're sorry, aren't you? But there was no sign. 'Try and remember your sins, tell God you are sorry. I am going to give you absolution. While I am giving it, tell God you are sorry you offended him.' He began to speak in Latin. I recognized the words *'ego te absolvo in nomine Patris...* ' and saw the priest make the sign of the cross. Then I knelt, too, and prayed: 'O God, if there is a God, forgive him his sins, if there is such a thing as sin,' and the man on the bed opened his eyes and gave a sigh, the sort of sigh I had imagined people made at the moment of death, but his eyes moved so that we knew there was still life in him.
> I suddenly felt the longing for a sign, if only of courtesy, if only for the sake of the woman I loved, who knelt in front of me, praying, I knew, for a sign. It seemed so small a thing that was asked, the bare acknowledgement of a present, a nod in the crowd. I prayed more simply; 'God forgive him his sins' and 'Please God, make him accept your forgiveness.'
> So small a thing to ask.
> The priest took the little silver box from his pocket and spoke again in Latin, touching the dying man with an oil wad; he finished what he had to do, put the box away and gave the final blessing. Suddenly Lord Marchmain moved his hand to his forehead; I thought he had felt the touch of the

> chrism and was wiping it away. 'O God,' I prayed, 'don't let him do that.' But there was no need for fear; the hand moved slowly down his breast, then to his shoulder, and Lord Marchmain made the sign of the cross. Then I knew that the sign I had asked for was not a little thing, not a passing nod of recognition, and a phrase came back to me from my childhood of the veil of the temple being rent from top to bottom.[337]

Notably, while this might appear to be a scene in which Charles converts from agnosticism to Catholic Christianity, after this scene Charles continues to be a-religious for several years. It is not the case that Charles moves from one belief to another in this scene – that is, from the belief that God does not exist to the belief that God does exist. Rather, Charles continues to believe what he has always believed, but his belief that God does not exist, which up until that time had been at the forefront, diminishes in a time of family crisis, and his belief that God does exist, which has only ever been submerged and sub-conscious during his adult life, comes to the fore and becomes the belief that motivates his actions (in this case, his decision to pray), helped by his Christian upbringing and, in particular, his latent familiarity with the rending of the veil of the Temple. This suggests that there can be contradictory beliefs and judgements within a person, implying that some beliefs and judgements might be held at the conscious, propositional level, while others become submerged and only re-emerge during a point at which they become relevant.

Furthermore, it is notable that Charles' decision to kneel and pray is not based in a perception or construal that God exists to which his judgement does not assent: There is no new thing that gives Charles the impression that God exists after all, and no sense that this conflicts with his initial judgement or belief about God's lack of existence. Rather, there is a submerging of a formerly prominent belief (that God does not exist) and a re-emerging of a formerly latent belief or judgement (that God exists, that there is such a thing as sin, that sin can be forgiven). In this case at least, therefore, emotion is closer to belief or judgement than to perception or appearance. Finally, holding two

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[337] Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited: the Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 383 - 5

beliefs (emotional or otherwise) at once may make Charles irrational, but there is no reason to suppose that it makes Charles *abnormally* irrational. Regardless of religious affliation, excepting the pugnacious, the reader does not come away from the narrative thinking, 'Charles is clearly not a rational person, for if he were, he would not be able to hold both that God does not exist, and that God does exist, at the same time'. Rather, the reader recognises that Charles' experience of realising that at some level they believe something they did not know they believed is an accurate reflection of human life. Thus, I suggest, Nussbaum's description of emotions as a type of judgement is not made less plausible by Roberts' criticisms.

Ought we then to conclude that Nussbaum's account of emotions is accurate? Is it true to our experience of emotion? I suggest that the answer to this is both 'yes' and 'no'. Yes, in that many emotions, including the example of grief that Nussbaum relates, are, at root, evaluative beliefs, and capable of the same kind of intelligence, rationality (and irrationality) that are found in other beliefs and judgements. But, I suggest, this will not do as an account of all the phenomena we call emotions, for there are also emotional experiences that are far more physiological and non-cognitive in nature. For example, the lust-infused love an hormonal adolescent boy might have for a woman he hardly knows and whose particular qualities (of character, appearance, or abilities) he does not in fact think attractive; or the anger and jealousy a naturally jealous and insecure man might feel when seeing his wife talk innocently to another man; or the drug-induced state of happiness and relaxation despite the awful circumstances of the subject's life, might all be regarded as exceptions to Nussbaum's understanding of emotions as judgements.

The conclusion that some emotions are intelligent and/or cognitive while others are far more visceral and non-intellective is interesting with respect to the passions and affections distinction and, in the context of contemporary philosophy of emotion, also suggests that accounts of what emotions are may be polarised because they are actually

describing and analysing very different phenomena. As Roberts notes, philosophers who claim that all emotions are cognitive or that all emotions are non-cognitive tend to provide a partial account by looking at only some emotions, against which counter-examples might be cited:

> ...[o]ne kind of theorist fixes on cases of emotion that have highly definite conceptual content, that respond flexibly to changes of information and reasoning, and that are highly integrated into the individual's conscious purposes and explicit worldview. Another kind of theorist fixes on cases of emotion that respond poorly or not at all to information and reasoning, have a strong component of bodily arousal, and have close analogues in beasts and babies. Both theorists then ignore the 'opposite' kinds of cases as long as they can, or they authorize their theories by finding clever ways to explain away the counterexamples or assimilate them to their own paradigm, or they just deny that those are 'really' emotions.[338]

Amēlie Rorty goes further in her article, 'Aristotle on the Metaphysical Status of *Pathé*'[339], arguing that the current conceptual analysis of emotions are 'puzzlingly pulled in what appear to be opposing directions,'[340] and that these 'persistent and unresolvable contemporary polemical debates carry an air of a chimaerial construction.'[341] Griffiths attempts to resolve the polarisation of accounts of emotion by distinguishing between non-cognitive phenomena (such as Paul Ekman's 'affect programs': Short-term, reflex-like, culturally-insensitive responses[342]), and 'higher cognitive emotions', which potentially involve a greater degree of choice and rationality. In fact, Griffiths goes even further, arguing that what we know about the experiences we call emotion suggests that 'there is no rich collection of generalizations about this range of phenomena that distinguishes them from other psychological phenomena.... The proper response to current knowledge is that there is no object of scientific knowledge which corresponds to 'emotion''.[343] I suggest that this conclusion

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[338] Roberts, *Emotions*, p. 7
[339] Amēlie Rorty, 'Aristotle', pp. 521 - 546
[340] 'Aristotle', p. 521
[341] 'Aristotle', p. 545
[342] Paul Ekman, 'An Argument for Basic Emotions', in *Cognition and Emotion* v.6, 168 – 678, 1992; *Nature of Emotion: Fundamental Questions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)
[343] Griffiths, *Emotions*, p. 14, 16

is too extreme, for there are sufficient family resemblances between cognitive and non-cognitive emotions to bind them together and, in addition, it is the case that all emotional experiences are on a spectrum of cognitive involvement rather than that all emotions fall clearly and neatly into the cognitive ('higher cognitive') or non-cognitive ('affect-program') categories. However, where Griffiths seems to me to be correct is that while we might conclude that Nussbaum is right to define some emotions in terms of judgement and cognition, other emotions are more properly described in terms of non-cognitive physiological feelings. These latter will emerge as the subject of chapter six. The concern of the remainder of this chapter will be with the emotional experiences we would regard as (to a greater or lesser degree) cognitive and potentially intelligent, and which we may associate with the affections of Augustine and Thomas discussed in chapter three.

What does it mean to say that emotions are intelligent?

One helpful approach to an understanding of the ways in which emotions can be intelligent is through a consideration of whether emotions are, in De Sousa's terms, 'objective' or 'subjective'. In the *Euthyphro* (as De Sousa interprets it), Plato asks whether we love something because it is lovable, or whether we call it lovable because we love it. The former is defined as the 'objective' answer, because it implies that the emotion apprehends something in the world that exists independently of our reaction to it. The latter is defined as the subjective answer, which implies that the properties that appear to evoke our emotions are in fact projections or shadows cast by the emotions themselves. The former view of emotions could be considered as ascribing intelligence to emotions, because it asserts that emotions are either based on, or even have as a component, a perception (accurate or erroneous) of a value in the world, while the latter

(the 'subjective') view of emotions could be seen as implying that emotions are not intelligent, because they neither reflect, nor provide us with, any information about the way the world actually is. De Sousa thinks that, while some emotions are subjective (such as moods, because they don't have a specific object), some others are objective. Notably, objective emotions don't necessarily impart or reflect information about the real world since, like beliefs, they might be mistaken. Thus, for example, Elizabeth Bennet is open to the possibility of falling in love with Mr. Wickham because she believes he is noble, forgiving and honest, whereas in fact he is dishonest, opportunistic and selfish. The important point here is that an emotion with an objective but mistaken basis is not the same as a subjective emotion: The former involves a misreading of evidence about the way the world actually is or the presentation of partial or faulty evidence, while the latter makes no attempt to read the way the world actually is at all.

I think that the question of whether emotions are objective and thus intelligent needs to be split into two further questions. First, can emotions be based on things in the world, such that the emotion is extraneous to the initial belief or perception? Second, might intelligence be intrinsic to emotions, so that emotions actually help us to perceive some value in the world? The answer to the first question seems, quite clearly, to be 'yes'. We may love someone because they embody some qualities we regard as good (whether these are qualities of intelligence, kindness, good looks, or whatever), and we might become happy when we believe that they reciprocate our feelings, or sad or jealous when provided with some indication that they don't like us, or prefer someone else. Similarly, we can become angry because we perceive that someone really has wronged us in some respect, or fearful because we observe some threat to us. Thus, emotions can be intelligent and 'objective' in that they can be based on beliefs and perceptions about the way the world really is.

The second question, about whether emotions might actually enable us to *perceive* something about the way the world really is, is far more difficult, yet I think that we can still provide an affirmative answer, though this will need careful definition and qualification. I think that the key point to emphasise here is not that we can know things through emotion that we cannot know without emotion but, rather, that we can know things through emotion in a way that is far more significant, deep-rooted and valuable than the way in which we might know things without emotion. Thus the epistemological value of emotion is not about the content of a belief, but is about the sort of *way* in which we can know something. I will try to explain this further, drawing on an illustration used and observations made by Gaita and developed by Wynn. Wynn cites Gaita's first-hand account of the contrasting way in which patients in a psychiatric ward were treated by both doctors and a nun, which illustrates how our moral understanding (in this case, of the value of the patients) might be rooted in our emotional response as well as in more traditionally intellective, cognitive or propositionally-held beliefs:

> The patients were judged to be incurable and they appeared to have irretrievably lost everything which gives meaning to our lives. They had no grounds for self-respect insofar as we connect that with self-esteem; or, none which could be based on qualities or achievements for which we could admire or congratulate them without condescension.... A small number of psychiatrists did, however, work devotedly to improve their conditions. They spoke, against all appearances, of the inalienable *dignity* of even those patients. I admired them enormously... One day a nun came to the ward. In her middle years, only her vivacity made an impression on me until she talked to the patients. Then everything in her demeanour towards them – the way she spoke towards them, her facial expressions, the inflexions of her body – contrasted with and showed up the behaviour of those noble psychiatrists. She showed that they were, despite their best efforts, condescending, as I too had been. She thereby revealed that even such patients were, as the psychiatrists and I had sincerely and generously professed, the equals of those who wanted to help them; but she also revealed that in our hearts we did not believe this.[344]

Gaita makes two claims here: First, that the nun's behaviour towards the patients demonstrates the equality of the patients to their carers, and, second, that despite their

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[344] R. Gaita, *A Common Humanity: Thinking about Love and Truth and Justice* (Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 2000), p. 17 – 19, cited in Wynn, *Emotional Experience,* p. 30

professing a belief in the patients' equality, the nun reveals through a contrast with her own behaviour that the doctors do not believe in the equality of the patients 'in their hearts'. These claims need careful consideration. Concerning the first, I am not sure that the nun's behaviour reveals that the patients are the equals of the nun and psychiatrist; it seems to me that no epistemological status can be given to the nun's behaviour with respect to the value of the patients, as her beliefs, regardless of the fact that they are affectively as well as intellectually held, might be mistaken. To use an analogy: I might deeply and personally be persuaded that pigs can fly, and live as though pigs can fly, launching them from the top of my roof in an attempt to help them realise their ability. However, my behaviour towards the pigs does not 'prove' that pigs can fly; similarly, the nun's behaviour towards the patients does not prove either that they are or that they are not the equals of everyone else. What the account *does* highlight, which is implicit in the second point Gaita makes, is that there is a distinction to be made between what people believe in the sense of assenting to a belief propositionally, and what they really believe 'in their hearts'. The psychiatrists assent to the belief that, despite the patients' condition, the patients are valuable people. However, the actions of the nun reveal the real attitude of the psychiatrists: By virtue of a contrast, the nun shows that the psychiatrists' belief does not penetrate their person in any way except as intellectual assent: It does not pervade their whole being, and they do not really understand or perceive the patients' value. While they assent intellectually to the idea that the patients are of equal value to themselves, the fact that this belief is not affectively toned or emotionally enriched prevents them from realising this fully. Thus, the situation of the psychiatrists is rather like that of someone who assents to the proposition that God exists, without having faith, or someone who assents to the proposition that all objects are drawn towards the earth with an equal and constant force, but for whom the proposition has no personal significance. Inverting this reading of Gaita's account, we

can also see that this account suggests that there are some instances in which emotional experience is not only based on real things in the world, but can actually enable us to know things in a way that we cannot know otherwise. The nun knows that the patients are valuable in a way that the psychiatrists do not *because* she does not just assent to this belief intellectually, but believes it in an intellective-affectively integrated way (or, in colloquial terms, she believes it both with her 'head' and with her 'heart'). The issue here is not so much that her emotional involvement means that the nun 'knows' the value of the patients while the psychiatrists do not (for they also assent to the patients' value); it is rather that the nun 'knows' the value of the patients in a *way* that the psychiatrists do not – and that this way of knowing has a greater level of understanding than that of the psychiatrists: She 'really' believes it rather than just assenting to the proposition. Perhaps the most illuminating thing about this conclusion is that it means that there is a certain way of knowing or perceiving or believing that can be experienced through emotional experience – and that cannot be experienced *in any way except through emotional experience.* Augustine's exploration of faith through the Psalms provides a dynamic illustration of the way in which objects (in this case, God and honey) can be known only through experience; here, we might understand Augustine's 'taste' as an analogy for emotionally enriched experience:

> 'I shall look out for your name, because it is delightful.' And to whom will you show its delights? Give me the palate to sense its delicacy. Praise honey as much as you like, overstate its sweetness with what words you can: a man who doesn't know what honey is doesn't know what you're saying until he tastes it. So what does the psalm say when it invites you to try it? 'Taste and see how sweet is the master.' You don't want to taste it and say 'It's delightful? How is it delightful?' If you tasted it, you would find it in your own pleasure, not just in words, no more than you would find it in sprouting leaves – you could deserve to be shriveled up by the master's curse like that fig tree. 'Taste,' he says, 'and see how sweet is the master.' Taste and see: you'll see, if you taste. But how will you prove it to a man who doesn't taste it? By praising the delightfulness of the name of god. Whatever you say, it's just words: taste is something else. The impious hear the words of his praise, but they don't taste how sweet he is – only the blessed do that.
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> So this author senses the sweetness of the name of God and wants to explain it and wants to demonstrate it, and he can't find who to do it for. For the blessed don't need to be shown, for they taste for themselves and they know. But the impious can't sense what they won't taste. So what does he do about the delightfulness of the name of god? He took himself away from the crowds of the impious: I will look out for, he says, your name, because it is delightful in the sight

> of your holy ones. Delightful is your name, but not in the sight of the impious: I know how sweet it is, but only to those who taste it.[345]

Similarly, we might understand the value of a person we love in a more 'real' way than the way in which someone who does not love that person might agree to the proposition that they are valuable. Compassion, as an aspect of love, can also reveal to us the object's value: As Nussbaum observes, 'compassion itself is the eye through which people see the good and ill of others, and its full meaning. Without it, the abstract sight of the calculating intellect is blind.'[346] Love and compassion may also help us to understand others and, in particular, enable us to understand (through both empathy and by analogy) the emotions of others.[347] Again, in the case of anger we might appreciate or understand the wrongness of a person's action because we feel anger in a way that someone who agrees that their action is wrong, but who is not emotionally involved, may not be able to appreciate or understand. As Roberts argues, 'emotions are a kind of eye for value and the import of situations, a mode of spiritual perception which may be deep and wise, or shallow and foolish'.[348] Speaking of love, Brümmer points out that love is a kind of knowledge about the beloved that we cannot have without love. In fact, 'Love is not the *source* of this kind of knowledge, it *is* this kind of knowledge. To know someone in this sense *is* to have fellowship with or to love that person. The antithesis of this kind of knowledge is not ignorance but estrangement. Thus the stranger who says 'I don't know anyone around here' is not ignorant but isolated.'[349]

The idea that emotions reveal values raises the question of whether we should trust emotions as vehicles of truth, or whether they are deceptive about reality. Clearly there are times at which emotions can deceive us about the real world. Someone's

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[345] Augustine, *En Ps* 51:18, translated by and cited in James O'Donnell, *Augustine: A New Biography* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), p. 131 – 132)
[346] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 392
[347] Stocker (with Hegeman), *Valuing Emotions*, pp. 188, 192, 201 - 3
[348] Robert C. Roberts, *Emotions*, p. 2
[349] Vincent Brümmer, *The Model of Love: A Study in Philosophical Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 180

jealousy of the wife of the man they love may prevent them from seeing that the wife is a kind, honest human being, and someone's insecurity about themselves may prevent them from perceiving the attractive qualities that others perceive in them. Sartre writes of the illogical arguments of the anti-Semites who say things like 'You see, there must be *something* about the Jews; they upset me physically'. Sartre continues that 'This argument, which I have heard a hundred times, is worth examining. First of all, it derives from the logic of passion. For, really, now, can we imagine anyone's saying seriously: 'There must be something about tomatoes, for I have a horror of eating them''?'[350] Sartre's point is clearly correct, since we cannot simply deduce from our emotional reactions that certain things or people are good or evil. But are there some circumstances in which emotions might be revelatory of the world? One might, for example, conceive of a case in which an affective reaction of fear to a large hairy sabre-toothed sharp-clawed beast reflected accurately the savagery of the beast in question, even prior to the intellective perception that the beast was both present and a threat.[351] As I have already suggested, it can also be true of religiously-pertinent emotions such as love (and emotions related to love, such as compassion and anger) that it is not the case in every instance that 'love is blind'; rather, love can allow us to see in an object some real value in a way that it is not possible to see unless we love. It is this revelatory nature of emotions that is of primary interest for our current purposes, because if emotions are revelatory then it is possible that passibility – and particularly the capacity to or susceptibility for love - is a significant aspect of our – and, potentially, God's – understanding, wisdom and intelligence. However, we must ask, how can we know when emotions such as love are revelatory, and how can we discern when they are actually deceptive or misleading?

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[350] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (New York: Schoken Books, 1976), p. 10

[351] *cf.* Joseph LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996)

Wynn suggests two criteria for the epistemological reliability of emotion. First, there should be no difficulty with the [emotional] experience itself or its context; in Nussbaum's terms, with its context, history, and relationship to other feelings and actions.[352] For the emotion to be epistemologically reliable it must be part of the narrative structure of the subject's life. To develop this further, the emotion must be consistent with the person's life and character as a whole, and not an incongruous or 'out of character' phenomenon that suggests that the subject is emotionally unstable and that something different is actually going on 'beneath the surface'. If something different is going on beneath the surface then, in a sense, the 'evidence' has been tampered with or made faulty: The values the subject *appears* to reveal about the world are not the values that would actually be revealed if the observer had all the facts, and we would need to know what was going on at the deeper level of the subject in order to ascertain what sorts of values their emotions really conveyed. In the example of the nun, Wynn argues that in Gaita's account of the event the nun satisfies this criterion: 'Her experience is not merely isolated, but integrated with her epistemic commitments in other respects: since this kind of sensitivity is grounded in her character, the experience fits with experiences she has had at other times, and it is consistent with her use of the language of divine parental love in her prayers.'[353]

The second criterion for judging the epistemological reliability of an emotional or affectively toned experience concerns how one evaluates the emotional experience epistemologically when that which it reveals conflicts with the information disclosed by other sources or media which have as much or more claim to reliability. What happens when the value of an object as suggested by my emotional response conflicts with the value of an object suggested by phenomena such as empirical evidence? In the case of Gaita's account, Wynn appeals to the fact that, apart from the example of people like

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[352] Wynn, *Emotional Experience*, p 74; Nussbaum, *Love's Knowledge*, p. 269 – 70. See also Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 174 - 176

[353] Wynn, *Emotional Experience*, p. 75

the nun who perceive the (real or imaginary) value of each person, we have no independent source for ascertaining the value of persons, or the quality of 'humanity'.[354] In other words, the emotional experience ought to be believed because we have no other basis for evaluation. In general terms, I think it would be difficult to make any hard-and-fast rules about whether emotionally enriched beliefs ought or ought not to take priority over non-affective beliefs, such that it is probably necessary to judge each case separately; but I do think that there are situations in which affectively toned beliefs might justifiably be given priority over non-affectively toned beliefs. For example, my affectively toned belief that my friend would not commit murder (built upon years of acquaintance with my friend and a knowledge of his history to date), might have a greater epistemological value, despite my friend's presence at the scene of the crime, than a law court would be able to take into account.

This discussion suggests that there are at least some emotions, or rather, some instantiations of emotion, that are intelligent, in the sense that they are potentially revelatory of value and of things about the world. This does not, of course, mean that all emotions (or all instantiations of emotion) have epistemological value or are intelligent. What it does tell us is that some instantiations of emotion are not only epistemologically rooted in truths about the world, but that they also reveal truths about the world such that we could not know these things in the same way if we did not have emotions. This may be crucial for the debate about divine impassibility, for if there is a certain type of knowledge that is only accessible through emotionally enriched experience, then it means that, like us, there is a certain type of knowledge God can only have if he experiences the world emotionally.

In addition, we might note that the sorts of knowledge that are revealed by emotional experience are particularly pertinent to God's wisdom and intelligence, since

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[354] Wynn, *Emotional Experience*, p. 75

a real appreciation of the full value of the object of one's love, for example, is more important to wisdom and intelligence than the purely propositional knowledge often conjured up by the term 'omniscience'. To use an analogy, a human being who knows very few facts about physics, or geography, or literature, but who is able both to discern his own emotions and recognise, through emotion, the value of others, may be more intelligent and wise than a human who knows a lots of facts but is emotionally backward or deficient or who cannot perceive the value of others. In this respect, a consideration of the epistemological value of emotion may also lead us to a more nuanced appreciation of the divine intelligence than 'omniscience' (when interpreted to mean primarily knowledge of propositions or facts) suggests.

So, what kinds of emotional experience are intelligent and revelatory of value? And are there kinds of emotional experience we might not want to attribute to God? I do not think that we can attribute revelatory value to some emotion types[355] and not others – for instance, we would not want to say that love is always revelatory and anger always deceptive, for there are surely instances in which love is 'blind', and instances in which the response of anger reveals a real wrong or offence to the injured party. Rather, I suggest, there are some instances in which most emotions are intelligent and potentially revelatory, and other instances in which we may well distrust emotion and suspect it to be misleading. For the purposes of theology, we might want to speculate that God would have emotional experiences that are intelligent and revelatory of value, rather than ones that would be misleading or deceptive. What follows, therefore, is a discussion of several emotions, in which we shall consider whether and to what extent and in what ways these specific emotion types might be revelatory, and in what ways they might be deceptive. In this way, I hope we might come closer to an understanding

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[355] Roberts makes a useful distinction between what he terms 'emotion category concepts' – things that have roughly the same generality as 'emotion', such as *pathos*, sentiment, *passio*, affect, passion, etc. – and 'emotion type concepts' – concepts of subclasses within categories of emotion, such as anger, dismay, sorrow and so on (Roberts, *Emotions*, p. 13)

of the sorts of emotional experiences we might want to attribute to God, and the kinds of emotional experiences we might wish to exclude from the divine life.

The three emotion types I shall examine are compassion, jealousy and anger; I choose these three emotions for two reasons. First, all three have been attributed to God, both in the Bible and in (some) later Christian thought. Second, all three can be taken as being (at least potentially) rooted in love, which is, in Christian theology, considered the first-order divine emotion or attitude (that is, the emotion or attitude upon which all other divine emotions/attitudes depend).[356] The questions we shall be asking are, in what respects are these emotions intelligent and revelatory of value? Concomitantly, is it appropriate to attribute these emotions to God? Conversely, in what way might these emotions be deceptive or misleading of value? If they can be deceptive or misleading, would we want to qualify our attribution of them to God, and in what way?

Compassion

It is important to begin by sorting out precisely what we mean we talk about compassion, or at least when we talk about compassion in this context. Compassion is, at root, 'suffering with' or 'feeling with'[357] someone. Compassion is thus not pity (since suffering *with* someone is different to feeling sorry *for* them); nor is it benevolence, which is a good will towards someone without (necessarily) suffering with them. The novelist Milan Kundera notes the distinction between feeling with and pitying someone, arguing that in languages derived from Latin compassion often has overtones of pity and thus condescension, and that we ought to be wary of seeing this kind of compassion as rooted in love:

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[356] see Brümmer, *Model of Love*, who comments on 1 John 4.7 – 9, 16 that '...in the Christian faith, love is not merely an aspect of God's relation to us humans and to the world in which we live, but rather the very key to understanding what this relation is all about' (p. 3)

[357] While *passio* came to have the specific implication of suffering, in the ancient world it could also mean 'feeling' more generally

> In languages that derive from Latin, 'compassion' means: we cannot look on coolly as others suffer; or, we sympathize with those who suffer. Another word with approximately the same meaning, 'pity',... connotes a certain condescension towards the sufferer. 'To take pity on a woman' means that we are better off than she, that we stoop to her level, lower ourselves.
> That is why the word 'compassion' generally inspires suspicion; it designates what is considered an inferior, second-rate sentiment that has little to do with love. To love someone out of compassion means not really to love.[358]

Whether we concur with Kundera's etymological and linguistic claim is not important for our purposes. What is important is that it is precisely the kind of emotional experience that is labelled 'compassion' in the English translation of Kundera's work, and which compassion undoubtedly often connotes, that we would want to exclude from the divine life, since this sort of experience has everything to do with condescension and, as Kundera observes, nothing to do with love. Should we therefore exclude the emotion of compassion from the divine life on moral grounds, because it does not spring from love, before we even begin to consider whether compassion might be appropriate to God on the basis of its revelatory or epistemological value? Or might there be another kind of compassion that carries the same idea of feeling with someone, without the implications of pity and condescension?

Kundera observes that there is a group of words (though there seems to be no equivalent for them in English) that connotes the idea of 'feeling with', but which is to do with imaginative empathy, and is devoid of pity and condescension:

> In languages that form the word 'compassion' not from the root 'suffering' but from the root 'feeling', the word is used in approximately the same way, but to contend that it designates a bad or inferior sentiment is difficult. The secret strength of its etymology floods the word with another light and gives it a broader meaning: to have compassion (co-feeling) means not only to be able to live with other's misfortune but also to feel with him any emotion – joy, anxiety, happiness, pain. This kind of compassion (in the sense of soucit, współczucie, Mitgefühl, medkänsla) therefore signifies the maximal capacity of affective imagination, the art of emotional telepathy. In the hierarchy of sentiments, then, it is supreme.[359]

Since there is no equivalent to these words in English, I shall continue to use the words 'compassion' and 'empathy' to mean feeling with, but shall understand these emotional experiences in Kundera's non-Latinate sense; that is, as distinct from the experience of

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[358] Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 19
[359] Kundera, *Unbearable Lightness*, p. 19

condescension that we may well find in instances of sympathy ('feeling for') or non-empathetic pity. Compassion in the narrower sense of 'suffering with' (as distinct from the broader sense of feeling a range of emotions with) is of particular importance to Christian theology, since suffering has often had a central place, and yet suffering with humanity has traditionally been something that has been excluded as a possibility from God in Godself. For this reason, while encompassing the notion of empathetically sharing the emotions of other people, the focus of this discussion of the possibility of divine compassion will be on the idea of compassion as 'suffering with'.

Compassion is a particularly interesting example for our discussion of whether emotions can be intelligent and revelatory, for, as Nussbaum argues, Greco-Roman philosophical traditions, and (deriving from these) some early Christian theology, as well as some early modern philosophers such as Kant and Spinoza, have held that compassion should be discouraged because it tends to be irrational and to make us behave misanthropically rather than benevolently. This anti-compassion tradition has been matched by an equally vehement pro-compassion tradition, both within and without the Christian – and, surprisingly, Stoic - traditions. As Nussbaum remarks: 'Compassion is controversial. For about twenty-five hundred years it has found both ardent defenders, who consider it to be the bedrock of the ethical life, and equally determined opponents, who denounce it as 'irrational' and a bad guide to action'.[360]

The anti-compassion tradition holds that compassion is not intelligent, revelatory and epistemologically valuable, but deceptive, misleading and irrational. I shall now look closely at why compassion has been considered to be irrational and deceptive, for if irrationality and deceptiveness are intrinsic to compassion, it may be incompatible with divine omniscience. I shall argue that compassion can be misleading and deceptive but is not necessarily so, and go on to examine the instances and ways in

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[360] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 354

which compassion can be deceptive and misleading, and so begin to qualify the attribution of compassion to the divine life, suggesting that some instances of compassion might be experienced by God, while others would be inappropriate or superfluous. In taking this approach, I hope to come to a fuller understanding of the sorts of emotional experience that might be appropriate, and the sorts that might be inappropriate, to a wise, omnipotent and intelligent God.

One objection the anti-compassion tradition has levelled against compassionate emotional experience is that compassion does not respect the dignity of the human person; in this respect, blame, rather than pity, is a more respectful response to a person's bad fortune. Nussbaum notes that the Socratic idea that compassion is unworthy of the dignity of both giver and recipient gave rise to the Stoic belief that to treat someone with compassion is to treat them as a victim or subordinate rather than as a dignified person.[361] I think that an answer to this objection might be made by an appeal to the distinction we developed from Kundera between a condescending 'feeling for' and an empathetic 'feeling with'. Compassion might fail to appreciate the dignity of the human person if it is the sort of condescending pity that Kundera notes has nothing in common with love; but if it is the sort of compassion that allows us to share the feelings of the beloved, then there is no reason why it should not respect their dignity; indeed, it may even lead to a far greater appreciation both of their dignity and their value.

Nussbaum notes that a second, related, objection to compassion is that it assumes that contingencies are important to our happiness because it requires that we place value, and therefore root our happiness, in external goods such as material possession, health, and family and friends. In fact, the anti-compassion tradition would claim, a happiness based on finite and transient goods is bound to be precarious, and is

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[361] Nussbaum, *Upheavals,* p. 357

rather shallow and not really worth having. This is, in general, the view of the Stoics, for whom the ethical life involves cutting off (as far as possible) one's attachments to anything that might disappear, die or change. It is also the attitude we see Augustine expressing when he reprimands himself for his severe grief at the death of his friend, on the basis that he had poured out his soul on the sand 'by loving a person sure to die as if he would never die.'[362] For both the Stoics and Augustine, the answer to this problem is to create an emotional distance between oneself and transient or mortal things, and root one's happiness in something that cannot change or die, or at least in something over which one has complete control. For the Stoics, this is one's own virtue, since one's ethical behaviour is always within one's control, regardless of the worldly circumstances in which one finds oneself. For Augustine, this is love of God, for no one loses God unless he abandons him.[363]

This sort of view clearly had a lot of followers in the early Christian ascetic movement, and modern thought is not completely devoid of the idea. However, most philosophers would now agree that some degree of material security, health and, in particular, emotionally enriched relationships with other people, are all important to human flourishing, and many theologians would want to relate the experience of loving others to our salvation, and would depart from Augustine's assessment that the grief he experienced at the death of his friend was somehow repugnant or inappropriate. At any rate, it is surely naïvely romantic to believe that a person can concentrate fully on prayer, or contemplate divine mysteries, or flourish fully as a human being, when they are starving to death or dying from thirst.

Thus I would depart from the opponents of compassion who claim that the attitude or experience of compassion erroneously attaches value to 'external' objects that are not in fact valuable, simply on the grounds that (while things such as material

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[362] *Confessions,* 4.viii.13, trans. Chadwick, p. 60
[363] *Confessions,* 4.ix.14, trans. Chadwick, p. 61

security might only have a relative value and should not have too much value placed on them), external goods are important, and some, such as our love of family and friends, may be essential both to our *eudaimonia* and, in Christian terms, even to our salvation. For this reason, I suggest we should not exclude compassion from the divine nature simply on the basis of the attachment it presupposes to external objects; departing from both the Aristotelian and the Platonic traditions, I suggest that God's love for humanity means that emotional attachment to us (perhaps by choice) is a part of God's joy and happiness.

A third, and potentially more problematic, objection against compassion is that while the attitude of benevolence is rational and can be directed equally towards the whole of humanity, compassion tends to be discriminatory and imbalanced because it has as its intentional objects some people and not others.[364] In particular, its objects are often people who are close to the subject, whom the subject knows; it 'binds us to our own immediate sphere of life, to what has affected us, to what we can see before us or can easily imagine',[365] rather than having as its object those whom the subject has never met but who have equal or greater need of compassion. In addition, people often feel more compassionate to those who are *like* them in race, class, colour, sex and sexuality (precisely because compassion requires imaginative empathy, and it is easier to put oneself in the shoes of someone one has something in common with), and also towards those who are appealing or attractive in some way (it is far easier to feel compassion for a good-looking youth than for a fetid vagrant). It is possible for people to fail to feel compassion for someone for whom compassion would be appropriate, simply on the basis of class or race differences (because this might cause one to fail to make the imaginative leap necessary for compassion), or because the object is unattractive, and

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[364] One might note the reverse phenomenon as an objection to benevolence without compassion: People can be generous to charitable causes they have never met, while being unable to love those around them. Thus the objection to compassion is matched by the reverse objection to non-compassionate benevolence.
[365] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 360

one wishes to distance oneself rather than to enter into their world. Charitable benevolence, on the other hand, can be universal, for it requires only that we assert a desire to help someone; we do not need imaginatively to enter into their world (we do not even have to admit that they are people and like us). Thus compassion can be deceptive about reality because it can hide truths about the real value of people (that the vagrant is as valuable as the youth), and can also lead us to less ethical behaviour (we ignore the vagrant's requests for help because we have not imaginatively entered into his world).

This is a serious objection to compassion for, if this partiality and discrimination are intrinsic to compassion, it means that compassion is both misleading of real values rather than revelatory of them, and leads us to lesser rather than greater ethical behaviour, thus rendering compassion inappropriate to an infinitely wise and morally perfect God.

Nussbaum notes that compassion is arrived at through empathy and the judgement of similar possibilities, that these typically rely on the senses and on the imagination – and that this reliance on the imagination and the senses is what makes compassion often discriminatory and uneven.[366] Thus, the discrimination objection to compassion is not an objection to compassion *per se*, for discrimination and unevenness are not something intrinsic to compassion, but something that arises in compassion because of the subject's dependence upon imagination and the senses. Because of this, compassion can be educated so as to become balanced and universal: We can educate both our imagination and senses so that compassion is broadened to include not only those that we know, but also those we have never met, and people not only like us, but people who are different to us in race, class, sex and sexuality. Again, while we instinctively have compassion for attractive or appealing people, we can also educate

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[366] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 386

our senses and imagination so that we become compassionate to people we initially find unattractive, as in Francis of Assisi's embrace of lepers. Of course, in humans this education of the imagination and the senses is likely to be incomplete, simply because we remain rooted in a particular time and place, and because our imaginative faculties are not powerful enough to enter empathetically into the world of someone we have never met on the other side of the world in the same way that we can imaginatively share the thoughts and feelings of a close friend. Likewise, we will probably still have greater compassion or empathy for someone who is undergoing the same sorts of suffering – or analogous sorts of suffering - as we have ourselves experienced, than we would be able to have for someone whose sufferings are of an entirely different nature, simply because of the limitations of the human imagination. For an omniscient, intelligent and wise being such as God, who is limited by neither time nor space, nor by a restricted imagination, and whose senses are not limited because he 'sees' everything, on the other hand, there is no reason why compassion should be a discriminatory and unbalanced experience. It follows from Nussbaum's argument that compassion is dependent upon the imagination and the education of the senses that a being who is not limited by time or space or in imaginative capacity would be able empathetically to enter fully into the world of any creature, regardless of their particular point in time and space, and regardless of the differences between them and the compassionate subject. Thus while the discrimination objection to compassion serves as a caveat to human experiences of compassion, discrimination is not intrinsic to compassion, and it is possible to see how a divine being who is not limited would be able to experience compassion with heightened particularity and an increased sense of the uniqueness of each person and their suffering, but without discrimination.

In relation to this last point, Helen Oppenheimer argues that the kind of heightened particularity and sense of the uniqueness of each person is often a vice in

humans because such partiality leads us to neglect or hurt those we do not love, but for God, who can love everyone with heightened particularity and a sense of their uniqueness, this partiality is not a vice but an aspect of the perfection of God's love:

> What is wrong with 'taking sides' is not the good we do one side but the hurt we may do the other. For this reason, human beings dare not be as partial as God. 'Impartiality' is not a divine virtue, but a human expedient to make up for the limits of our concern on the one hand and the corruptibility of our perfections on the other. If we find ourselves neglecting, or spoiling, or abusing, we need to be more even-handed and partiality becomes a vice; but the august partiality of God is a taking hold of the special character of each creature as uniquely significant.[367]

Oppenheimer's argument suggests that God might grasp the uniqueness of each individual and experience love and compassion for them with a heightened sense of particularity or, in Oppenheimer's words, with partiality, without the discriminatory aspect of partiality that we associate with human love and compassion. Such partiality, which speaks of each individual's unique value and irreplacability in God's eyes, surely gives us a better understanding of the depth and intensity of God's love for us, than does a non-emotional attitude of benevolence.

The fourth objection Nussbaum notes is that compassion is closely connected to anger, hatred, revenge and cruelty. If no importance is attached to contingencies or external goods (possessions, health, loved ones) then no anger is felt when they are lost or damaged. In contrast, 'the person who has compassion for another acknowledges the importance of certain worldly goods and persons, which can in principle be damaged by another's agency.'[368] If the damage is to oneself, then the response to the damage is likely to be anger; if the damage is to an object of compassion then (*pace* Nussbaum[369]), the 'feeling with' may well extend to anger as well as to shared sorrow. The evaluation that external goods are important may lead one to compassion therefore; but it may also lead one to anger, resentment and cruelty in circumstances in which one, or one's

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[367] Helen Oppenheimer, *The Hope of Happiness: A Sketch for a Christian Humanism* (London: SCM, 1983), p. 131

[368] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 362

[369] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 362

beloved, is damaged or hurt. If we are benevolent but emotionally detached, on the other hand, then we can choose (with minimal pain or self-sacrifice) to show justice or mercy (or both) to wrongdoers. As Seneca argues in both *On Mercy* and *On Anger*, the best way to overcome retributive anger is to rise above the concerns and emotional attachments that undergird it. But if we insist upon valuing contingencies and cultivating compassion, then it seems inevitable that we breed anger and resentment too. Compassion and anger go hand in hand, precisely because compassion makes us take the victim seriously, and highlights the seriousness of the damage they have undergone.

Advocates of this objection to compassion rightly observe that both anger and compassion are characteristic of an emotionally engaged response that invests value in mutable things or contingencies in the world. However, I suggest, there is no *necessary* correlation between anger and compassion: It is quite possible, through an emotionally engaged response, to feel either compassion or anger, without feeling the other (even in situations in which *both* might be possible or even appropriate). Thus it would be quite possible to attribute compassion to God without attributing anger. Whether or not anger is also something we ought to attribute to God is something I will discuss in the next section; before moving onto this discussion, however, I want to make a few concluding suggestions about compassion. So far, I have responded to the objections against compassion, showing that compassion is not morally dubious and need not cause a partial view of reality – that is, be deceptive about reality. This suggests that there is no reason why God should *not* experience compassion. But that does not mean that God should experience compassion, for while compassion might not be inappropriate, it may still be superfluous. What, therefore, if any, are the reasons God should experience compassion, that relate to the potential intelligence of compassion and its possible truth-bearing qualities?

One revelatory aspect or epistemological function of compassion is that compassion is what makes us realise that things and, in particular, people, matter very deeply, and are intrinsically valuable rather than valuable for any utility they may have, or as a means to an end. Because of this, compassion makes us understand why altruism, benevolence and selfless behaviour towards others are important: Without compassion, there is simply no reason for benevolent action, for compassion is what gives value to or helps us to perceive the value of the objects of benevolence. As Nussbaum says:

> ...people do not get to altruism without proceeding through the intense particular attachments of childhood, without enlarging these gradually through guilt and gratitude, without extending their concern through the imagining that is characteristic of compassion.... The good of others means nothing to us in the abstract or antecedentally. It is when it is brought into relation with that which we already understand – with our intense love of our parents, our passionate need for comfort and security – that such things start to matter deeply. The imagination of similar possibilities that is an important mechanism in human (if not necessarily in divine) compassion does important moral work by extending the boundaries of that which we can imagine; the tradition claims that only when we can imagine the good or ill of another can we fully and reliably extend to that other our moral concerns.[370]

We understand our fellow human beings in a way that we couldn't if we simply had a duty to act benevolently towards them, and we understand our duty to act benevolently towards them only because of the compassion we feel. Compassion, then, reveals both the value of the object, and the reason for our obligation to behave benevolently towards other people. A being without compassion would have an incomplete picture of the world because they would not understand the value of other people, and because, even if they assented to the idea that they had a moral duty towards them, they would not understand the duty or its significance. Compassion, I suggest, would therefore not only be intrinsic to God's moral perfection, but would also be a necessary part of God's intellectual perfection, infinite wisdom and omniscience.

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[370] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 388

Anger

One notable feature of the theological climate of the twentieth century is that while many now regard the suffering and compassion of God as axiomatic to Christian theology, the anger or wrath of God has been propounded by only a few, mainly conservative, modern theologians in the last century,[371] and then primarily on the basis of the idea of divine wrath in the Bible. Furthermore, even where God's anger is not explicitly denied, it is often either ignored or reinterpreted. C.H. Dodd offered a seminal reinterpretation of divine anger in his 1959 commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Dodd claimed that the idea of God experiencing anger is too anthropopathic, and that while the original meaning of the 'anger of God' was the 'passion' of anger, in Paul's time it had come to refer to an impersonal process of cause and effect – God's anger is conceived merely as our experience of the consequences of sin. In Paul, then, the wrath of God does not refer to 'the attitude of God to man' but 'inevitable process of cause and effect in a moral universe'.[372] This interpretation has influenced the understanding of divine anger in both modern biblical studies and modern theology.

Yet as I have already suggested, anger is, in some ways, the flip-side of compassion: It is precisely because we invest value in contingencies that we experience both compassion and anger. Thus a Stoic might point out that to experience compassion and never anger is in practice unlikely, because both are rooted in the same evaluation of external goods. The relationship between anger and compassion is not an equal one, of course, for while compassion may lead us to experience anger (such as when we

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[371] Proponents of divine wrath in the twentieth century include John Stott (*The Cross of Christ*, 1989); P.T. Forsyth (*The Work of Christ, 1910*); Brunner *(The Mediator);* Barth (*Church Dogmatics* II/1, 1957)

[372] C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 2nd ed. (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1959), pp. 47-50. For a discussion of the influence Dodd's reinterpretation of God's anger had on both subsequent theology and biblical studies, see Tony Lane, 'The Wrath of God as an Aspect of the Love of God', in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 138-167

become angry at the person who inflicted harm at the object of our compassion), anger does not *directly* lead us to experience compassion.

Interestingly for this discussion, and in contrast to most modern theologians, many Greek and Roman philosophers considered the experience of anger and not compassion a good state of affairs: While compassion was often seen as problematic, anger, experienced in response to a slight to one's honour, is to be encouraged. Concurring with Achilles' sentiment that 'wrath is sweeter than dripping honey'[373], much of the ancient world saw anger as a positive emotion that is directed towards the future, because in anger one has the enjoyable and pleasant experience of anticipating and planning revenge upon the object of one's anger.[374] For Aristotle, for example, anger consists primarily in a desire for revenge and pleasure in anticipation of revenge, and only secondarily in distress at a slight to oneself or one's friends.[375] Having too little anger is regarded as a defect: It is thought of those who do not have enough anger that 'they do not feel *[άισθάνησθαι]* or resent *[λῦπησθαι]* an injury, and that if a man is never angry he will not stand up for himself; and it is considered servile to put up with an insult to oneself or suffer one's friends to be insulted'.[376] Thus anger, at least when appropriately channelled, is seen by a surprisingly large number of ancient philosophers as an appropriate and even enjoyable reaction to perceived harm.

Another reason why anger is advocated in the ancient world is that it is often seen as useful in accomplishing some necessary goal: Anger might motivate us in battle, or in our duty to administer punishment, whether to adult criminals or to disobedient children. Augustine, for example, advocates anger as appropriate and necessary in the prevention of public disorder. Anger may also be important in self-defence, or in

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[373] Homer, *Iliad* XVIII, trans. Robert Fitzgerald (London: Harvill Press, 1961), p. 108-9

[374] *cf.* Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 159-161

[375] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 2.2.; *cf* Sorabji, *Emotion*, p. 23. Not all the ancient philosophers, or even all ancient Aristotelians, were as keen on anger. Aspasius reverses – seemingly unconsciously - Aristotle's idea that anger is a desire with an attendant distress, thus making anger distress with an accompanying desire for revenge. He also completely ignores Aristotle's explicit warning that hate does not imply distress (*cf.* Sorabji, *Emotion*, p. 131)

[376] Aristotle, *Rhetoric* IV.5, cited in Stocker with Hegeman, *Valuing Emotions*, p. 247

motivating oneself to succeed in one's career against an adversary or competitor. Anger is often held to be a virtuous rather than a vicious thing when it is appropriately channelled or put to a good use; Gregory of Nyssa argues that when both appetite and anger are put to a good use they are not to be counted as $\pi\alpha\theta\acute{\eta}$ [377]

Ancient evaluations of anger include more critical appraisals; in particular, some are suspicious of the claim that anger is useful. Seneca argues that anger is generally counter-productive, even in the circumstances of battle and necessary punishment. What is needed instead is firmness of purpose. Following Seneca's point, one might speculate that in battle or self-defence an experience of anger may in fact lead the subject to fight ineffectually rather than to attack more strategically and with greater precision, and in the context of punishment anger may lead us to punish the offender to excess or in a way that is detrimental not only to their well-being but also to ours. This observation casts some doubt on the idea that anger is appropriate to God, for, if anger is counter-productive, then it is in at least one sense an unintelligent response to offence.

The question that emerges from the observation that anger can be counter-productive is whether anger, the way that anger is expressed and the actions it instigates, are *necessarily* counter-productive, or whether anger can be expressed in a non-destructive or even productive way. Here we might distinguish between two characteristic expressions of anger: Responses aimed at inflicting harm on the offender (such as retributive punishment, revenge and retaliation) on the one hand, and responses aimed at the long-term improvement of the offender (such as pedagogy, rehabilitation, correction and discipline) on the other. Despite the characteristically ancient belief that anger could be enjoyable because of the anticipation of revenge, and that revenge is an appropriate response to an offence to one's honour, several ancient thinkers are critical of the idea that anger should express itself in retaliation or revenge, and suggest instead

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[377] *cf.* Sorabji, *Emotion,* p. 386

a pedagogical response to offence or wrong-doing. The Epicurean Philodemus advocates a response to anger aimed at correction or pedagogy for the offender rather than retributive punishment or revenge,[378] and the Aristotelian Aspasius objects to Chryssipus' account of anger and vengeance, pointing out that Fathers can be angry with their sons without thinking that revenge would be appropriate.[379] In terms of Christian thought, Lactantius makes a similar point, observing that people who are angry with their wives, children or pupils would properly direct their anger to correcting their loved ones, rather than to exacting revenge.[380] Retributive punishment is criticised by some philosophers as being counter-productive, while pedagogy is advocated by some – including Christian – thinkers as an appropriate expression of anger that may be helpful both to the subject and to the object of the emotion. We may note in addition to this that while retributive punishment does not value the wrong-doer, pedagogical punishment is rooted in love of the offender, and involves a desire to teach, 'cure' or help the wrong-doer despite the harm they have inflicted. Thus we may say that while Seneca is right that one expression of anger – notably, retributive punishment and revenge – is indeed counter-productive, another expression of anger – pedagogical punishment or discipline - is not only *not* counter-productive; it may also lead to a process directed towards the object's improvement and *eudaimonia*, and rooted in the subject's love for them. Taking on board Seneca's objection to anger with respect to the question about divine impassibility, therefore, I suggest that Seneca's objection to anger is not conclusive for the impassibility debate, because being counter-productive is not intrinsic to anger. However, I would qualify the sort of anger we would want to predicate of God by saying that divine anger is not retributive, but pedagogical, issuing in a response that is directed towards the wrong-doer's ultimate well-being and salvation, and rooted in the divine love. Anger expressed pedagogically would not be

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[378] Philodemus, *On Anger*, ed. G. Indelli (Naples, 1988), cited Sorabji, *Emotion,* p. 138
[379] Aspasius, *In EN* 46.4 – 5, cited Sorabji, *Emotion*, p. 138
[380] Lactantius, *On God's Anger* 17, cited Sorabji, *Emotion,* p. 138

counter-productive, but may actually be productive – and thus a rational and intelligent response to a situation of harm and moral culpability.

A second objection to anger is that anger can make us irrational in that we react with anger before we see all the evidence, and our anger causes us to interpret any remaining or additional evidence partially and one-sidedly. Because this makes us irrational, anger might be considered a non-intelligent response, inappropriate to a perfectly wise and omniscient God. However, again I suggest that the property of making someone irrational is not intrinsic to anger – a perfectly rational person may be able to see all the evidence before they respond angrily, and to reason in a clear-headed way in the face of any counter-evidence, despite their feelings of anger. Thus the potential irrationality of anger does not pose a problem for assertions about God's emotional life. Once again, however, I would qualify an attribution of anger to God by saying that while humans often become less rational and clear-headed because of their experience of anger, God's anger would always be consistent with God's rationality, intelligence and wisdom. As John Stott puts it, God's anger

> Does not mean... that he is likely to fly off the handle at the most trivial provocation, still less that he loses his temper for no apparent reason at all. For there is nothing capricious or arbitrary about the holy God. Nor is he ever irascible, malicious, spiteful or vindictive. His anger is neither mysterious nor irrational. It is never unpredictable but always predictable, because it is provoked by evil and by evil alone.[381]

While Christian theology has generally been suspicious of human anger and cautious about attributing the emotion of anger to God in Godself, the Old Testament provides advice for humans on how to avoid irrational anger, and suggests that rational anger can be predicated of God. The Old Testament view on divine and human anger is worthy of consideration, not because the Old Testament provides authoritative 'evidence' that God is or is not passible with respect to anger (if only because these are not the questions the biblical writers were asking), but simply because of the useful distinction the biblical

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[381] Stott, *Cross of Christ* (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1989), p. 173

writers draw between God's anger and human anger. In terms of human anger, both the biblical narratives and exhortations in the Wisdom literature implicitly advocate being 'slow to anger' (ארך-אף)[382] on the grounds that impulsive deployment of anger makes us interpret the evidence one-sidedly and unjustly, and often has destructive consequences. In the biblical narratives, this is instanced by the framing of Joseph by Potiphar's wife, while the Wisdom literature advises us that the hot-headed person is foolish (Pr. 12:16; 14.17; 14:29; 29:11; Ecc 7:9), stirs up strife (Pr 14:30), and is vulnerable to failure and destruction in their life (Pr. 25:28). In contrast, someone who can *control* their anger is mightier than a great warrior who can capture a city (Pr. 16:32), is recognised as having knowledge (Pr. 17:27), ends contention, and is powerful because he can persuade rulers.[383] Notably, the emphasis is on the control of anger, rather than its absence, denial or elimination. Edward Baloian argues that for much of the Old Testament '...one of the greatest dangers that uncontrolled anger in a person can pose is that it overrides clear thinking (Pr. 14: 29 and 19:11). One cannot be wise in their choices if they are not based on a rational assessment of the options and a critical evaluation of the data. Decisions made in anger tend to shut off rational thinking in human beings as it propels them into a state of urgency.'[384] The antithesis of losing control because of anger is to be 'slow to anger'. In contrast to the impulsive expression of anger, 'The phrase 'slow to anger'... graphically makes the observation that it is intelligent to delay letting one's anger come to full expression. The length... of time taken to reach the state of anger displays understanding... and insight..., quiets contention..., and obtains the needed open mindedness (or favor) of a person in authority.... Patience in the *expression* of anger is clearly beneficial and is encouraged.'[385]

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[382] The main word for anger in the OT, אף, also means 'nose'. It is possible that its association with anger comes through the idea of snorting as an expression of anger.
[383] Bruce Edward Baloian, *Anger in the Old Testament* (New York: P. Lang, 1992), p. 21
[384] Baloian, *Anger*, p. 23
[385] Baloian, *Anger*, p. 20, my emphases

Divine anger is portrayed as a result of God's intense personal involvement with humans and, in particular, with Israel. God's anger, as an aspect of his passionate character as a whole, is indicative of the fact that God is not merely an abstract principle, but a fully relational person; and so God's anger is linked to the possibility of human communion and fellowship with God. While it is important to emphasise the passionate nature of God in the Old Testament, this passion is inseparable from God's rationality. This is primarily because God's motives are rational rather than capricious: God's anger is aroused either by idolatry or disregard of Godself, or else by wickedness towards other human beings and so the violation of commonly held principles of justice.[386] This is indicated by the motive clauses generally found alongside, or within the same pericope as, announcements of God's impending anger:

> The desire of the righteous is only good; but the expectation of the wicked is wrath[387]

> A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick[388]

> Now is the end come upon thee, and I will send mine anger upon thee, and will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense upon thee all abominations[389]

The rationality of divine anger is not only due to the fact that God's motives for anger are rational and just, but also because, in contrast to humans, God always has the necessary information to implement his anger immediately in a just manner. While a delay is encouraged between the passion of anger and its expression in humans, the implementation of God's judgement is immediately initiated. Baloian argues that this is because in human anger a delay is important for the gathering and assimilation of further relevant information, or for the subject to change their mind about their action,

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[386] *cf.* Baloian, *Anger*, p. 157
[387] Prov. 11:23, from the Authorised (King James) translation
[388] Is. 65:3, from the Authorised (King James) translation
[389] Ezek. 7:3, from the Authorised (King James) translation

whereas God already has all the necessary information, and does not have dispositional defects that might bias God's judgement.[390] This idea is accentuated by the legal metaphors used, which depict God's anger as present in the final implementation of the verdict, and not in the trial phase of the court scene.[391]

An additional facet of the rationality of God's anger in the Old Testament is that, in general, non-Israelites are judged only on what they know and can thus be held accountable for. Almost half of the motive clauses that speak of human wickedness or cruelty, but do not comment on idolatry or disregard for God, are addressed to nations other than Israel. There are several instances in which Edom, Assyria, Babylon and Egypt incur God's anger because of rebellion against God, but in these cases the surrounding verses make clear that the disrespect of God demonstrated by these nations against God is deliberate.[392] In the case of Egypt, a pedagogical motive is also given for God's anger: They will come to know God through the experience of God's judgement against them.[393] The majority of the cases of divine anger against Gentiles are caused by their mistreatment of other human beings. In contrast, the theme that dominates the pronouncements of God's anger against Israel is her disloyalty towards and disregard of God. While 96 announcements of divine anger towards Israel are motivated solely by idolatry or disregard of God, there are only 14 occasions in which the reason given is solely abuse or injustices towards other humans.[394] Thus God's anger tends to be presented as rational in that it is incurred by wrongs deliberately or consciously committed.

Taking the depiction of God's anger in the Old Testament as a starting point, then, I suggest that a model of divine anger need not imply that God is irrational.

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[390] Baloian, *Anger*, p. 165
[391] Baloian, *Anger*, p. 158
[392] *cf.* Baloian, *Anger*, p. 75-6
[393] Eze. 29:9, 16, 21; 30:8,19,26; 32:15
[394] Baloian, *Anger*, p. 76. There are also 70 occasions in which both disregard of God and injustice towards humans are mentioned.

Rather, if we were to qualify the divine anger by an appeal to God's rational motives, sufficient knowledge and the idea that wrongs committed in ignorance do not incur God's anger, we have a portrayal of divine anger as closely allied to reason and rationality. In addition, the Old Testament also provides us with an indication of the way in which God's anger is an aspect of his love and personal involvement with humanity, a theme I shall return to later.

A third objection to anger is that anger is closely related to hatred, and hatred is typically seen as the opposite of love, while God's relation to creation is, in Christian theology, characterised unerringly by love. Thus anger can be seen as contrary to a, or even the, primary divine attribute, and so must be rejected. Three points can be made in response to this objection. First, the emotion of anger towards one person may well be a sign of love towards another in a situation in which the first person is inflicting suffering on the beloved. Second, people generally only feel anger if they respect the object of their anger as an autonomous agent, and so anger is closely connected to the subject's recognition of human value. Third, people are likely to feel far more anger at someone they love than at someone towards whom they have no emotional attachment, so that it is entirely reasonable to conceive of a situation in which a subject may feel both love and anger towards one and the same object, without any incompatibility between the two.

Concerning the first point, it is easy to see why, in theological terms, love for humanity as a whole might mean that God is angry with individual sinners who cause suffering to the rest of humanity. As C.E.B. Cranfield notes, it is difficult to conceive of someone as good and loving if they were not to react with anger to offences that lead to human suffering: 'For indignation against wickedness is surely an essential element of human goodness in a world in which moral evil is always present. A man who knows, for example, about the injustice and cruelty of *apartheid* and is not angry at such

wickedness cannot be a thoroughly good man; for his lack of wrath means a failure to care for his fellow man, a failure to love.'[395] By analogy, *ceteris paribus*, it seems logical to conceive of a God who loves humanity and who is angry with those who inflict suffering upon it.

Concerning the second point, Aaron Ben Ze'ev notes that 'We do not become angry with inanimate objects that damage us, unless we construe these objects as agents rather than as inanimate objects. Since inanimate objects cannot treat us improperly, we cannot be angry with them.'[396] We may become angry with someone who kicks us, but we would surely recognise that we were being irrational if we became angry with a piece of furniture upon which we stubbed our toe. One might extend Ben Ze'ev's point to say that it is not just a question of whether the offender is animate or not (though this is a prerequisite), but actually a question about whether the offender is a *moral agent*. Thus young children, and people with some mental disabilities, are excused offences other people would be blamed for, on the grounds that their moral agency is diminished. Again, someone would only be angry with a dog for eating their dinner if they (correctly or erroneously) attributed some kind of moral agency to the animal. Therefore, God's anger for humanity entails a respect for human beings as moral agents, and an absence of anger in God for sinful humanity may imply a lack of respect for humans as moral beings, and a failure to recognise human intelligence and free will.

Concerning the third point that people are generally far more angry with someone they love than with someone to whom they are emotionally detached, Ben Ze'ev notes that 'The influence of the *closeness* component upon the intensity of anger seems to be straightforward: the closer the person is to us, the more we care about the person, and the angrier we are when this person hurts us.'[397] The reason that this is so is

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[395] C.E.B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 1:109, cited in Tony Lane, 'Wrath of God', in Vanhoozer (ed.), *Nothing Greater*, p. 161
[396] Aaron Ben Ze'ev, *Subtlety of Emotions* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), p. 380
[397] Ben Ze'ev, *Subtlety*, p. 398

unclear. One reason, as Aristotle puts it, is that 'we are angrier with our friends than with other people, since we feel that our friends ought to treat us well and not badly.'[398] Aristotle is undoubtedly correct about this; however, the relationship between love and anger seems to be more complex than being simply about a belief that our friends would treat us better than our enemies or those who are indifferent to us. We might add to Aristotle's observation that we are more hurt by those we love not only because we expect more of them, but also because we have invested more value in them and in their opinion and their treatment of us. The Stoics are thus correct that we make ourselves more vulnerable to the possibility of being hurt and becoming angry when we allow ourselves to love, and to invest value in other people. By analogy then, we might suggest that God's anger for human beings is not inconsistent with the divine love, but is actually rooted in God's love for and valuing of God's creation and, in particular, for human beings. This seems quite clearly to be the intuition of much of the Old Testament. Baird writes that 'Wherever in the Old Testament one finds a reference to the love of God, his wrath is always in the background, either explicitly or implicitly, and we neglect this element to the impoverishment of the Hebrew concept of love.'[399] Erlandsson claims that 'the wrath of YHWH is a personal quality, without which YHWH would cease to be fully righteous and His love would degenerate into sentimentality.'[400] The fact that the subject feels more anger for someone they love is rooted in their emotional engagement, in their investment of value in the object, and in the fact that their love gives them the ability to see the potential for something far better in the object than is evidenced by the beloved's wrong-doing or offence. Thus the wrong-doing of a beloved in and of itself may lead to hurt, disappointment and anger, while, *mutatis mutandis*, the wrong-doing of someone to whom we are emotionally detached may simply incur our emotionally detached blame, condemnation or

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[398] Aristotle, *Rhetoric* II, 2, cited Ben Ze'ev, *Subtlety*, p. 398
[399] J. Arthur Baird, *The Justice of God in the Teaching of Jesus* (London: SCM, 1963), p. 46
[400] Seth Erlandsson, 'The Wrath of YHWH', *Tyndale Bulletin* 23 (1972), p. 116

reprobation. In theological terms, the difference is between the anger of a personally involved and loving God on the one hand, and the attitude of condemnation of an emotionally detached divine judge on the other. Thus with C.S. Lewis we might contrast the 'consuming fire' of God's love, which gives rise to the divine anger, with the 'cold philanthropy of a conscientious magistrate', which can only ever be an attitude of condemnation or acquittal.[401] The attitude of condemnation and acquittal of the latter may be useful and laudable in a court room, but it is at best only an emotionally abstracted attitude, and is indicative of emotional detachment, while the 'passion'[402] of anger when the object of anger falls short of that for which God created them is an expression of personal involvement with and love for them.

So far I have noted and responded to three objections to anger, concluding that none of them make all instances of anger inappropriate to an omniscient and perfectly intelligent God. First I have examined the claim that anger makes the subject act in a counter-productive way, and have argued that this is not an essential feature of anger, though it often characterises human anger. Second, I have addressed the concern that anger makes us irrational by suggesting that anger can be wedded to rationality. Third, I have discussed the objection that anger is closely related to hate, and so is inappropriate to a being whose nature is characterised by love, and have suggested that the association between anger and hatred, and the opposition of anger and love, is mistaken. In addition, as a result of reflecting on the objections to anger, I have qualified the sort of anger we might want to attribute to God in two ways. First, I have suggested that in order for the divine anger to be productive and creative and rational it must be expressed pedagogically rather retributively; that is, action arising from it must be directed towards the object's ultimate well-being and salvation, and not towards their regression or ultimate destruction. Second, I have qualified any attribution of the divine

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[401] C.S.Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1940), p. 35

[402] 'Passion' in the sense of emotional intensity, distinct from the Augustinian view of *passiones*

anger by saying that God's anger would always be consistent with God's rationality and intelligence, and would never cause God to misinterpret evidence or give a biased judgement. In addition, I have also indicated that anger may actually signify both respect and love for the offender in a way that is lacking from the analogous but emotionally-detached response of blame or condemnation. Thus we already have a reason for preferring the predication of the emotional response of anger to God over and against the similar but potentially emotionally-detached response of condemnation/blame advocated by most of the Stoics and their Christian successors.

Having examined these objections and, using these as a springboard, reached some more constructive conclusions, I would now like to turn to the question: What other reasons might there be for attributing anger to an intelligent and wise God? That is, are there any other respects in which it is more intelligent, or rational, or wise, for God to experience anger, than for God *not* to experience anger? I shall explore this question with two ideas in mind. First, that (in addition to loving and respecting the moral agency of the offender) anger also recognises the seriousness of the offence, while not experiencing anger does not take into account the seriousness of sin and the suffering it has caused. Second, anger (and the 'giving up' or waiving of the right to anger) is implicit in the notion of divine forgiveness to which the personal involvement of the God of the Christian Gospel lends itself.

The idea that it is only through a response of anger that we recognise the seriousness of the object's offence is closely connected both to Cranfield's point that in some situations anger is entailed by our love for the victim, and also to the idea that anger towards the offender is intrinsic to a real understanding of the suffering that the victim has been caused. To respond with pity but without anger to torture, gang rape, or a systematic massacre, is to mimic at an authentic response and to have lost some element of our humaneness. This is, I suggest, the main force of Ivan Karamazov's

argument when he tells Alyosha the reason for his rebellion. Whether or not one agrees in the end with his decision to 'return his ticket', what is most persuasive about his argument is that the righteous condemnation of the philanthropic ladies of Geneva of the young man who is about to be executed, or the verdict of acquittal of the jury to the parents who had tortured their little girl, misses the point about the value of the victim and the extent of the suffering they have been caused. In contrast to these, inadequate, responses, Ivan's outrage and anger is an authentic response. In this respect, we can say that anger is intelligent in that it is revelatory of value, and indicative of our perception of value: We do not experience anger unless we perceive the value of the victim and the seriousness of the harm they have been caused, and the experience of anger enables us to realise further their value, their suffering, and to experience compassion. This doesn't mean that, with Ivan, we should say that there can be no forgiveness; rather, as I shall suggest, it means that in situations of great suffering caused by great moral culpability the emotion of anger needs to be present in order for real forgiveness to take place.[403] This suggests that there are some situations in which anger is a more intelligent response than, for example, emotionally detached condemnation, for there are some circumstances in which anger is entailed by the subject's love and evaluation of the victim, and appreciation of the suffering they have been caused. For this reason, therefore, there is at least one good reason to suppose that a wise and intelligent being would experience anger as opposed to an emotionally detached response such as blame or condemnation, and so one good reason to attribute anger to God.

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[403] On the related topic of resentment, P.F. Strawson argues that we need resentment, as resentment upholds the fact that a wrong has been committed, and suggests that without resentment our moral sense of right and wrong can be diminished. Strawson argues that reactive attitudes to offence, such as anger and resentment, are important and should be upheld, and that premature forgiveness should be avoided, since this fails to recognise the wrong that has been committed. (P.F. Strawson, *Freedom and Resentment and Other Essays* [London: Methuen, 1974]). One might extend Strawson's point to suggest that if humans try to forgive immediately without recognising and accepting their anger and resentment, then it often turns out to be not forgiveness, properly understood, but merely condones or overlooks the wrong committed.

In his classic soteriological work, *Atonement and Personality*, R.C. Moberly notes that forgiveness in its ideal form, and thus as it relates to God, is neither merely the remission of penalty, nor a choice on the part of the subject simply to overlook the offence and regard the wrongdoer as though they were innocent, for this latter could amount to a condoning of the injury.[404] Forgiveness is something far more personal, which has a real effect on the one who forgives: 'Forgiveness is no mere transaction outside of the self... which leaves the self unchanged.'[405] Personal, emotional involvement is essential to the process of forgiveness, and distinguishes forgiveness from an emotionally abstracted attitude such as pardon. As Joram Graf Haber notes, the distinction between forgiveness and official pardon and remission of punishment is rooted in the fact that forgiveness, rather than pardon, is based in a personal relationship between forgiver and wrongdoer.[406]

One of the reasons why forgiveness involves a personal relationship between the forgiver and the wrongdoer is that intrinsic to forgiveness is a real self-sacrifice on the part of the forgiver. This is, in part, because in forgiving, the subject chooses to re-enter a relationship with the offender and begin to trust them again, and so make themselves vulnerable to the possibility of further suffering and hurt. Part of the sacrifice of forgiveness also relates to the 'giving up' of our anger: 'In forgiveness... we "waive" the right to resent the wrong-doer'.[407] The person who forgives must give up their justifiably-felt anger and resentment. The forgiver's experience of anger, and their willingness to give it up, therefore, is part of what makes forgiveness about personal involvement and self-sacrifice, and distinguishes it from emotionally abstracted principles such as pardon and the remission of punishment. It is, I suggest, only through an understanding of forgiveness as involving the 'giving up' of justifiably felt anger and

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[404] R.C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (London, 1901), p. 52 - 3
[405] Moberly, *Atonement*, p. 71-2
[406] Joram Graf Haber, *Forgiveness* (Savage, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991), p. 16; *cf.* also R.J. O'Shaughnessy, 'Forgiveness', *Philosophy* 42 (1967), p. 338
[407] Joram Graf Haber, *Forgiveness*, p. 65

re-entering into a personal relationship with sinful human beings that we can take seriously God's involvement with the world in the incarnation and, in particular, on the cross.

In this section I have discussed the possibility of divine anger, arguing that anger is an important part of the divine emotional life, since anger is an aspect of God's love (both of the offender and of the victim), and is implicit in the notion of forgiveness, which involves the 'giving up' or waiving of the right to anger. However, while affirming divine anger, I have suggested two qualifications of God's experience of anger. First, God's anger is always be expressed creatively rather than destructively, such as in the pedagogy of the offender. Second, God's anger is always rational in that it God always has rational motives and sufficient knowledge as a basis of his anger. Thus the irrationality and destructiveness that is frequently found in human anger is missing from attributions of divine anger. In the next section, I will look at the possibility of divine jealousy, which, like anger, is attributed to God in the biblical literature but which has likewise received little support in contemporary theology and philosophy of religion.

Jealousy

Jealousy is, in general terms, an unpleasant or painful emotional experience aroused when someone else has something, or threatens to acquire something, that one wants oneself. Jealousy is closely related to envy both conceptually and experientially, yet it is important to distinguish between the two, and so define more precisely what we mean by jealousy in its 'pure' form, since while jealousy is sometimes predicated of God, to my knowledge envy is never predicated of God. Jealousy and envy are often also used as synonyms in everyday speech, but I think that we might note six distinctions between them, none of which are either necessary or sufficient, but all of which are descriptions

of typical characteristics of jealousy helpful to our discussion of the possibility of divine jealousy.

First, I suggest that jealousy tends to concern exclusive objects, while envy may concern inclusive ones. So, for example, someone might be jealous if they see that another person has something that they themselves want, and that they want to have alone, rather than to share it with any one else. In contrast, envy occurs when we see that someone has some ability or possession we would also like to have, but which we do not feel we should have to the exclusion of others. Thus jealousy often concerns sexual or romantic love, since this is generally deemed to be exclusive and non-shareable, while the objects of envy are far broader, and may include someone's ability to sing, their fast and flashy car, or the fact that they have a girlfriend (in general terms) while the subject does not. We may want all of these things – but if we are envious rather than jealous then we probably do not want them to the exclusion of the other having them: We are happy for them to possess them as long as we can possess them too.

Second, in jealousy we tend to think that we have a right or a claim to something, whereas in envy the subject would like the thing without feeling he has any particular right or claim to it. So, for example, I might say 'I am jealous of my husband spending time with that woman; he is, after all, *my* husband; he should be spending time with me'. Here I am implicitly making a claim to something I feel I have a right to: I have a right to my husband's time because he is *my* husband. In contrast, I might say that I am envious of someone's wit or superlative figure, but it would not make sense for me to make any claim to have a right to these properties. If I did feel I had a right to the desired object (for example, if I felt that I had been cheated out of my desired object while drunk in a game of cards), then, I suggest, my emotional state would contain elements of jealousy as well as envy.

Third, jealousy is often to do with losing something we have or had or believe we had, while envy is to do with not having something we would like to have, but which we never felt we possessed. Thus I might be envious of someone's running skills, since they possess an ability I have never had, but jealous if someone overtook me in some skill I did possess, and replaced me as leading figure in that field. This is closely related to the second point, since when we possess something (including an attribute or an ability) we often come to believe that it is rightfully ours, even if there is no independent reason for thinking this.

Fourth, in jealousy the subject construes the desired object as a person, while in envy the subject construes the desired object as a thing. Thus I am likely to be jealous of a rival for `stealing` the affections of my husband, lover, daughter, or dog (if I relate to my dog in sufficiently personal terms), while I am likely to be envious of someone's abilities, possessions, or appearance. Of course, there are situations in which someone appears to be envious of someone for 'possessing' a person, but here I think that the object is being construed as a thing and not as a person. Suppose a man sees a girl he admires with another man, and feels a twinge of what he discerns as jealousy or envy. If this is real jealousy, then the man perceives the girl as a person who is irreplaceable and whose affections he wants for himself for reasons that are purely personal. If, on the other hand, it is envy, then the man does not perceive the girl as a beloved person, but as an object he aspires to have as, for example, a status symbol. Again, this is why jealousy often emerges in sexual or romantic contexts while in general envy does not: Jealousy is a far more personal and relational emotion than envy.

Fifth, jealousy is frequently unfriendly or malicious, while envy can be either malicious or amiable. This is because while jealousy involves a rival (who threatens to, or who has already, taken the desired object [the beloved] away from the lover or stolen their affection), envy involves someone who might be construed as a rival, but who

might instead be an object of admiration or appreciation to the subject. (This is, of course, related to the fact that the desired object in envy need not be exclusive.) This kind of envy is illustrated well by the Lord Chancellor's envious appreciation of Pell in Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*:

> 'Pell,' he used to say to me many a time, 'how the blazes you can stand the headwork you do, is a mystery to me.' – 'Well,' I used to answer, '*I* hardly know how I do it, upon my life.' – 'Pell,' he'd add, sighing, and looking at me with a little envy – friendly envy, you know, gentlemen, merely friendly envy; I never minded it – 'Pell, you're a wonder; a wonder.' Ah! You'd have liked him very much if you had known him, gentlemen.[408]

This, of course, is not to suggest that envy is always friendly; but, rather, that jealousy is rarely so.

Sixth, jealousy and envy differ in their intentional objects. The intentional object of jealousy is the rival, while the intentional object of envy is the thing desired. Thus someone might be jealous of the sibling who has stolen their parents' affections, but envious of someone else's cricketing skills, academic ability or ease in social situations. It would not make much sense to say 'I am envious of you' unless it were then qualified by the respect in which one were envious; that is, the particular quality or attribute of which one is envious; for example, I might be envious of your blue eyes, or your massive CD collection, or your exciting job, but not of you *per se*. In contrast, saying 'I am jealous of you' only needs qualification with respect to the reason for one's jealousy; for example, 'I am jealous of you because I love your wife, and she loves you'. (If one were to say 'I am envious of you because your wife loves you', it would mean instead that one envied the property of having a wife that loves one, without desiring that particular wife.) One exception to this is when someone says 'He is jealous of his wife' meaning that he is very vigilant of his wife's affections and activities, protective of her, and easily angered by any flirtation on her part, or any signs of interest in her shown by other men. I think that here 'He is jealous of his wife'

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[408] Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers* (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 1998), ch. 55

is being used in a slightly different sense to mean 'vigilant' or 'protective', and is a short hand for saying that the subject has a jealous disposition with respect to his wife, as distinct from jealousy being a one-off emotion experienced by someone who is not particularly disposed to it. This use of the term jealousy is conceptually distinct from the other use of jealousy, and would require a separate treatment.

These typical characteristics of jealousy and envy help us to distinguish between the two, even though we often experience jealousy and envy together: One might be jealous of one's lover's wife, and envious of her looks, or intelligence, or wit; in this case, jealousy and envy feed off one another, so that the more jealous one is of the other woman being married to one's lover, the more likely one is to perceive her as good looking and clever and funny, the more important these characteristics are going to seem, and the more envious one is going to become of her. Notably, in this sort of situation Ben Ze'ev argues that if the jealous person thinks that the rival is better than him in the relevant respect, then his jealousy will be reduced.[409] Goldie argues *contra* Ben Ze'ev that the reverse is the case: 'the belief that the rival is 'better' than you typically will fan the flames of jealousy, not reduce them'.[410] While there might be exceptions to this, I think Goldie's point is generally more accurate: Envy and jealousy often work together to play on the subject's insecurities by heightening their sense of their own inadequacy and by portending forthcoming loss.

In terms of the intelligence of emotions, one argument against the possibility of divine jealousy is that jealousy tends to be deceptive: It is difficult to interpret and evaluate one's action, values and goals in an balanced way when one is under the thrall of jealousy. This is partly because jealousy involves insecurity, mistrust and even paranoia so that, as Iago perceives, 'trifles light as air are to the jealous confirmations

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[409] Ben Ze'ev, 'Envy and Jealousy', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 20, 487 - 516
[410] Goldie, *Emotions*, p. 225

strong as proofs of holy writ'.[411] Conversely, however, the jealous person is often also unjustifiably credulous, susceptible to being unduly assuaged by reassurances from the beloved, or even from the rival, or an outside party, simply because the person gives them the answer they want to hear, and so relief from the tortures of jealousy.[412] Jealousy thus makes us both too credulous and too mistrustful of others. Marcel observes this characteristic of jealousy when he describes his reaction to Albertine's reassurances of her fidelity:

> Albertine merely gave me her word, a categorical word unsupported by proof. But this was precisely what was best calculated to calm me; jealousy belonging to that family of morbid doubts which are eliminated by the vigour of an affirmation far more surely than by its probability. It is moreover the property of love to make us at once more distrustful and more credulous, to make us suspect the loved one, more readily than we should suspect anyone else, and to be convinced more easily by her denials.[413]

The problem is made more complicated, as Goldie argues, by the extraordinary way in which an emotion such as jealousy can influence our thoughts and other feelings, because there is no independent epistemological basis on which we can judge the situation we are in. This is in contrast to other emotions including, I suggest, compassion and anger, in which we can appeal to the legal and moral norms of our society or religious community in order to discern whether or not we are, in each situation, rightly compassionate or angry. In the case of jealousy, however, there is far less of an independent norm to appeal to. So we might judge that someone 'got what they deserved', despite feeling compassion for them, or judge that the object of one's anger was acting under mitigating circumstances, and yet still feel some anger at them. At a different level, we might judge that a stick in a bucket of water is straight while perceiving it as bent, or judge that the grass snake is harmless while still feeling it to be a threat. In these cases, the latter state is, in Goldie's terms, 'cognitively impenetrable'

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[411] William, Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Othello*, Act 3, Scene 3, 326 – 8 in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Greenblatt, Cohen, Howard and Maus (Norton & Co: New York, 1997)
[412] *cf* Goldie, *Emotions*, pp 225 - 8
[413] Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past* (or *In Search of Lost Time)*, iv. 286, cited Goldie, *Emotions*, p. 227

by the former state, which can be arrived at on sound evidence while one is in a rational state. However,

> ...with jealous thoughts and feelings, there really is no relevant cognitive element which one can set up, as being appropriately arrived at, in *contrast to* those other thoughts, imaginings and feelings which are impenetrable by that former cognitive element. There does not seem to be any relevant standpoint for isolating those beliefs that are appropriately arrived at, and from which you can, so to speak, build outwards to a reasonable view on whether or not your jealousy is justified.[414]

When, during a relatively calm moment, one asks oneself, 'what ought I to believe in this situation?', one realises that one's tendencies to be both too mistrusting and too trusting obstruct any rational judgement. In this respect jealousy is like most or all types of insecurity: It plays upon both suspicion and paranoia on the one hand, and hope and wishful thinking on the other, to eliminate the subject's chances of making a balanced and rational judgement.

As with compassion and anger, the question that confronts us here is whether this particular characteristic that would make jealousy inappropriate to an omniscient God is intrinsic to jealousy, or whether it is an extraneous quality that just happens to attach itself to most instances of human jealousy. Jealousy differs from anger and compassion however in that, while there are instances in which compassion and anger can be deceptive of truth, there are also obvious counter-examples, whereas jealousy's tendency to deceive or at least to subvert rational judgement seems more ubiquitous. Furthermore, while there are instances in which compassion and anger become revelatory of truth, jealousy might be based on a real infidelity on the part of the beloved but it rarely, if ever, sheds light on the situation or makes it clearer, and generally makes it less clear. Whether this deceptiveness is an intrinsic and necessary property of jealousy then becomes a semantic question: Jealousy could be defined in terms that either make deceptiveness part of its nature or make it peripheral or non-essential. For this reason it is a question that should be put to one side. The question

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[414] Goldie, *Emotions*, p. 228

that concerns us here is (if one believes that deceptiveness is not intrinsic to jealousy) what would jealousy look like once we remove the extraneous deceptive quality from it? Alternatively (if one believes that deceptiveness is intrinsic to jealousy), what characteristics might the biblical writers, for example, have been getting at when they predicated jealousy of God? What is the underlying meaning of attributions of divine jealousy, and what value do they have in speaking of God's affective life?

In his excursus on jealousy, Baloian notes that while the word קנא is rightly translated as 'jealousy' when it is used of humans, when it is used of God 'intense passion' seems to be a better translation.[415] Divine קנא is closely related to concepts of possession, though possession is not to be understood in a 'petty' sense.[416] There are three main contexts in which קנא and its derivatives are used of God. The first concerns God's refusal to allow rival cults and/or idolatry. Baloian argues that the exclusion of pettiness from talk of God's קנא is ensured by the connection between God's קנא and his covenant with Israel.[417]

The second context in which the Old Testament speaks of God's קנא is that of human sin and consequent divine judgement (e.g. Ps. 79:5; Eze 5:13; 16: 42; 36:5; Zeph 3:8), where human sin is interpreted both as a direct turning away from God, and as harming other human beings. The emphases of these texts is that God is just in expressing God's קנא and in the extent and intensity of God's emotional involvement. For example, Ps 79:5 asks: 'How long, Lord? Wilt though be angry for ever? Shall thy justice burn like fire?'. Baloian concludes that God's judgement takes place 'with an intensity of passion but is not capricious and certainly not unfair'.[418]

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[415] Notably, Masoretic Hebrew distinguishes between קָנָא, which is human jealousy, and קַנָּא, which is used only of God (*The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996)

[416] Baloian, *Anger*, p 181. Baloian does not explicate the distinction between 'petty' and 'non-petty' jealousy.

[417] Baloian, *Anger*, p. 182. Baloian does not explain how or why this is the case.

[418] Baloian, *Anger*, p. 182

The third context for God's קנא is divine 'zeal' for God's elect. In fact, the most common translation of קנא in this context is not 'jealous' but 'zeal' or 'to be zealous'. Zeal is closely related to divine anger, and is here directed towards the adversaries of Israel. However, it is primarily a positive 'emotion' towards Israel, and only secondarily a negative 'emotion' towards those who would harm her: 'Its focus is deliverance: to bring forth a remnant, to establish justice, bring righteousness, to extend compassion, mercy, or have pity on His people. This positive blessing of deliverance is accomplished through Yahweh's intensity and it is a wrathful undertaking: God's wrath and zeal become the means of salvation for his elect.'[419]

Divine קנא is dissimilar to human קנא in that whereas human קנא involves negative instances and characteristics including racial hatred (2 Sam. 21:2), lack of control (Prov. 14: 30) and covetousness (Gen 30:1), divine קנא is always just, within God's control, and directed towards the good – that is, towards the salvation of Israel. Furthermore, the justice of God's קנא implies that it is not deceptive of truth: When God reacts with קנא, it is because Israel or God's relationship with Israel is truly under threat, rather than because God misinterprets the evidence through jealousy and insecurity. This understanding of קנא suggests that the essential characteristic we should draw from the ascription of divine 'jealousy' is not the insecure mistrust and credulity typical of human jealousy but the intense passion[420] that God feels for his creation, which involves anger and protectiveness when the creation or God's relationship with it is threatened. In what follows I shall discuss whether this type of love involving anger and intense passion is the best understanding of divine love, or whether God's love is better understood as free from intense passion and involving simply a consistent attitude of benevolence for his creation.

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[419] Baloian, *Anger*, p. 182

[420] Note that this meaning of the word 'passion' is distinct of the Augustinian *passiones* discussed in ch. 3

Recent discussions of divine love have distinguished broadly between two types of love: Personally involved love, and love without intense personal involvement, characteristic of charity, benevolence and beneficence. Some, such as Brümmer and Sarot, have associated personally involved love with reciprocity (Brümmer calls personally involved love 'mutual fellowship', and Sarot terms it 'fellowship-love' and 'mutual love'), and contrast this with beneficence. Brümmer, for example, relates beneficence to the idea of the subject having a certain attitude towards the beloved, while mutual fellowship is seen to be a relationship rather than an attitude. In the following discussion I will follow in broad terms Sarot and Brümmer's distinction between the two types of love, though my understanding of the two types of love departs from Brümmer's in that it does not involve the distinction between attitude and relationship, and the implications of reciprocity and mutuality that accompany Brümmer's understanding of relationship. This is primarily because I do not find the distinction between an attitude and a relationship a satisfactory one, and in this context I think it would only obfuscate our discussion of divine love. Rather than stick to Sarot and Brümmer's terms, therefore, I will discuss two models of love: Benevolence or beneficence, or that which views the subject as a benefactor, and personal involved love, that which conceives the subject as lover. The idea of the subject as lover need not imply erotic love, but could also mean the personally involved love of a parent for their child, or the love of someone towards a very close friend, though there are also respects in which erotic love becomes a uniquely helpful model when characterising this type of love. This sort of love is distinct from beneficence, not because it is necessarily more of a relationship than beneficence, but primarily because while beneficence allows the subject to retain a personal distance from the object, love entails a personal involvement characterised by intense desires, beliefs and emotions on behalf of or because of the beloved. In contrast, beneficence or benevolence is characterised by an

attitude of good will towards the object, but in which the subject is not personally affected by the object's fortunes.

One objection Brümmer raises to the idea of love as beneficence is that in pure beneficence (for instance, in charitable donation) the subject tends to give without taking anything back from the object. While this sounds laudable and altruistic, in fact it can be deeply damaging, for it ultimately destroys both the integrity and the freedom of the object, since it leaves them perpetually in a position of need and never able to fulfil their need to give. John MacMurray explains this well when he writes:

> If in my relation with you I insist on behaving generously toward you and refuse to accept your generosity in return, I make myself the giver and you the recipient. This is unjust to you. I put you in my debt and refuse to let you repay the debt. In that case I make the relation an unequal one. You are to have continual cause to be grateful to me, but I am not to be grateful to you. This is the worst kind of tyranny, and is shockingly unfair to you. It destroys the mutuality of the personal by destroying the equality which is its negative aspect. To maintain equality of persons in relation is justice; and without it generosity becomes purely sentimental and wholly egocentric. My care for you is only moral if it includes the intention to preserve your freedom as an agent, which is your independence of me. Even if you wish to be dependent on me, it is my business, for your sake, to prevent it.[421]

This suggests that, while God's relation towards humanity has traditionally been characterised as one in which God gives but in which humans cannot give anything back in return, this kind of love is ultimately deficient, because it debilitates rather than edifying or liberating the beloved. That God's love is not like this is suggested by the soteriological narrative of the incarnation: Mary's free acceptance of her vocation, Jesus' humanity, and the fact that the disciples are commissioned to spread the Gospel and bring about the Kingdom of God, all emphasise the fact that salvation is brought about by both divine grace and free human acceptance, and that salvation is challenging and enabling rather than something that is benevolently done to us and of which we are simply the passive recipients.[422] While Brümmer focuses on the distinction between

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[421] John MacMurray, *Persons in Relation* (New York: Humanity Books: 1998), p. 189 - 190

[422] *cf.* Paul F. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* (London: Darton Longman & Todd, 1991), esp. p. 26

relationships in which there is give and take on both sides and those in which one person gives and the other can only take, however, it seems to me that this is part of a wider point about the value of the beloved. Personally involved love gives value to the beloved, or at least helps them to recognise their inherent value.[423] In contrast, having a benefactor highlights our neediness and inadequacy, and does not create or help us to realise our value. Again, the former is liberating, the latter debilitating. This leads to an interesting point for Christian theology. For Christians, the value of every person lies in the value that they have in God's eyes, or in God's love for them. If it seems that this love is denied or modified, or that God does not in fact regard them as valuable, then Christians would either need to re-think the value they place in people, or else conceive of a different basis for this value. This is a serious objection to the idea of God's love as benevolence then, for it challenges the basis of the Christian evaluation of persons.

However, Cook argues that God still has the beliefs and desires which impart or indicate value to, for example, persons, but that God does not have the emotions that tend to accompany these beliefs and desires in human mental life. Concerning the idea that emotions have valuational merit in themselves – that is, that emotions are constitutive[424] and not merely indicative of the beliefs and desires one person has for another, Cook writes that `... it is these beliefs and desires... which are at the heart of such emotions, constituting the valuing of one person by another. And if, for human beings, emotions are in fact, merely a *means* by which one person communicates his or her beliefs and desires to another, whatever is peculiar to emotion can be dispensed with in conceiving of God`s love for us – what matters are His beliefs and "desires" as they relate to ourselves.'[425] It is the beliefs and 'desires' characteristic of divine love,

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[423] See above on De Sousa's Platonic question: Do we love because the beloved is valuable, or do we make the beloved valuable by loving them?

[424] my term

[425] Cook, 'Impassibility', p. 176

argues Cook, that constitute our value, and not the emotional aspect of love that accompanies much of our own experience of love.

Cook is certainly right that love is not reducible to being a mere 'emotion' in the sense of a feeling, and is, I think, right to include beliefs and desires in his definition of love, thus defending the idea of divine love from those passibilists who would want to claim that love is a (feeling-) emotion, and so God cannot really be said to love unless God has (feeling-) emotions. However, my problem with Cook's argument is that I am not sure that one could say that someone has the belief that *x* is valuable and the desire[426] to be united with *x* without also saying that this person experiences the emotion we call love. As Nussbaum argues, emotions are essentially beliefs, and, in particular, beliefs that have strong eudaimonistic content, which would include desires. Thus love is the belief that the beloved is valuable and the desire to be united with them, anger is the belief that one has been offended against or unjustly hurt and the desire to re-right that offence (through, say, compensation or revenge or an apology on the part of the offender), and jealousy is the belief that the beloved is valuable and that the rival has stolen or threatens to steal their affections, and a desire to be (re-) united with the beloved to the exclusion of the rival. If we accept the thrust of Nussbaum's account of emotion, then it doesn't make sense to say that God has these beliefs and desires without having the associated emotions – for what is the emotion other than the beliefs and desires? Therefore God's love is better understood as personally involved love than benevolence, for personally involved love supports the basis of the Christian belief in the value of human persons as being the value God sees in us and the love God has for us, while the idea of God's love as benevolence undermines this belief.

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[426] It is notable that Cook puts the term 'desire' in inverted commas. I assume this is because he wants to separate 'desire' from its associations with emotional experience. Perhaps desire in this context is better understood as 'will', which does not have the same overtones of emotional intensity. However, even if we replace 'desire' with 'will' the experience we have is still emotional: Someone's will to have a tidy house may not be like their burning desire to be united with their wife, but this is simply a question of the intensity of the emotion, rather than one being emotional and the other not so.

Another aspect of the benefactor-lover distinction is that the benefactor is able to give with impunity, while the lover becomes vulnerable precisely because of his or her personal investment in the life, fortune and feelings of the beloved. In love, the lover identifies with the beloved, and so shares in the beloved's interests and fortunes. In love, the lover also seeks some kind of reciprocity (though this need not mean that the lover seeks for an `equal` or symmetrical relationship), and so makes him or herself vulnerable to rejection or betrayal on the part of the beloved. In terms of divine passibility then, God`s personal involvement may mean that God is caused to suffer both by our own suffering (since God shares in our interests and cares about our well-being) and also by our sin – that is, by our rejection of him and our abuse of his creation.

This characteristic of personally involved love creates a problem for Christian theology, for Christianity has traditionally attributed omnipotence to God, and omnipotence seems to be incompatible with vulnerability. Thus Cook, for example, argues that there is nothing in the world that can cause God to suffer or have an emotion, since both of these involve vulnerability to sources outside the subject's control, while God`s omnipotence means that he is always in perfect control.[427] If God loves in the way characteristic of personally involved love, then God makes himself vulnerable to the suffering caused by identification with us in our suffering and by our sin and rejection of him, and also, as we have been arguing, to the emotional experiences of anger and the intense passion characteristic of jealousy. Furthermore, being a lover implies a need (for instance, for reciprocity, or unity with the beloved) and this is at odds with the traditional idea of divine aseity or self-sufficiency, which holds that as God is perfect he has no need.

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[427] Cook, 'Impassibility'

I shall discuss this question in more depth in chapter five, which is concerned with the relation between emotions and the will, and whether the experience of emotion is at odds with divine omnipotence. At the moment suffice it to say that divine omnipotence and the vulnerability entailed by personally involved love are not *necessarily* incompatible, for it is *possible* for an omnipotent being to choose to be vulnerable in order to love, and for this choice to be an affirmation of divine omnipotence, rather than a privation of it. This is the point that Gregory Thaumaturgos and Moltmann both make, though in Gregory's case the discussion is restricted to divine emotion in the incarnation, and not to God's emotional life more generally. The question about the way in which suffering that is chosen can be 'real' or authentic suffering given that impotence is characteristic of most human suffering remains; this question will be dealt with in the next chapter.

This discussion suggests that personally involved love is a preferable model to benevolence when speaking of divine love, because personally involved divine love liberates and edifies the beloved and creates and/or recognises their value, while mere benevolence can be debilitating and does not provide a basis for the Christian belief in the value of human persons. This suggests that along with divine compassion and divine anger there may also be a place for a belief in divine jealousy, though this jealousy is always to be understood as the intense passion God has for his creation, his protection for them and the demands God makes of them, and never as involving the insecurity, credulity and deceptiveness characteristic of human jealousy. That this personally involved intense passion, while contains aspects of jealousy, is a part of God's love for humanity is well expressed by C.S. Lewis when he writes:

> When Christianity says that God loves man, it means that God *loves* man: not that He has some 'disinterested,' because really indifferent, concern for our welfare, but that, in awful and surprising truth, we are the objects of His love. You asked for a loving God: you have one. The great spirit you so lightly invoked, the 'lord of terrible aspect,' is present: not a senile benevolence that drowsily wishes you to be happy in your own way, not the cold philanthropy of a conscientious magistrate, nor the care of a host who feels himself responsible for the comfort of his guest, but the consuming fire itself, the love that made the worlds, persistent as the artist's

> love for his work and despotic as a man's love for a dog, provident and venerable as a father's love for a child, jealous, inexorable, exacting as love between the sexes.[428]

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the relation between emotion and intelligence, suggesting that many emotions are closely connected to beliefs and values, and often have a strong epistemological function, particularly in relation to the value of the object. This suggests that some instantiations of emotion are intelligent, in the sense that they both reflect and reveal truths about the world. However, I have qualified this statement throughout with the recognition that at other times emotions are not intelligent: They are not based on truths in the world, and they tend to be deceptive rather than revelatory about the world. I have also argued that both cognitive and non-cognitive views of emotion are correct, simply because the phenomenon we call emotion is so diverse that it includes both 'intelligent' mental phenomena and more physiological reactions as well as a range of emotions in between. In recognising this I follow in broad terms Augustine's view of the *passiones* and *affectiones*, a distinction between types of emotion that are arational and not intelligent, and those that can be rational (or irrational), and have the potential to impart truth about the world. Turning to the impassibility debate, I have suggested that we might want to attribute the potentially intelligent emotions to God, while excluding the sorts of emotions that are misleading about the world. I have also argued that emotions can have a uniquely revelatory value – that is, they may reveal truths about the way the world is that cannot be known except through the experience of emotion. Given this, I have argued, emotional experience may be an essential aspect of divine omniscience, and not a departure from it. I have also focused on three specific emotions - compassion, anger and jealousy - and argued that there are instantiations of these emotions that we would want to attribute to God, partly

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[428] C.S. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*, p. 35

on the basis of their intelligence and truth-bearing potential, while excluding misleading or deceptive instantiations of them. In the next chapter I will turn to the question of how our emotions are related to our wills, whether it is possible to choose, control or cultivate them, and whether the vulnerability entailed by emotional involvement is compatible with God's omnipotence.

Chapter Five: Emotion, Will and Divine Omnipotence

Introduction

One of the primary problems that impassibilists have with the idea of divine suffering in particular and with divine emotions in general is that these seem incompatible with God's aseity or self-sufficiency because, it is claimed, emotions are passive and often suffered involuntarily.[429] According to this argument, both suffering and susceptibility to emotion involve vulnerability to sources outside the subject's control, and as God is omnipotent, he is in perfect control, and so cannot be made vulnerable to things outside his control. As Cook puts it:

> Although the concept of divine impassibility is thought to involve a number of ideas, the core idea is that nothing 'external' to God can cause Him to suffer or evoke an emotion in Him.... The rationale behind this idea is God's independence of the world and His complete sovereignty over it. Things and events in the world are part of creation's matrix of cause and effect, a matrix which God, as creator, cannot be part of. And because God holds the world in being, He has perfect control over it in all its aspects. There is nothing in the world which can in any way control Him or limit Him.[430]

Again:

> ... a God who suffers is a God under constraint, and my objection to this idea is that it conflicts with a central feature of traditional Christian theism, namely the idea that God is omnipotent. God's ability to control His world is perfect, and therefore there is nothing that can constrain Him in any way.[431]

But are we right to think that emotional experiences are necessarily something outside our control, and that they are something that make us passive, susceptible and vulnerable? The belief that this is the case certainly has age on its side, and it seems *prima facie* to be true because of the way that we speak of certain emotional

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[429] Cook makes the important distinction between emotions being essentially overpowering (which, he notes, is obviously false, though it is often erroneously attributed to impassibilists) and the idea that emotions are essentially passive in the sense that they involve something that happens to us and over which, in this sense at least, we have no control (which he upholds). See Cook, 'Impassibility', especially p. 62-63

[430] Cook, 'Impassibility', p. 3

[431] Cook, p. 52

experiences. For example, we talk of 'falling in love', 'being paralysed by fear', 'struck by jealousy' and 'overwhelmed by sadness'.[432] There is also the etymological link between passions and passive to strengthen this assumption. However, as a concomitant of the cognitive theory of emotions, some philosophers emphasise the voluntary and chosen aspects of emotion, and claim that our emotions are more under our control than we might at first think.

Emotions as active

Foremost among those who have challenged the 'passive' view of the emotions is Solomon, who began his career stating (and, he later concedes, overstating) the case for the voluntary nature of emotions at a time when the idea that emotions could be chosen was the preserve of a few Existentialist philosophers, and who has been at the forefront of the emergence of this view in Anglo-American analytical philosophy. The emergence of the 'voluntarist'[433] view of emotions is closely related to the emergence of the 'cognitive' view of emotions for, if emotions are thoughts or involve thoughts, they can, like thoughts, be chosen and controlled to some degree. Therefore the voluntarist view of the emotions should be seen as the twin of the cognitive view of emotions, and to say that emotions are cognitive implies they can be voluntary, and *vice versa*. Having already argued for the cognitive view of emotions with respect to some emotions, I shall now look closely and critically at Solomon's view in his two latest authored works that concern emotion and will, *Not Passion's Slave: Emotions and Choice* and *True to our Feelings: What our Emotions are Really Telling us* before moving on to consider the

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[432] These and other examples can be found in Robert Solomon, *True to our Feelings*, p. 190

[433] My term. Solomon tends to use the term 'cognitive' of his theory of emotion. I am using the term 'voluntarist theory' in order to emphasise the element of choice that Solomon thinks we often have in emotion that is pertinent to this chapter, and which is part and parcel of his cognitive theory.

opposing position, in order to see why, how and to what extent (and in what circumstances) we can regard emotions as chosen or under our control.

Solomon's thesis is that emotions can be chosen 'at least sometimes, and to some extent'.[434] though in *Not Passion's Slave* he regards himself as providing a more nuanced and moderate account of the volitional aspects of emotion than in his previous work. Notably, Solomon defines emotions as distinct from reactions such as startle reflexes and the burst of physiology and feeling in embarrassment. He regards the Stoics as correct in viewing these not as emotions but as 'first movements': '...by 'emotion' I mean not those momentary phenomena but those long-lasting complex experiences such as Othello's love and growing jealousy, Iago's insidious and dangerous envy, Franz Fanon's escalating rage, and Lily Bart's fateful pride.'[435]

Solomon argues that part of the problem with a lot of literature on emotion is that it tends to focus on specific instances, and often short-bursts, of emotion. This provides a one-sided view of emotion, for it is difficult to see with these one-off instances the extent to which people cultivate their emotions and emotional responses. Solomon's view is that emotions are far more long-term, and that they are often cultivated and nurtured by the subject in line with deep-rooted desires and character traits. For example:

> [The subject discovers...] that anger is an effective way of intimidating people, and so they allow themselves to get angry at the slightest provocation. I say 'they allow themselves' but this does not imply that there is any conscious decision at the time of the outburst. It is rather a pattern of behaviour that is cultivated over time. So, too, some people cultivate sadness, perhaps because they earn sympathy that way, or because 'feeling sorry for themselves' allows them to withdraw and be irresponsible or unsociable. Others allow themselves to fall in love frequently, possibly just because they find it invigorating and fun. We resist calling this love, looking instead for signs of insecurity, manipulation, utter irresponsibility, or deep neurosis. Of course, we may also be morally critical, insofar as such a person tends to forget about the feelings of the transient victims. Indeed, I would say that failure to take into account the feelings (and especially the 'hurt' feelings) of one's supposed beloved is definitive proof that the emotion in question – whatever it may be – is not love. Which is not to deny that it, too, whatever it is, consists in part of choices as well.[436]

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[434] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, vii.
[435] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, viii.
[436] Solomon, *True to our Feelings*, p. 198

These examples highlight the ways in which emotions are controlled by manipulative people, and yet, Solomon argues, we all cultivate and nurture our emotional tendencies throughout our lives, regardless of whether or not this is a means to a manipulative end. The cultivation of emotional tendencies may be means to a different end: For instance, we may cultivate an ability to get angry in order to be able to avoid being walked over or in order to stick up for someone else, or we may cultivate our ability to love because we hold this up as a great virtue and regard it as essential to being a good and happy person. Crucially, for Solomon most emotions are not single episodes or 'bursts' of affect, but are processes over time. In particular, love is always a process, and not a momentary emotional episode.[437]

By defining emotions as processes rather than episodes, Solomon excludes from emotion the affect programs of Ekman, and other instantaneous or automatic reactions that one might cite as counter-examples to the volitional nature of emotion. In this way his account might be criticised as being one-sided by ruling out of the definition of emotion the 'wrong sort' of emotion, but as Solomon's thesis is simply that emotions are voluntary some of the time and to some extent, this potential one-sidedness need not concern us too much, and elsewhere he is careful to say that not all emotions should be regarded as voluntary, and not all to an equal extent. Furthermore, because (I suggest) most of our emotional experiences are inconspicuous because they are ongoing and are part and parcel of our everyday lives, Solomon's view of emotion reflects the vast majority of our emotional experiences, in opposition to views of emotion that focus on less frequent violent and conspicuous emotional outbursts.

I would also add to Solomon`s point a further, yet related, point: While we speak of having 'emotions', this is rather misleading, for it is not the case that we live our lives emotionlessly and then have emotions inserted into our lives at dramatic moments.

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[437] Solomon, *True to Our Feelings*, p. 194

Rather, we experience life emotionally through and through. At some points we become aware of particular emotions, as, for instance, when these are especially intense or sudden or unusual. However, that is not to say that we do not experience everything emotionally, from small everyday events which we imbue with deeply-rooted hopes and fears, to dramatic and uncommon events which cause us to be particularly aware of our emotions and to reflect consciously on them. Wittgenstein makes this point when he says:

> Pain has this position in our life; has these connections; (That is to say: we only call 'pain' what has this position, these connections. Only surrounded by certain normal manifestations of life, is there such a thing as an expression of pain. Only surrounded by an even more far-reaching particular manifestation of life, such a thing as the expression of sorrow or affection. And so on.)[438]

In this respect we might turn around Musil's statement that 'things swim in emotions', and also say that emotions swim in things and events 'the way water lilies consist not only of leaves and flowers and white and green but also of 'gently lying there''.[439]

Another aspect of Solomon's definition of emotions is that emotions involve social narratives and not just physical responses. In viewing emotions like this, Solomon roots emotional experience in human narrative, rather than seeing emotions as physical events that happen extraneously to human life. Solomon labels this an 'holistic' view of emotion. It is also a moral and ethical view of emotion for, against the non-cognitive view of emotion, it holds that emotions are not value-neutral, and that we can be held responsible for some of the emotions we feel. To Griffiths' argument that philosophical accounts of emotion are 'moralizing', Solomon responds that emotions are moralised through and through. People are in some ways responsible not only for what they do by also for what they feel, and this is at the root of many traditions including the Judaeo-Christian tradition: 'To "command" people to "love their neighbor" may be a bit far-fetched (depending on the neighbor); but it is by no means

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[438] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel* (Oxford, 1967), p. 533-4

[439] Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, trans. S. Wilkins and B. Pike (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), cited in Goldie, *Emotions*, p. 228 fn 1

nonsense or inappropriate. It just turns out to be rather difficult to do.'[440] A more religiously ubiquitous example might be that in making wedding vows in which we promise to love our spouse until their, or our, death, we are assuming that the ability to love is within our power to some extent, and that failing to do so involves moral culpability: We often attach moral blame to people who fail to live up to these promises through neglect, betrayal, abuse or infidelity, but this would be illogical of us if people had no control over their emotions. Thus there is a moral aspect to our emotions, and this fact implies that we have some control over our emotions, and that our emotions are not simply things which happen to us.

Solomon's contention that emotions are, sometimes and to some extent, chosen and under our control leads to a second important argument, namely that we should not equate intentionality (in the sense of what we mean to do or feel) with voluntariness, or voluntariness with responsibility. Just because something is non-intentional does not mean it is involuntary, or that we are not responsible for it. This is related to the distinction between a choice being conscious and being voluntary: In order to be voluntary, a choice need not necessarily be conscious. We can make unconscious and subconscious choices. I might choose to push the clutch in my car, change gear, and remove my foot from the clutch; but if I am an experienced driver this choice might be voluntary without being conscious.

Solomon further clarifies this idea when he discusses and illustrates what we might mean when we speak of emotions being under our *control.* Many philosophers have held that we can control, but not choose, our emotions, and only then by constraining them or controlling their expression. But, he notes, there is an ambiguity about what 'controlling' means here: 'Is controlling an emotion… a matter of conscious choice?'[441] In his later book Solomon develops the question of what we mean by

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[440] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave,* ix
[441] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave,* p. 195

'control' through a number of metaphors, and also makes clear how something that is not conscious might still be considered voluntary and within one's control:

> Is controlling an emotion something like controlling a wild animal within? (Horace: 'anger is like riding a wild horse.') Is it like controlling one's blood pressure, or one's cholesterol level, something that (certain Yogis excepted) we can only do indirectly? Or is it rather like a boss controlling his or her employees by way of various threats and incentives, the 'boss' being reason? (Plato's model in *The Republic.*) Or is controlling an emotion like controlling one's thoughts, one's speech, one's arguments, putting them into shape, choosing one's mode of expression as well as one's timing?... Or is it like coordinating one's actions through practice, like riding a bike, which may be 'mindless' (that is, wholly unreflective and unselfconscious) but is nevertheless voluntary and both very much within one's control and a continuous matter of choice?[442]

It is the last of these images of 'controlling' that Solomon prefers, and here he draws on Sartre to develop the idea of cultivating a good character, which involves cultivating the right emotions and right emotional responses.[443]

Two immediate objections arise to the idea of the volitional nature of emotion. First, emotions *seem* to happen to us, quite apart from our preferences and choices. Second, an enormous range of emotions suggests that no single claim or analysis will suit all emotions, or emotion as such.[444] As we have already noted, emotions are so diverse that few generalisations can be made about them. In addition, every emotion has different aspects,[445] including behavioural, physiological, phenomenological, cognitive and social. These different aspects require very different sorts of arguments regarding the voluntary/involuntary, active/passive status of emotions. There is also a spectrum of different degrees to which emotion might be voluntary or involuntary. Solomon concedes that in his previous works he often failed to take account of these different distinctions between different emotions, their different aspects, and the different ways in which they might be voluntary or involuntary. However, he insists, one cannot with Griffiths distinguish neatly between higher and lower, active and passive, emotions on

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[442] Solomon, *True to our Feelings.* p. 191
[443] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave,* p. 195
[444] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave,* p. 196
[445] Solomon uses the term 'aspects' in preference to the term 'components' which, he argues, implies a 'mechanical' view of emotion. Aspects are interwoven, whereas components tend to be seen as competing.

the basis of different emotion types, with anger being a basic emotion and love a higher cognitive emotion.[446] Rather, anger can be voluntary or involuntary, cognitive or non-cognitive, higher or lower, just as other emotion types such as fear, love, embarrassment, shame and guilt.

In an earlier book on the emotions, *The Passions*,[447] Solomon takes up Sartre's task of criticising William James' view of emotions as passive, and James' emphasis on visceral disturbance and bodily sensation. Central to this task is Sartre's notion of *mauvaise foi* (bad faith): Our tendency to deny responsibility by making excuses for ourselves. One of the ways in which we make excuses for ourselves is to argue that we were helpless in a particular situation because we were in the thrall of a particular emotion; for example, 'I didn't mean it, I was angry at the time', or 'I'm sorry I was so foolish. I was hopelessly in love.'[448] Solomon aims to highlight our responsibility, not only for the behaviour arising from emotions, but also for the emotions themselves.

While Solomon claims that emotions are voluntary and involve choices, he nevertheless distances himself from the following claims. First, Solomon rejects the idea that emotions are *deliberate* actions, the result of overt plans or strategies: 'We do not think our way into most emotions. Nor do emotions fit the philosophical paradigm of intentional action, that is, actions which are preceded by intentions – combinations of explicit beliefs and desires and "knowing what one is going to do."'[449] Emotions are not like conscious or intentional actions, but more like 'semiconscious, inattentive, quasi-intentional, habitual, spontaneous action'.[450] Solomon makes the important point that, despite the fact that in philosophy actions tend to be seen as conscious and intentional, there is a huge range of behaviour and action lying between the completely active and

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[446] *cf.* Roberts, *Emotions*, p. 13
[447] Solomon, *The Passions*
[448] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 198
[449] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 199
[450] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 199

the straightforwardly passive.[451] Solomon therefore opposes the polarisation of emotion in philosophy: The tendency to regard emotions either as intentional actions or as something that happens to us and victimises us 'from the inside'.

Second, Solomon distances himself from the claim that having an emotion is a 'basic action': that is, an action one performs without performing any other action (such as wiggling one's little finger). One does not simply *decide* to have an emotion. One might, however, decide to do a number of other things that might set oneself on a trajectory to emotion – for instance, one might enter into a certain situation, or not take one's medication, or think about a situation in a different way. One might object to this that choosing to put oneself in a situation is not choosing the emotion itself. However, on Solomon's holistic view of emotion, emotions are inseparable from the narrative of one's life as a whole, and the choices one makes are inextricably bound up with the emotions one has, so putting oneself in the situation of, say, visiting one's ex-wife and her new boyfriend, may also be choosing to be susceptible to certain emotions (whether of love, anger, jealousy, *schadenfreude* etc.). Solomon also perceives that one might also choose to have a certain emotion by acting as though one had a certain emotion and, by acting in a particular way, cause that emotion to come into existence. This possibility is illustrated by William James' advice: 'Smooth the brow, brighten the eye, contract the dorsal rather than the ventral aspect of the frame, and speak in a major key, pass the genial compliment, and your heart must be frigid indeed if it does not gradually thaw'.[452] Virtually all human actions involve doing something by doing something else – for example reading a book in order to write a Ph.D. thesis. However, this does not mean that the 'doing something else' causes the 'doing something'. Rather, it *is* the doing something. The one act or course of action (reading several books, thinking about a particular subject, writing chapters) *constitutes* the doing something (in this case,

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[451] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 199
[452] William James, cited Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 199

doing a Ph.D.). Thus, as Solomon observes, 'one's intentional smoothing of the brow is already constitutive of the ensuing kindly emotion.'[453]

Third, Solomon separates himself from the idea that *all* emotions are devoid of premeditation and deliberation, though he argues that most are. Solomon points out that we often pursue love, or 'work ourselves into' a rage, sometimes with certain objectives in mind. Sometimes the intention to have an emotion, and even the announcement of this intention, help to bring the emotion about – and it is an oversimplification to think that because an emotion is deliberate it is therefore less genuine.

In order to propound the idea that emotions often involve choice, Solomon proceeds by drawing a distinction between the situation that evokes the emotion, and the emotion itself. One objection to the voluntary view of emotions is that we do not usually deliberate and choose our immediate emotional responses, and it does usually seem as though our emotions arise uninvited, in the face of an unexpected and possibly disturbing situation. However, Solomon argues, '...it is the situation and circumstances that suddenly confront us, not the emotion.'[454] He goes on to illustrate the point:

> I am driving along a mountain pass and I suddenly see a rock slide in front of me. Depending on my driving skills, my self-confidence, and my previous experience (not to mention my tendency to panic, etc.), both my emotional response and my actions (which cannot be easily separated), are just that, *my responses*. They may be spontaneous, unthinking, and, if I am practiced in the art of driving in dangerous conditions, habitual. My response need not be fully conscious. It certainly need not be articulated or explicitly 'thought' at the time. There is no room for deliberation. What I do and feel no doubt depends on my history of habits and kindred experiences, but it is the situation, *not my emotion* that suddenly confronts me. My response, whatever else it may be, is a *response*, an action of sorts, not a reflex. I am not its recipient or its victim. I am the *agent* of my emotion, and as Aristotle argued in his *Ethics*... we are responsible for *even those actions which are involuntary* if we can be held responsible for the *cultivation* of the relevant habits, perhaps from childhood.[455]

This claim requires some thought. Is Solomon right to say that someone could choose to build their character or disposition so as to cope in this situation? Could a naturally

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[453] Solomon, *Passion's Slave*, p. 199, *cf.* also Robert C. Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Virtues* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2007), p. 27 - 29
[454] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 201
[455] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 201

nervous person ever overcome their tendency to panic in this sort of situation so as to react calmly and rationally? Perhaps the answer to this lies in Solomon's 'some of the time and to some extent' though I think we might want to add here, 'and depending on the latent potentialities in our character'. Some people seem to be 'naturally' able to react calmly, others more nervous and prone to panic. For example, the question of whether a person might overcome their panic and react calmly in this sort of situation may depend on them having a particular kind of intelligence, in that they would have to perceive that they required more confidence in order to remain calm, and that in order to attain greater confidence they would need to adopt positive rather than negative thoughts about themselves. Again, strong will power may be a factor in their ability to react calmly when confronted with a sudden rockslide, and it is impossible to say whether strong will power is something we can choose whether or not to have (especially as the decision to have strong will power may require strong will power). In addition to factors concerning the subject's personality, social factors may also play a part. For example, if the subject is consistently told by their family and friends that they are a bad driver, and particularly if their confidence has been eroded from an early age, they are unlikely to build up their confidence, and so more likely to panic than to remain calm. Finally, age might be another factor that makes the potential to react calmly rather than with panic person-specific. This is partly because people tend to increase in self-knowledge with age and have a kind of confidence that is closely related to this. A person may increase in confidence as they get older and become aware both of their strengths and their limitations, and develop strategies to cope with or compensate for their weaknesses. A naturally nervous person might, with age, become more aware of the fact that they are capable of remaining calm if they take a deep breath and allow themselves time to think, and that this will enable them to make the right responses and so avoid an accident. At the same time, an older person is less likely to be *over*-confident, or arrogantly to feel

that they can break rules or drive at high speeds with impunity. Broadening this out to other examples, the greater chances of older people 'knowing themselves' may mean that they avoid certain situations (if they know that they are prone to becoming violently angry at seeing certain relatives, or very depressed at a sad film, or carried away by lust after a few drinks) or that they develop strategies to cope with these propensities (the proverbial 'counting to ten' when angry, or watching something cheerful after an unhappy film, or only getting drunk in the company of ugly people or celibates). Thus, while I think that Solomon is right than we can choose our emotion, the 'some of the time and to some extent' is crucial, and we might also add that the sorts of emotions we can choose differ very much from person to person (depending on natural propensities, social context, and age, among other things), so that the emotions that one person can choose to have or to avoid might be thrust on someone else against their will.

Solomon goes on to focus on the way in which the voluntarist view of emotions can be applied to romantic or erotic love in particular, where the term 'falling in love' misleadingly implies that it is something over which we have no control. As Alice from the film *Closer* remarks, 'there is always a choice point [in falling in love], where you say to yourself, "go ahead, or don't go ahead."'[456] In fact, Solomon observes, falling in love is often not only one choice but a series of choices:

> Falling in love is not (as the metaphor suggests) a sudden 'fall' but a slow campaign, looking for, finding, and to some extent creating ever new charms and virtues in the beloved (what Stendhal famously calls 'crystallization'). It is not a matter of 'falling but of making incremental decisions and commitments and occasional major ones (saying 'I love you' for the first time), nurturing both the beloved's good feelings, and (more to the point) one's own.[457]

Again, we might here want to qualify Solomon's argument by adding the important 'sometimes and to some extent', for there are surely instances in which falling in love is

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[456] Alice (Natalie Portman) in the film *Closer* (Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2005), cited Solomon, *True to our Feelings*, p. 194

[457] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 202

closer to being involuntary or against one's better judgement. In addition, we might note that even if one can choose to fall in love, we cannot usually so easily 'fall out of love' again if the object of our love turns out to have some unpleasant characteristics or if they display rejection or disinterest towards us. In fact, these things may actually *increase* our love, and this usually against our will. As Proust comments, 'There is no doubt that a person's charms are a less frequent cause of love than a remark such as: "No, this evening I shan't be free."'[458]

Contrary to some more physiological views of emotion, Solomon argues that emotions are not just short-lived incidences, but may be enduring processes. On the basis that emotions are short-term physiological responses, some have eliminated love as an emotion, claiming instead that it is a long-term disposition to have other emotions. In opposition to this view, Solomon argues that love does indeed involve many dispositions (such as the disposition to feel protective, to feel jealous, and to feel moments of passionate affection) but this fact does not make it *just* a disposition. This is also the case with other *long-term* emotions such as long-term anger, indignation, resentment and envy. These involve dispositions, but they should not be excluded from the category of emotion on the bases of their duration and the fact that they do not continuously display physiological arousal. To limit emotions to short-term and physiological responses is arbitrary, counter-intuitive and reductive. Many emotions, and 'especially the morally interesting ones', are processes and not just dispositions or episodes. It is these emotions in particular that are potentially voluntary and over which we have considerable control.[459] Thus Solomon, like Aquinas, draws the link between emotions being non-physiological and emotions being voluntary, and regards these kinds of emotion as 'morally interesting' (and thus, implicitly, intellective or cognitive,

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[458] Marcel Proust, *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* trans. as *In Search of Lost Time* by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and T. Kilmartin, rev. D.J. Enright, (London:Vintage Press, 1996), iv, p. 227

[459] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave* ,p. 202

since, in order to be potentially moral or immoral, they must be potentially rational or irrational [though not necessarily consciously reflected upon]).

Thoughts, which are closely related to emotions, lie somewhere between just appearing and being invited, and it is not always clear when a thought 'just appears' and when we have conjured it up. Solomon follows de Sousa in arguing that what is morally important is not whether the thought is invited or conjured up, but whether it is consistent with one's life and character, and appropriate to a particular context: 'During a metaphysics lecture, thoughts of sex are probably (but certainly not always) uninvited and distracting. During a romantic conversation or a Freud lecture, they tend to be invited if not conjured up'.[460] The way in which we interpret our thoughts is closely related to the context in which they occur, and whether (among other things) we are proud or ashamed of them. This also applies to emotion, insofar as emotions involve thoughts.

We not only have thoughts that are parts of an emotion; we also have thoughts *about* our emotion:

> Getting angry has a lot to do with our 'building a case', our looking for and bringing in more evidence, our deciding that 'yes, I'm right to be so upset and he really was wrong to do that!' Falling in love has a lot to do with entertaining thoughts of the beloved, rehearsing upcoming conversations and remembering, fondly or with distress, past meetings, reaffirming one's love of the beloved, and thinking in terms of the word 'love'.[461]

We need to appreciate the power and pervasiveness of reflection in our emotional life – if we do not, we 'choose' to become passive to our emotions. Reflection on our emotions leads to a further kind of agency and responsibility concerning emotion, in that thoughts about our emotions may lead to certain actions. However, it should be borne in mind that the distinction between the thoughts involved in emotion and the thoughts reflecting on emotion is a very messy one. Developing James' earlier point

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[460] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave,* p. 207
[461] Solomon, *True to our Feelings,* p. 198

about the causative nature of expressive behaviour, Solomon observes that `To *think* that one is in love, or jealous, or angry is not just to recognise one's emotional state. Such thoughts are part and parcel of the emotion'.[462]

Solomon concludes from his discussion that some emotions are voluntary while others are not, conceding that '...to insist that, across the board, we are agents of and responsible for our emotions is surely wrong. However... it is at least as wrong, and far more irresponsible, to insist that, across the board, we are passive with respect to our emotions.'[463] The question then becomes, in what ways and in which emotions are the notions of agency and responsibility the best framework for understanding emotions? Conversely, which emotions should we regard as passive, and in which ways?

Solomon's argument for a voluntarist theory of emotion is that emotions are judgements, and that judgements are acts for which we may be held responsible. Solomon notes that an emotion is generally a set of judgements, and not just a single judgement. These judgements are not necessarily conscious, deliberate or articulate, though they may be all of these things. Crucially, if judgements are unconscious it does not entail that they are involuntary: Our habitual actions are often unconscious yet not lacking intention. In fact, habitual actions can be intentionally rich, such as when one types on a keyboard in order to express one's thoughts. The typing itself is generally unconscious in the relevant sense. Therefore, 'Unconscious actions are still actions, and unconscious intentional actions are still intentional actions'.[464]

One important distinction here is between intentionality and choice. Choice implies deliberation.[465] In contrast, we often 'find ourselves' making judgements – but this does not mean that we do not do them, and do them voluntarily.

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[462] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 210
[463] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 210
[464] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 212
[465] At the same time, Solomon insists that speaking of choice still remains appropriate in cases where one could have chosen otherwise, *even if one didn't think of or consider alternative options*. For example, 'We blame a man for making racist judgements... whether or not it ever occurred to him that he might not

Judgements are like beliefs in that they are not simply made; they involve evidence, a framework, cross-references, consistency and coherence requirements. One cannot simply change one's beliefs. Rather, one has to open oneself to new evidence, reconsider old evidence, and rethink one's beliefs in the light of one's other existing beliefs. One might also voluntarily subject oneself to new influences – for example, by going to Church, taking a course, or joining the Army. Likewise, in order to change one's judgement one might look at certain evidence, think in terms of other judgements and beliefs, seek out new acquaintances, and subject oneself to new influences. Judgements also involve a history and a context. We are responsible for them *in that* we are responsible for cultivating them, criticising them, and correcting them.[466]

Solomon also notes that there is a conflation in much literature on emotion of the idea that emotions are involuntary (passive) and the idea that the *expression* of emotion is involuntary. This is partly due to the notion that the expression of emotion is an essential aspect of emotion. While some behaviourists would go as far as to say that an emotion *is* its expression, Solomon argues that not all expression is equally constitutive of or essential to emotion. He adds that not all expressions of emotion are equally involuntary, passive or unintentional. Body language may differ from verbal language, which again may differ from actions arising out of emotion such as writing a love letter or giving someone a black eye.

However, one might ask, if an expression of emotion is part of the emotion, and some expressions of emotion are involuntary, does that mean that some emotions are (at least in one respect) passive? Solomon agrees that this is indeed the case: `The upshot is that both emotions and their expressions span the entire spectrum from deliberate, intentional actions to "automatic" responses.'[467] However, he cautions against assuming

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make them' (Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 212). I think that this is highly contestable, but that the rest of Solomon's point stands.

[466] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 215

[467] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 222

that what is not entirely deliberate and intentional is therefore not a matter of agency: Even unthinking facial expressions are both *bona fide* expressions, and voluntary to some extent. We are thus responsible for emotions and their expressions, or rather, emotions as expressions, for while the emotion is not *identical* with the expression, the expression is an aspect of the emotion, and it is impossible to separate the two.[468]

In conclusion then, we have seen that Solomon highlights the volitional aspect of emotion, particularly with respect to cultivating and nurturing certain aspects of one's character that lend themselves to some experiences and not others, by developing strategies to cope with unwanted emotional propensities, and by putting oneself into (or else avoiding) certain situations. Central to an appreciation of Solomon's argument is that emotions must be understood within the context of the narrative of the subject's life as a whole, and that (relatedly) emotions are generally long-term processes and not short-term affects. I have suggested a related (and perhaps obvious) point that, while we speak of 'emotions', we should always keep in mind that this is misleading because we experience everything emotionally, and that emotions are integrated rather than separate from the rest of our lives. Solomon's argument also involves the idea that emotions are on a volitional spectrum, with most being somewhere between completely chosen on the one hand, and thrust upon one against one's will, on the other. Solomon's argument is persuasive in that it 'rings true' to experience, provided that one keeps in mind his all-important qualification that emotions can be chosen *'some of the time and to some extent'*. I have also suggested a further qualification to 'some of the time and to some extent': That the extent to which emotions can be chosen or controlled might also be person-specific, depending on the natural emotional propensities of that person, and other factors such as their age, background (whether they have been encouraged or discouraged in their attempts to overcome or control a particular emotion from an early

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[468] Solomon, *Not Passion's Slave*, p. 222

age), a particular type of intelligence which may allow them to perceive how they might deal with their emotions (what Daniel Goleman termed 'emotional intelligence'[469]), and previous experience. It is notable that the 'sort' (as distinct from type) of emotions that Solomon says are (or can be) chosen or controlled the most are the long-term processes, which are the most 'morally interesting' and the least likely to be 'unintelligent' or strongly physiological. This is important because the sorts of emotion that are intelligent and morally interesting are the emotions passibilists are generally most concerned to attribute to God, and because associating characteristics such as intelligent, non-physiological and voluntary as typical of particular emotion sorts but not others strongly recalls the Augustinian and Thomist distinction between passions and affections, while adding a qualification: These characteristics of emotion must always be understood as being on a spectrum, and not as two polar opposite kinds of emotion. For the purposes of this discussion, therefore, I suggest that the impassibilist argument against divine emotions that is based on the idea that emotions are incompatible with God's omnipotence is not conclusive, because some emotions can be chosen and controlled. Furthermore, it is precisely these sort of emotions that we would want to attribute to God anyway, because these emotions are also likely to be the most intelligent, non-physiological, and 'morally interesting'.

Emotions as passive

While Solomon argues that our susceptibility to having an emotion can be under our control to some extent, Cook contends that the determinative factor for the impassibility debate is not about our susceptibility to emotions, but about whether the *subjective experience* of an emotion is within or beyond our immediate control. Cook asserts that

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[469] Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (Bantam Books, 1995). The idea of emotional intelligence already had some currency in the scientific world, but Goleman popularised the idea and brought it to other disciplines.

we cannot have an emotion at will, or stop having it at will, and, additionally, throughout the duration of an emotion we are more or less preoccupied with the emotion's object, and that this preoccupation is generally not entirely of our choosing.[470] Because our subjective experience of an emotion seems beyond our control, emotions are passive, and should not be attributed to an omnipotent God.

Cook begins by clarifying his position: He does not claim that emotions are essentially overpowering (though there are situations in which they are overpowering) but, rather, that emotions are essentially passive. We are passive to something when something *happens to us*. This, claims Cook, entails that we have no control over it: '...an essential and central characteristic of emotion is that it is a *passive* experience. An emotion involves something that *happens* to us. And in this sense, it is something over which we do not have control.'[471] However, it is worth noting at this point that the fact that something happens to us does not entail that we have no control over it. I might go to a health spa and ask for a massage. During the massage I would have something done to me – I would be passive in the relevant sense – and yet I would nevertheless be in control of the situation: I would have instigated the massage, and I would be able to stop it at any time I pleased. Thus it is worth noting that, despite the link that Cook makes, there is no necessary connection between passivity and not being in control. Therefore, while Cook is correct that we often do not control things that happen to us, there are situations in which we do control things that happen to us, and that 'not being in control' is not essential to something happening to us. We may choose for something to happen to us, and be in control of it when it does happen.

Cook argues that two components of emotions are affects (changes that occur in our body and/or minds), and evaluations or perceptions. Affects, he claims, are beyond our immediate control when we have emotions. For example, in the case, of non-bodily

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[470] See Cook, 'Impassibility', p. 58
[471] Cook, 'Impassibility', p. 62-63

'psychic' or mental affects, '...one cannot produce or eliminate a non-bodily feeling of pleasure or pain merely by willing it. Rather, it is necessary to think or to cease thinking about something pleasant or painful'.[472] With respect to the evaluation/perception component of emotion, Cook argues that one cannot start evaluating or perceiving, or cease evaluating or perceiving, a particular object at will, such that one starts having or ceases having the relevant emotion:

> However, changing my perception (or evaluation) is not something I can do at will, because changing my perception would involve changing some of the beliefs, desires, and attitudes which go up to make my perception, and these are not the sorts of things that are susceptible of change at will.[473]

So both components of emotion – affectivity and evaluation – are passive, and cannot be turned on and off at will.[474]

Suffice it to note for the moment that Cook's argument here raises serious questions about what we mean by 'control'. If, by control, we mean that we can turn something on and off at will in the way that we have control of a light switch, then Cook is surely correct, since we cannot simply turn our emotions or our beliefs on or off. If, on the other hand, we adopt Solomon's view of 'control' as 'like coordinating one's actions through practice, like riding a bike, which may be 'mindless' (that is, wholly unreflective and unselfconscious) but is nevertheless voluntary and both very much within one's control and a continuous matter of choice'[475] then Cook's position is more debatable. I shall return to this point later.

Returning to Cook's argument, a further respect in which emotions are, according to Cook, passive and out of the subject's control, is that when we have an

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[472] Cook, 'Impassibility, p. 71
[473] Cook, 'Impassibility', p. 74
[474] However, we may note that by the same criteria, and by Cook's own admission, beliefs and attitudes (in short, thoughts) are also beyond our control and passive. As Solomon recognises, if we want to change our beliefs and attitudes we have to open ourselves to new influences, rethink related beliefs, revisit the evidence, and so on. Presumably Cook nevertheless attributes beliefs and attitudes (correct ones) to God in line with the rest of Christian theism.
[475] Solomon, *True to our Feelings*, p. 191

emotion we experience our thoughts being focused and intensified in relation to the object of the emotion. This focusing and intensification is not something we choose; rather '... we find that the object of our emotion always attracts or engages our attention in a way that is not entirely voluntary. Sometimes the emotion is so strong that the object can be said to *grip* our attention.'[476] While this is most obviously true of powerful emotions, Cook asserts, though without evidence or illustration, that 'the general idea holds good for milder experiences of emotion as well'.[477] Thus, he argues, our attention is passive in relation to the object of the emotion.

That the object of even mild emotional experiences 'grips' our attention seems to me counter-intuitive in that it seems contrary to our experiences. I might be mildly looking forward to having a bath this evening, or mildly dreading having to eat my mother-in-law's cooking at Christmas, but these emotions are unlikely to grip my attention involuntarily if they are only mild emotions. Again, I might be mildly irritated with a friend for being late when meeting me for coffee, or mildly pleased with my flatmate for remembering to get some washing-up liquid when she went into town. However, I cannot imagine any of these emotions gripping my attention involuntarily, and I think that I am not unusual in this respect. It is possible to imagine a very highly-strung person becoming very angry about his friend's lateness, or a very excitable and domestically-minded person being overjoyed that their flatmate remembered to get washing-up liquid and so having their attention gripped by the particular object in question; but in these cases the emotion would cease to be a mild emotion and become an intense or powerful emotion. Therefore, I think that Cook's account of emotion is one-sided, and that he emphasises the characteristics of one-off, intense and powerful emotions over and against the characteristics of long-term and/or mild emotions.[478]

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[476] Cook, 'Impassibility, p. 74
[477] Cook, 'Impassibility', p. 75
[478] That an emotion is long-term and ongoing does not entail that it is mild – though it is not likely to be *felt* with equal intensity all the time.

While we noted that Solomon tends to emphasise the opposite sort of emotions, i.e. emotions that are long-term processes, the one-sidedness is more problematic in Cook's thesis because Cook is claiming that *all* emotions are passive, while Solomon only claims that emotions could be active some of the time and to some extent.

Cook adds to his diagnosis of the passivity of the emotions that 'Whereas non-emotional cognitive judgements are made '*actively*, consciously, and (for the most part) freely'[479] this is not the case with the judgements that are involved when we have an emotion'.[480]

I think Cook's point here is deeply flawed. This is because, I would suggest, it is not at all clear that non-emotional judgements are active or conscious or voluntary (we make lots of unconscious/subconscious and involuntary judgements, such as 'That ball is going to hit me - I'd better move') and, as Cook himself has already noted in the quotation above, we often cannot simply change our judgements at will (or, as Cook puts it, our beliefs and attitudes, which are surely closely related to judgements if not identical), just as we often cannot just change our emotions at will. Conversely, as we have already argued, emotions are not always passive or unconscious or involuntary. In addition, we have already seen in the previous chapter that emotions involve evaluations and judgements, and, following Nussbaum, may even be evaluations and judgements. Thus Cook's polarisation of judgement and emotion is very problematic, since it does not accurately reflect the interrelatedness of emotions and judgements, and the fact that both emotions and judgements are sometimes passive, unconscious and involuntary, sometimes active, conscious and voluntary, and often a mixture of all of these things.

Cook concludes from his discussion so far that 'To a considerable extent – more so than is generally the case with non-emotional thinking – our thoughts are not under

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[479] B.W. Helm, *Emotional Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 65, Helm's emphasis.
[480] Cook, 'Impassibility', p. 75

our control, but cluster around our perception of the object of the emotion.'[481] It is undoubtedly true that the thoughts that are involved in our emotions are not always under our control and that they tend to focus on the object of our emotion, and it may well be true that this is the case more with emotional thinking than with 'non-emotional thinking'; but what it does not show is that emotional thinking is *always* passive in these senses; even less that it is *essentially* so.

Cook proceeds to relate the idea that emotions are essentially passive and cannot be controlled to divine passibility. His argument is basically that the fact that emotions take place independently of the subject's immediate will means that attributing them to God is extremely problematic. In order to argue this, Cook begins by outlining the distinction Heschel makes between necessitated reactions (a reaction that is wholly determined by external factors or conditions; e.g. chemical reactions, reflex responses, and hypnotism) and occasioned reactions (in which the subject chooses how to respond to the object), and the analogous distinction Sarot makes between being causally affected (= a necessitated reaction) and being personally affected (= an occasioned reaction). Heschel and Sarot attribute occasioned reactions and being personally affected to God, aiming to show how God can be responsive to the world without the world determining his response.

Cook argues that the problem with this solution is that it does not take account of the 'occurrency' of the emotion – that is, of the emotional experience itself.[482] Sarot's analysis of emotions is actually an analysis of emotional tendencies and not of emotions themselves. While emotional tendencies may be occassioned reactions, Cook argues, emotions themselves are necessitated reactions. He explains that although

> ...when we have an emotion, we access or evaluate the particular object in a certain sort of way, there is not a process of deliberation whereby we decide whether to have the emotion or not. This is a basic difference between a response to someone's attempt to persuade us to act and our

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[481] Cook, 'Impassibility, p. 78
[482] Cook, 'Impassibility, p. 83

> emotional 'response to some situation that has occurred. One is an *activity* and the other is a (passive) *reaction.*[483]

Thus, according to Cook, the attempt to justify divine emotions on the basis that they do not cause God to be acted upon does not accurately reflect the nature of emotions. Again, I suspect a tendency on Cook's part to treat emotions as one-off events, separate from the emotional narrative that goes on in our lives all the time, and of which conspicuous emotions are only one small part. I shall return to this point below.

Cook closes his discussion by saying that if we conceive of a divine emotion as something that God *chooses* to have, then it is difficult to see how it is a real emotion, for emotions are basically and essentially passive experiences.

Throughout my discussion of Cook I have intimated various objections that could be made to Cook's argument, and here I would like to develop four of them further. First, Cook unquestioningly adopts an understanding of 'control' in relation to emotions that is only one of many models of control, and one which puts the idea of emotions being controllable at an immediate disadvantage. Cook's argument is basically that we cannot control emotions (and beliefs, attitudes, desires and evaluations) because we cannot turn them on and off at demand, as we would turn on and off a light switch, or push a pen across a table. However, many other understandings of control are possible. As Solomon argues, the one most appropriate to the way in which we sometimes control our emotions is that of coordinating our actions through practice. While some instances of emotion are more controllable than others (and some are doubtless not controllable at all), many instances of emotion are (like beliefs and attitudes) open to re-evaluation, cultivation and correction, and are not beyond our control.

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[483] Cook, 'Impassibility, p. 84

Second, Cook is looking at emotions as one-off events, not as processes integrated into our lives as a whole. This means that he erroneously separates the subject's susceptibility to emotions and the emotions themselves. In reality, my anger is both my susceptibility or predisposition to anger, and my ongoing angry outbursts, as well as being the general anger that goes on all the time and of which I am not generally aware. Likewise, my love for my husband is both my disposition or tendency to feel certain things towards or about my husband, and also the specific feelings that are foregrounded during a romantic meal out or when he volunteers to do the washing up. Moreover, both my anger and my love are things I carry into every situation in my everyday life, regardless of whether or not I am aware of them at any particular time. Thus, what Cook regards as our susceptibility towards certain emotions is actually also the emotions themselves, and in nurturing our emotional tendencies and susceptibilities we are also choosing which emotions to have and which emotions to avoid. For this reason, Cook's argument that the subjective experience of emotions is passive and that this renders emotion inappropriate to God is not conclusive, since (while it may seem to us that we are passive to our subjective experiences) in fact we have nurtured and cultivated our emotional tendencies and emotional lives of which these seemingly one-off emotions are simply one small part.

Third, partly as a result of the fact that Cook's account of emotion is one-sided because he tends to view emotions as one-off events (which tend to happen to us in a way that long-term emotions such as love for a spouse or child do not), Cook persuasively shows that our emotions are sometimes passive, but he does not show that they are always passive, and so he cannot begin to show that they are essentially passive. That sometimes our subjective experiences of emotions do seem to render us passive is not conclusive, since the fact that we also sometimes seem to be active in our subjective experience of emotion (such as in someone's freely chosen love of their

spouse) means that passivity is not essential or necessary to emotion. Thus Cook's argument does not show that an omnipotent God could not have emotions, but only that an omnipotent God would not experience emotions that overcame him beyond his control.

Fourth, as a result of the fact that he erroneously regards passivity as entailing that one is not in control of a situation, Cook overlooks the possibility that God might choose to have something happen to him, or to be passive, and thus overlooks the possibility that God might choose to have emotions. As a result, Cook does not discuss the question of whether God not being able to have emotions is more or less of a threat to divine omnipotence than the alternative idea that God's impassibility renders him unable to choose to have emotions. Is the idea that God is subject to change by something outside himself – where this 'subject-ness' is according to God's will – really contrary to divine omnipotence? Surely, as Theopompus points out to Gregory Thaumaturgos, the idea that God *cannot* choose to be susceptible to things outside his control is more of a threat to his omnipotence than the idea that he *can* choose to undergo emotion.

Suffering and passivity

While the impassibilist case is not persuasive in respect of saying that emotions are always passive, there is another objection to the idea of God having certain emotions that concerns suffering, the will, and divine omnipotence, and which may still dissuade us from wanting to say that God has emotions such as those involved in suffering.

While I have shown that emotions in general do not entail passivity, there is a problem with the emotional experiences involved in suffering (in which we may include not only sadness, but also compassion, anger and jealousy) more particularly. At the

root of the problem is the fact that, in order to avoid diminishing God's omnipotence and sovereignty, some passibilists have argued that God chooses to suffer. For example, Moltmann argues that there is not in God 'a fateful subjection to suffering', but rather an 'active suffering... [in which God] lays himself open to the suffering which love for another brings him; and yet, by virtue of his love, he remains master of the pain that love causes him to suffer'.[484] Similarly Fiddes is keen to emphasise that God always remains in control of his suffering:

> When God chooses to make our suffering his own he is *subject* to suffering, but not *subjected* by it; he is under constraint from suffering, but it has no power to overwhelm him because he has freely chosen it as part of his own being. He triumphs over suffering because he chooses it for a purpose.[485]

I already argued that emotions are not necessarily involuntary, and yet there is a problem with the idea of emotions and choice that is peculiar to the emotional experiences involved in suffering. This problem is that it seems to be an integral aspect of suffering that we do not have control over our suffering, that we do not choose to suffer. Simone Weil expresses this aspect of suffering when she says: '...it is the essence of affliction that it is suffered unwillingly'[486] and Origen says that suffering is 'an experience outside the control of the will'.[487] It is part of what suffering is that we do not want it or control it. This is essentially the point made by Jarvis Cocker in Pulp's song 'Common People': While the wealthy and educated woman in the song hopes to experience what common people experience, and believes she can acquire this by living like common people, doing what common people do, and sleeping with common people, the lyrics in the song tell her that 'still you'll never get it right, 'cos when you're laid in bed at night watching roaches climb the wall, if you called your dad he could

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[484] Moltmann, quoted in Richard Bauckham, 'In Defence of *The Crucified God*' in de S. Cameron, N.M. ed. *The Power and Weakness of God* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House Books, 1990), p. 106
[485] Fiddes, *Creative Suffering*, p. 62
[486] Simone Weil, *Gateway to God* (London, 1974), p 87-88
[487] Origen, *Contra Celsum* 2.23; trans. and ed. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: The University Press, 1965), p. 88

stop it all'; consequently she will 'never understand how it feels to live [her] life with no meaning or control'.[488] Despite her best efforts she will never live like common people, or do what common people do. The artist explains that this is because she will never 'fail like common people', or 'watch her life slide out of view'. The point here is that while the woman can take on most aspects of poverty and suffering, the aspects she cannot take on are that she always will have chosen suffering, and the suffering will never be outside her control: Because she can call her dad to stop it all she will never be helpless in the face of the suffering. This, claims Cocker, means that her project will not succeed: She can never really know what it is like to suffer as a result of poverty.

By analogy, a situation in which God suffers but chooses this suffering, where he remains in control of his suffering, perhaps means that, like the woman in 'Common People', he will never get it right. A situation of suffering in which the subject is not to a greater or lesser extent helpless or unable to do anything about their suffering does not seem to be suffering in an authentic sense; like the woman, God may just be mimicking at the sort of suffering that people undergo. This would suggest that, like the woman in 'Common People', God mimics at suffering rather than experiencing suffering authentically, thus raising questions about the moral credibility, omniscience, and intelligence, of God.

However, on reflection we might note that choosing suffering does not entail mimicking suffering. In other words, it is not clear that involuntariness is essential to suffering. Consider, for example, a woman who chooses to experience morning sickness and later birth-pains in order to have a baby, or a martyr who is tortured and executed because he won't relinquish his beliefs. In both cases the people in question could choose not to suffer – the woman could choose not to get pregnant after all, or could terminate her pregnancy, and the martyr could simply convert to another religion and

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[488] Pulp, 'Common People', lyrics available at http://www.musicsonglyrics.com/P/pulplyrics/pulpcommonpeoplelyrics.htm (accessed on 26th October 2007)

relinquish his own – yet we would not want to say that the sufferings of the martyr or the pregnant woman are less severe or less authentic simply because they could do something about them.

To give a fleshier example, consider the following situation. A young man from a rich family who has hitherto led a luxurious and sometimes debauched life believes that he has been told by God to give away all his possessions and to dedicate himself to the poor. After some initial resistance, and much to the chagrin of his parents (who believe his choice to be a passing whim), he gives his wealth to the needy, stops working in the family business, cuts off ties with friends who are addicted to vice, and passes over the opportunity of making a lucrative or politically advantageous marriage. Dressed in rags and eating only leftovers he makes his way to a nearby leper colony where he embraces these social outcasts, and tenderly looks after them, seeing in them the image of God, identifying with their sufferings as well as experiencing his own. His compassion and humility are deeply rooted, and he sees this compassion and humility as rooted in the compassion and humility of God in the incarnation. Gathering like-minded people, he founds a school for the orphans of lepers, and a Church in which lepers and their families will not be shunned. His identification with the sufferings of Christ is so strong that eventually he is granted the stigmata, which he bandages up to avoid self-aggrandisement, despite the great pain it causes him. Eventually, and foreseeably, he contracts leprosy too, but continues to lead a life of prayer and service to others, remaining tender, cheerful and faithful to the end of his life.

Our saint is not unlike the woman in 'Common People'. Like the woman in 'Common People' he comes from a rich background, and his descent into poverty is freely chosen, not inflicted by birth. Like the woman in 'Common People' he is also able to escape the situation if he pleases: His parents disapprove of his choice, and he need only return home to be welcomed back like the Prodigal Son. He has both chosen

his suffering, and is in control of it. Yet despite the similarities to the woman in 'Common People', we intuitively feel that his suffering is authentic while that of the woman is mimicry. So, if the crux of the matter is not the voluntariness or otherwise of suffering, what is it that distinguishes our saint from Cocker's would-be common woman?

One possible answer to this question lies in the fact that the woman in 'Common People' is at pains to pretend that she, like the authentic common people, really does come from a poor background: Cocker instructs her on two occasions to 'pretend' in order to fit in, first when he tells her to 'pretend' she has no money in the supermarket, and, second, when he says that she should 'pretend' that she never went to school. The saint in our example, by contrast, does not pretend to be something he is not; while dressing like a beggar and living with lepers, he does not deny that he has had a privileged background, and the fact that he has given up the privileged background is not seen to make his suffering less authentic, but, rather, to give a meaning and value to his very real suffering. The woman is pretending to be someone else, while the saint is not. However, the issue of pretence is part of a larger difference between the woman in 'Common People' and the saint. This is, I suggest, to do with the person's motivation for becoming poor, and the value we give these motivations.

Cocker is not particularly explicit about the woman's motivations in the first half of the song, and leaves it open to us to interpret why she might want to live like a common person. One option he presents us with is that the woman 'has a thirst for knowledge' – the implication seems to be that the singer initially believes that the woman wishes to experience poverty to learn what it is like. The way the song develops, however, suggests that (despite having agreed to her plan at first, albeit partly on the basis of the suggestion of sexual gratification) he quickly becomes disillusioned with her plan and suspicious of her motivations. By the end he offers us a more explicit

explanation for why she began the project: Because she thinks that being 'poor is cool'. Far from realising the suffering that does in fact take place for people who suffer out of poverty, the woman sees poverty as a sort of fashion accessory. Her motivation, then, is to do with her own image – both in terms of the way she sees herself and in terms of the way she is perceived by friends. This makes the suffering less authentic, I suggest, not because she could stop it all, but because the reasons for which she accepts suffering are lacking in value: They are superficial, pretentious, and lacking an appreciation of what poverty really is.

By contrast, the saint accepts suffering because of his love for God and his identification with the poor and outcast, in whom he recognises God. He does not enjoy the suffering for itself or think of the suffering as something that enhances his self-image; rather, the suffering is something he takes on in order to care for the sick, whom he loves, and because he believes it to be the outworking of God's salvific love in the world. As such, the suffering he experiences is authentic, because it is accepted as part and parcel of a greater good – service towards God and humanity. We might hypothesise that if, as in the film *The Last Temptation of Christ*, the woman and the saint were given the chance to lead their old comfortable lives while a phantom carried out their impoverished new life, the woman might agree, since she would still look cool, while the saint would share the conviction of the hypothetical Jesus that 'You can't save the world by lying'.[489] The woman's suffering is mimicry, then, because everything about the way she undertakes it is mimicry – she makes pretences, she is concerned with how she looks and not how she is. The saint's suffering is authentic because he undertakes it authentically – not with pretences about who he is but hoping to become more *fully* what he is, and not because he is concerned with his appearance towards others but because he seeks to live out his experience of God's love. Of course, we

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[489] Jesus to the philanthropic Paul, in the film *The Last Temptation of Christ* (Universal City Studios, 1988)

might note that the saint's suffering is still different to the suffering of one of the impoverished lepers whom he tends – but this difference does not lie in the authenticity of the suffering but in the meaning and value that are part of the saint's suffering by virtue of his motivations for suffering (and not by virtue of the fact that he chose it). In addition, the saint not only suffers his own sufferings but also, because of his solidarity with the lepers, he experiences their sufferings also. Therefore the saint's sufferings are not less authentic than the sufferings of someone who has not chosen suffering, but simply given greater meaning and value by the motivations for which suffering is undertaken, and this meaning and value does not detract from the intensity or authenticity of the suffering; in fact the saint suffers more than the person who does not choose suffering because he also experiences the helplessness and sense of meaningless of the lepers around him. In this way, we can see that the idea that suffering is only authentic if it is not freely chosen and if we have no control over it is erroneous. It is rather that the authenticity of chosen suffering is dependent upon the value of the motivations for which the suffering is chosen.

The question then becomes, what are God's motivations for accepting or choosing to suffer? Does he, like the woman, choose to suffer for superficial or selfish reasons (for example, because it gives him a certain sort of knowledge, and so adds to his perfections[490]), and does he imitate helplessness and humility? Or are the motivations for God's suffering (as the source of the saint's actions suggest) more akin to those of the saint? The question of God's motivation for choosing to suffer is not an easy one, and a variety of portrayals of Jesus (from Docetic ones in the ancient world to ones that view Jesus as a 'superhero' in the modern[491]) have diminished the authenticity

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[490] *cf.* Sarot, *Passibility*, pp. 56; 70 and David Brown, 'Problem of Pain', p. 55 - 6

[491] The film *Priest* puts this problem very acutely when Fr. Greg says tearfully and angrily to Christ: 'I look around for an example. I'm in the depths of despair. I look around for an example, and all there is is you. But you perform miracles. You change water into wine. You raise the dead. You, you cured the sick. What kind of example is that? How could you possibly know despair? 'Oh well, I'm feeling a bit low today. I think I'll, I'll raise somebody from the dead'. How could you, with that kind of power,

of Christ's suffering and vulnerability, thus suggesting that the suffering of God in Godself cannot be taken seriously. However, suffice it to say that for much Christian theology, God's suffering (exemplified in the suffering of the incarnate Christ) is motivated by love for humanity, rather than by a desire to add anything to God's own perfections. While it is not within the scope of this thesis to explore this theme further (which moves away from issues surrounding emotion and the will), we might point to Kierkegaard's thought-experiment of the King and the maiden in his *Philosophical Fragments* as a way of exploring why God's love means that God takes on humanity's weakness and vulnerability in the incarnation, Moltmann's expression of both the Father and the Son's very real yet chosen suffering on the cross, and Fiddes' discussion of how God in Godself (as well as in the Person of Christ) may choose to limit himself, suffer change, and even experience death and non-being.

Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter I followed Solomon, arguing that emotions are not always passive and not always suffered involuntarily, and that some emotions can be cultivated and nurtured in line with our desires and beliefs about the world. In arguing this I hoped to show that the argument that God cannot have emotions because the passivity of emotions would diminish God's omnipotence is not conclusive, since it relies on the fallacious position that emotions are necessarily passive. In addition, I highlighted the fact that, as Solomon argues, it is the 'morally interesting' emotions that are processes rather than dispositions or episodes, and that it is these that are potentially voluntary and active. Building on this, I have noted that there is an implicit distinction between emotions that are voluntary, not essentially physiological, and intelligent on the

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know what I'm going through right now?' A related point is also made earlier on in the film about the idea that Christ would have certainty of God and heaven, while the rest of humanity has only a faith that is often shaken or called into question (*Priest* [Polygram Filmed Entertainment, 1995])

one hand, and those that are strongly physiological, passive and non-cognitive on the other, and that this mirrors Augustine and Thomas' distinction between the passions and the affections. However, while Augustine and Thomas' passions and affections might be interpreted (rightly or wrongly) as being two quite separate phenomena, I would want to say (with Solomon) that these experiences are in fact on a spectrum from emotions that are cognitive, deliberate mental actions with little physiological disturbance, to emotions that are automatic and highly physiological responses which include little or no deliberation. The distinction between emotions that are cognitive, voluntary and non-physiological (at one end of the spectrum) and those that are non-cognitive, passive and strongly physiological (at the other) is exciting for passibilist theology since it suggests that the former kind of emotion may be predicated of God without diminishing God's omnipotence, challenging God's incorporeality, and (since some emotions can be uniquely revelatory of value) may also be an aspect of God's omniscience.

In the second part of the chapter, I dealt with a specific problem concerning the predication of suffering to God in passibilist theology. This problem is that for some passibilists suffering is regarded as being chosen by God and in accordance with God's will, and yet (others have argued) it is the essence of suffering that it is experienced involuntarily. This raises a difficult question about whether an omnipotent God could ever really suffer, or whether God's suffering would always be mimicry.

Juxtaposing the would-be common woman in Pulp's song 'Common People' and the life of a saint who freely chooses to suffer in order to serve God and care for suffering humanity, I attempted to show that suffering does not need to be suffered unwillingly in order to be authentic – in fact, some people freely choose suffering and yet we would not want to say of the saint, the martyr or the pregnant woman that their suffering is less authentic because they have chosen it. Rather, I suggested, the

authenticity of the suffering depends not on the involuntariness of the suffering but on the value of the motivations for which suffering is undertaken. God's suffering is authentic, because God's motivation for suffering is not superficial or selfish (as is the woman's in 'Common People') but is freely undertaken because of God's love for the world. This suggests that there is not a problem with saying that God chooses to suffer – God's suffering can still be considered authentic despite the fact that God's omnipotence is maintained.

An undercurrent of the second part of this chapter (and a theme in the thesis as a whole) is that the polarisation of passibilism and impassibilism is in some respects a modern construct in which impassibilism is read back into the theology of the early Fathers, often missing the fact that a more nuanced position is being put forward. In this chapter, I contributed to this undercurrent by highlighting that the passibilism of Moltmann and Fiddes (who claim that God's suffering is freely chosen) is close to the 'impassibilism' of Gregory Thaumaturgos and others, who asserted that God suffers while maintaining that this suffering is in accordance with God's will. This suggests that passibilism may not be as radical or untraditional to Christian theology as surveys of the impassibilism debate often portray.

In the final chapter I shall continue to enquire into the question of what sort of being can have emotions, looking specifically at the relation between emotions and the body.

Chapter Six: Emotion, the Body, and Divine Incorporeality

Introduction

In this chapter I shall discuss the relation between emotional experience and the body, and ask whether it makes sense to attribute emotional experience to an incorporeal being. I shall begin by providing a summary and critique of Sarot, who argues that emotions are essentially physiological, and that therefore a passible God must be a corporeal one. Having argued that Sarot's argument is flawed, I shall turn to three questions about the relations between emotions and the body. First I shall ask whether emotions are simply kinds of bodily feelings. I shall attempt to show that emotions are not merely types of bodily feeling through a critical examination of the penile bloody volume experiment, which, I shall suggest, highlights why the presuppositions of the physical reductionist position are erroneous. Second, I shall ask whether the body is a prerequisite of emotions. I shall suggest that there is an analogy between thoughts and emotions with respect to this question, in that we can see that a body is a prerequisite for both thoughts and emotions in the case of humans, but that this should not incline us to think that a body must also be a prerequisite for thoughts and emotions in the case of God. Third, I shall question whether the physical experiences we have when we have an emotion are intrinsic or extrinsic to the emotion. Here I shall follow the Augustinian and Thomist distinction between emotions that are intrinsically physiological and emotions that are not, with the qualification that it is not the case that most emotions fit into one category of the other (i.e. are either physical or non-physical), but, rather, that emotional experiences are on a spectrum of physicality. I shall take as a case study the emotional experiences involved in sexual desire in order to give a sense of the ways in which emotions and the body can interact in humans and in order to counter-balance the emphasis on more cognitive emotional experiences in chapters four and five. I hope to

show from this discussion that while some emotional experiences may be attributed to God, others may be excluded from the divine life by virtue of their essentially physiological nature.

Overview of the debate in theology: Marcel Sarot

In his chapter six, on the connection between divine passibility and corporeality, Sarot sets out to answer the question of whether the specific experiences that are ascribed to God by passibilists can be ascribed to an *incorporeal* God. Sarot's argument may be summarised as follows. First, an incorporeal God cannot undergo bodily sensations because bodily sensations are necessarily located, and incorporeality entails non-locatedness. Second, feelings, physical pain, and strong and intense emotions all necessarily involve bodily sensations. Therefore an incorporeal God would only be able to experience weak and calm emotions (and associated experiences, such as weak and calm instances of mental pain, suffering, affects, passions, sympathy, empathy and compassion). As passibilists tend to want to attribute strong and intense affective experiences (emotions, feelings, etc.) to God, the specific experiences ascribed to God by passibilists cannot be ascribed to an incorporeal God.

Is Sarot's argument conclusive? Must we either reject passibilism, or else accept that God is, in some sense, bodily? What follows is a deeper exploration of Sarot's argument, and a critique of some of the assumptions, and methods, Sarot employs to reach his conclusions.

Sarot begins his argument with an analysis of the concept of emotion. Sarot agrees with the consensus that there is no adequate definition of an emotion, and so turns to a list of dimensions or aspects of emotion drawn up by Paul R. and Anne M Kleinginna. This list, according to Sarot, gives a far less biased impression of what,

according to contemporary theorists, are the constituents of emotion than any definitional account gives. The aspects are:

1. The feeling dimension: The *bodily* feelings involved in our experience of emotion. These may be localised bodily sensations (such as feeling a lump in one's throat), feelings of general bodily condition (such as feeling ill), feelings of hedonic tone (such as feeling happy) or feelings of tendency (such as feeling like going for a walk)
2. The cognitive or evaluative dimension: The appraisal of the object of an emotion (such as appraising someone's qualities as attractive), or the labelling of the emotional state oneself (recognising one's emotional state as happiness, anger, envy etc)
3. The external causes of emotion (or external stimuli)
4. The physiological changes involved in emotion: Changes in involuntary bodily processes (such as changes in heart rate or blood pressure, the constriction or dilation of blood vessels, changes in the electricity-conducting properties of the skin, in muscle tension, or in the waves emitted by the brain)
5. The expressive behaviour involved in emotion. This might be actions performed voluntarily to express the emotion (such as shouting angrily, or looking fondly), and also involuntary physiological effects that are externally observable (for example, crying, blushing, jumping with fright).
6. The disruptive dimension of emotion: Emotions *may* cause disturbing effects and disrupt normal patterns of behaviour
7. The adaptive dimension of emotion: Emotions may increase the likelihood of the subject meeting his or her needs

8. The motivational dimension of emotion: Emotions involving desire may motivate us to meet our needs and goals, while emotions involving disgust may motivate us to avoid those things we fear or find repulsive.

I think it is worth noting that one strength of Kleinginna and Kleinginna's list of dimensions is that it appeals to the diverse approaches to emotion: Some dimensions correspond to the sorts of things biologists would see as important in emotion, some to those things highlighted by philosophers, and others to those pertinent to psychology. In this way, the list spans most of the disciplines that deal with emotion and provides a view that is both relatively comprehensive and non-controversial. Kleinginna and Kleinginna do go on to produce a new definition of emotion on the basis of the list but Sarot, I think rightly, regards the list as more useful than the definition that is derived from it. Interestingly Sarot terms the eight aspects 'constituents' of emotion, while for Kleinginna and Kleinginna they are aspects or dimensions. The significance of this seems to me to be that for Kleinginna and Kleinginna they are different ways of looking at the phenomena of emotion, while for Sarot they become more like a list of things that an experience must be to be an emotion. This is not to say that Sarot accepts the eight constituents as necessary constituents of emotion: Later on in the chapter he comes back to the question of whether 1 (feelings) and 4 (physiological changes) are essential to emotion, concluding that feelings are essential to emotion, while physiological feelings are not.

Sarot proceeds with his enquiry by asking which of the eight aspects requires the possession of a body. He concludes that 1 and 4 (feelings and physiological changes) both require a body. Sarot then turns to the question of whether the other experiences ascribed to God by passibilists also incorporate (bodily) feelings and physiological changes. First, he begins with the term 'feelings' and uses as his basis the inventory of different types of feeling developed in William Alston's 'Emotion and Feeling':

'1. Perceptual: feel a cool breeze on one's cheeks.
2. Exploratory: Feel for the light switch.
3. Localized bodily sensation: feel a shooting pain in the foot, a lump in the throat, a tingling in one's hand.
4. General bodily condition: feel sleepy, tired, feverish, refreshed.
5. Hedonic tone: feel good, contented, satisfied.
6. Emotional: feel distressed, embarrassed, homesick, depressed, enthusiastic.
7. Tendency: feel like taking a walk.
8. Epistemic: feel that a certain team will win, that things are improving.
9. Attitudinal: feel sorry for him, unsure of myself, drawn to her.'[492]

Sarot argues that 3,4,5 and 7 are all among the constituents of emotion, and so do not need separate treatment as 'feelings'. He also excludes 6 from consideration, on the basis that someone can be envious, loving, angry etc without feeling envious, loving, angry etc, and so when we say that someone feels a particular emotion we are saying that they have a certain emotion and that they also feel that emotion, and so 6 is covered by the concept of emotion and does not need separate treatment. 1, 2 and 8 may also be excluded from consideration as they are not attributed to an impassible God. This leaves 9. Feeling sorry for someone, for example, is attributed to God, and is not among the constituents of emotion. Sarot notes that sometimes we do speak of feeling sorry for someone as an emotion but, he suggests, this is not the sort of 'feeling sorry for' that Alston has in mind. Alston is thinking rather of long-term sympathetic attitudes. For example, Bertrand may feel sorry for Leo for having an unhappy marriage, because he knows that this is an ongoing source of unhappiness in Leo's life. This attitude of feeling sorry for Leo might have gone on for many years, without having been continuously conscious. Thus one can feel sorry for someone in a long-term, attitudinal way. From this Sarot draws the distinction between occurrent and dispositional feelings. Occurrent feelings have a limited duration, while dispositional ones mean that one has a disposition to have a certain (occurrent) feeling in certain circumstances. This means that attitudinal feelings are dependent (or, in Sarot's term, 'parasitic') on occurrent feelings, and so there is no need to discuss them separately. Thus, Sarot concludes,

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[492] William Alston, 'Emotion and Feeling' in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* II, ed. P. Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), p. 483, cited Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 165

feelings (of any sort) do not need separate treatment to emotions when it comes to considering whether the sorts of experience attributed to a passible God require corporeality.

The next concept Sarot discusses as a possible variant of emotion is pain. Sarot takes as his starting point the definition of pain offered by the Subcommittee on Taxonomy of the International Association for the Study of Pain: Pain is 'an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage.'[493] Sarot then broadens this definition to include mental pain such as the pain of bereavement or a painful interview, though he notes that mental pain does not admit of bodily location. Sarot also notes that pain may not always be unpleasant. For example, experiments have shown that a pricking sensation steadily growing in intensity will be called a pain before it is disliked, so it is possible not to dislike a pain.[494] In addition, some people actually find a pain a pleasurable experience. Thus the unpleasant character of pain should not be written into the definition of pain, since pain need not always be unpleasant and may in fact be positively pleasurable. In addition, we can experience pain without having tissue damage, and some people have tissue damage without experiencing pain. Thus, in place of the definition offered by the Subcommittee on Taxonomy of the International Association of Pain, Sarot puts forward Roger Trigg's suggestion that we define pain in terms of the feeling of pain or 'pain-quality'. As Sarot observes, 'We all know how it [pain] feels, but we are not able to describe it accurately'.[495] (Of course, this is slightly erroneous, as it is not the case that everyone knows how pain feels: People who suffer from the congenital indifference to pain, a rare genetic disorder, are unable to experience [physical] pain. Interestingly,

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[493] cited Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 167
[494] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 168
[495] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 168

the disorder is characterised by medical bodies as an inability to *perceive* pain[496] – the underlying assumption being that pain is experienced whether one feels it or not – an idea that is obviously at odds with Trigg and Sarot's description of pain as essentially experiential. However, I think that Sarot's point that, in general, we know what someone means by pain without having to define it is correct, with the exception of sufferers of congenital indifference to pain. I certainly think Sarot is correct to define pain emically and experientially rather than attempting a more conceptual and etic definition [as he does with emotion and feeling.]) Sarot concludes: 'In short, in most cases the term 'pain' refers to a sensation that has pain-quality and that is accompanied by an emotion of displeasure or distress that is directed at it. In some instances, the term pain denotes a sensation having pain-quality but unaccompanied by negative emotions.'[497]

The distinction between sensory and emotional components of pain, Sarot argues, enables us to understand mental pain (which is without the sensory component) and physical pain (where the emotional component is not necessarily present). Mental pain is therefore an emotion of distress or displeasure directed at situations, encounters, discoveries, etc. Thus all types of pain can be explained in an analysis that distinguishes between two components: Sensation and emotion. In his discussion of the link between emotion and the body (which we shall discuss below), Sarot pays extensive attention to sensation - and thus both components of pain are covered in the analysis, and pain does not need separate treatment.

Another potential additional category to emotion is the concept of suffering. Suffering, Sarot notes, is closely related to pain, but it is not identical. Suffering is, at

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[496] See, for example, the article *'Gene Mutations Detected for Disorder Marked by Inability to Feel Pain' in* Nature *2006;444:894-898*, available at http://doctor.medscape.com/viewarticle/549303_(accessed on 7th June 2007)

[497] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 168

root, an emotional response to threatening circumstances.[498] Because it is emotional in character, Sarot's discussion of the connection between emotion and the body will also apply to suffering, and suffering will not need separate consideration.

A further set of variants of emotion is the cluster of terms 'affect', 'to be affected by', and 'passion'. Contrary to my argument in chapter three, Sarot regards these as terms as synonymous in ancient Latin texts, and suggests that both affect and passion had overtones of passivity. Further, he argues that in contemporary usage the terms have no fixed usage and, while they are not regarded as synonyms, they can generally be used synonymously. In so far as a distinction is possible, one might say that affect has a broad meaning, while passion has more specific connotations. For example, passion, unlike affect, is often used to mean suffering, primarily because of its derivation from the Greek *πάθος* and Latin 'passio'. In addition, passion is often used for the more violent among the dispositional (rather than occurrent) emotions: People who love, fear or hate passionately have a powerful inclination to love, fear or hate specific objects. On the basis of this discussion, Sarot concludes that passions, affects, and their cognate terms are used to signify varieties of feeling, emotion and suffering, and not other experiences outside of these. Therefore, when we want to know about the relation between affects, passions and the body, it will suffice to examine the relation between feeling, emotion, suffering and the body.

A further possible alternative to emotion that Sarot discusses is pathos.[499] Abraham Heschel first coined the term 'pathos' in relation to God, and gave it a different meaning from the Greek or the ordinary English usage. Since Heschel, it has been used increasingly by passibilists, and has become a technical term. As Heschel uses it, pathos 'denotes God's involvement in history, His participation in the human predicament.... Man is relevant to God, and this finds its deepest expression in the fact

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[498] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 170

[499] In this context, pathos becomes a theological term in its own right, distinct from the Greek word *πάθος*. For this reason I have refrained from transliterating it into Greek.

that God in His pathos can actually suffer.'[500] Pathos is so comprehensive a term that it includes, and goes beyond, passibility. Although it appears on the surface more specific than passibility, this is deceptive. Pathos (while originally psychological) has become a theological term that means God's involvement, and when Heschel wants to spell out God's passibility more concretely he turns to specific, psychological concepts such as emotion, feeling, pain, suffering, and affect. As Sarot observes, this means that Heschel's theology of divine pathos does not lead to the use of other concrete concepts than those we have already discussed above, and so the analysis of the relation between emotion and the body will also apply the Heschel's view of God's pathos.

Another possible alternative to emotion are the compounds of *πάθος* /passio, sympathy, empathy and compassion. Of these, sympathy is used most frequently. We experience sympathy when we believe that an animal or human experiences positive or negative emotions and we respond to these with corresponding positive or negative emotions. Empathy is defined as 'the self-conscious act whereby a person imaginatively shares and accurately comprehends the consciousness of another person, including especially her feelings and emotions'.[501] Empathy requires a positive effort, whereas a sympathising person may be passive. In both, one focuses on another's feelings or emotions, but while in sympathy the responsive feelings are one's own, in empathy one shares the feelings of the other.[502]

Compassion differs from sympathy in two respects. First, compassion refers to the sympathetic response of only negative emotions, not neutral or positive ones. Second, compassion is not just an emotional response to someone else's negative emotions, but also actions intended to relieve their suffering. Sympathy, empathy and compassion do not need separate treatment to emotion feeling and suffering, as they are

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[500] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 173
[501] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 175
[502] Of course, this means we can never know whether empathy ever actually occurs.

particular varieties of feeling, emotion and suffering, and not experiences outside emotion, feeling and suffering.

Finally, Sarot discusses sensitivity and vulnerability as needing additional consideration to emotion. A sensitive person is easily moved to feeling and emotion, a vulnerable person easily affected by unpleasant and noxious experiences. Sarot argues that we need to rely on the more specific experiences described above rather than to deal with sensitivity and vulnerability, since these do not denote the experiences themselves but rather the capacity to have them. Sarot concludes that the other concepts discussed are, on closer analysis, reducible to emotion or to bodily feelings, one of the constituents of emotion, and so that none of them need separate treatment to emotions.

In the next section Sarot aims to ascertain whether we need a body in order to have emotions by looking at the two constituents of emotion which seem most intimately connected with the body- bodily feelings and physiological changes. Sarot follows Philip Koch in calling the bodily experiences involved in emotion 'bodily feelings'. Some writers use 'sensations' instead of feelings, the main difference between the two being that sensations are localisable and body-focused, while feelings are not. For the main enquiry some further preliminary clarification is needed: 'What is the exact difference between feelings and sensations? How are these connected? And in terms of which can we best proceed with our inquiry into the connection between bodily experiences and the body?'[503] Having already discussed feelings,[504] Sarot now turns to a discussion of sensations. Gilbert Ryle notes that sensation is a slippery concept, and that it is virtually impossible to distinguish clearly between the different uses and meanings of the term sensation. At the end of the chapter on sensation and observation in *The Concept of Mind* Ryle concludes with considerable intellectual honesty that he has failed to distinguish between the different uses and meanings of the term 'sensation' and

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[503] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 178
[504] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 165-7

that consequently `there is something seriously amiss with the discussions occupying this chapter'.[505] However, he does not see what he can do about this: 'I do not know what more is to be said about the logical grammar of such words, save that there is much more to be said'[506]. Despite this humble conclusion, Sarot notes that Ryle makes some important observations about sensation.

Ryle distinguishes between an ordinary and a sophisticated sense of sensation. The sophisticated sense indicates the 'sense-impressions' or 'sensory data' involved in sense perception. These sense perceptions are had by means of the eyes, ears, tongue and nose, and the body (particularly the surface of the body), which constitutes the organ of touch.[507] Ordinary sensation seems to mean 'a kind of perception' – that is, tactual sense perception. On the other hand, Ryle includes other feelings, such as localisable pains and discomforts. But, notably, not all localisable pains are sense perceptions. Thus Ryle's class of ordinary sensations ought to be subdivided into bodily sensation and tactual sense perceptions. These two can be distinguished as follows. First, tactual sense perceptions always provide information about the current state of one's material environment and about one's own body, whereas bodily sensations provide data concerning the current state of one's body without necessarily providing information about one's material environment. Second, in the case of tactual sense perceptions it makes sense to ask 'With what do we feel this object?'. This question makes no sense in the case of a bodily sensation. Third, the object of bodily sensations is private in a sense in which the object of tactual sense perceptions is not: 'I am the only one who can feel my pain, but in principle any being endowed with the sense of touch can feel whether the surface of the slab is wet'.[508]

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[505] Ryle, *Concept of Mind*, p. 228, cited Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 178
[506] Ryle, *Concept of Mind*, p. 231 cited Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 178
[507] See Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 179
[508] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 180

Bodily sensations may be involved in tactual sense perception. For instance, blind people cannot see when a cup into which they are pouring coffee is full, and therefore they learn to hold a fingertip just below the brim inside the cup, so that they can feel when the cup is full. A sensation of heat warns them. This sensation is a bodily sensation providing information about the current state of the blind person's body, and also serving as a tactual sense perception providing information about the current state of the material world. Thus there are two kinds of sensations: Simple bodily sensations, and bodily sensations which in a certain context serve as tactual sense perceptions. However, there is no essential difference between the two. Tactual sense perceptions are not among the sensations involved in emotions; if they were, 'emotions would provide information about the current state of the world, which they don't'.[509] Therefore, the sensations involved in emotions are simple sensations and not sensations that serve as tactual sense perceptions.

Concerning the connection between sensations and bodily feelings, Sarot argues that some feelings can be reduced to bodily sensations, including the feelings of sense perceptions and simple bodily sensations. Is it the case that all bodily feelings can be reduced to bodily sensations? As we have already seen, bodily feelings are feelings of

i) localised bodily sensation

ii) general bodily condition

iii) hedonic tone

iv) tendency

Clearly localised bodily sensations are bodily sensations; how about feelings of general bodily condition, hedonic tone and tendency? General bodily condition (ii) and hedonic

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[509] Sarot, *Passibility*, p 182. This, of course, is arguable, and depends on what one means by 'the current state of the external world'. Sarot is here drawing on Wittgenstein: 'What makes them [emotions] different from sensations: they do not give us any information about the external world' (Zettel § 491, cited Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 182).

tone (iii) are certainly reducible to bodily sensations. One can be tired or contented without having bodily sensations, but one cannot feel tired or contented without having bodily sensations. In the case of tendency (iv), however, it is less clear that bodily sensations must be involved. However, William P. Alston, who argues that the one thing *all* feelings have in common is that they consist of or are accompanied by a complex of bodily sensations, remarks that

> We might even try to bring 'feeling like going for a walk' into the same camp by claiming that to feel like going for a walk, as contrasted with just being prepared or willing to go for a walk, essentially involves a distinctive pattern of bodily sensations of incipient muscular tendencies.[510]

Sarot suggests that Alston does not succeed in proving that whenever someone says that they feel like going for a walk they mean that they feel bodily sensations of incipient muscular tendencies. However, he argues that Alston's point justifies a weaker claim: In so far as feelings of tendency are *bodily* feelings, bodily sensations (of readiness, for example) must be involved, for how else could bodily feelings of tendency be connected to the body? It is only the *bodily* feelings of tendency which have been accepted as among the constituent elements of emotion, and therefore all four forms of bodily feeling are reducible to bodily sensation. Sarot concludes for this that he should concentrate on bodily sensations in his enquiry into the relationship between emotion and corporeality, since bodily sensation is one element common to all bodily feelings and provides the most obvious link of these with the body.

The next question therefore is to do with how bodily sensations are connected with the body and, more specifically, whether these connections are of a necessary or of a contingent nature. Sarot lists the following characteristics of bodily sensations:

i) Localisation
ii) Genuine duration

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[510] Alston, 'Emotion and Feeling', pp. 479-86, p. 484, cited Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 183

iii) Intensity
iv) Quality
v) The involvement in bodily sensations of an inclination to act towards the body, which may lead to actual action
vi) The causation of bodily sensations by changes in the body of the subject experiencing them
vii) Bodily sensation provide information about the current state of one's body

Genuine duration (ii), intensity (iii) and quality (iv) do not seem to be directly connected to the body, and so Sarot excludes them from consideration. With respect to the causation of bodily sensations by changes in the body of the subject experiencing them (vi), Sarot follows Idziak in arguing that bodily sensations are possible which are not caused by changes in the body.[511] Regarding the idea that bodily sensations provide information about the current state of one's body (vii), Sarot notes that the information provided may be true or false. The factual information of bodily sensations is also contingent and not necessary, and thus it is not essential to have a body to experience bodily sensations, and so this does not provide a reason why an incorporeal God would not be able to experience bodily sensations.

With respect to the involvement in bodily sensations of an inclination to act towards the body which may lead to actual action (v), Sarot agrees with Idziak that there are instances in which bodily sensations involve neither behaviour towards the body, nor an inclination to behave in a certain way towards one's body – for example, when one does not notice the itch in one's foot because one is absorbed in philosophical debate.[512] Sarot notes that this is most likely to be the case when the sensation does not last long, when it is only a mild irritation or pain, and when one's attention is engaged by something else. Idziak's point, therefore, implies that an incorporeal being could only have a trivial sensation, and not a really disturbing sensation, since a really disturbing sensation would involve an urge to act towards the body. Of course, Idziak could respond to this that one should take into consideration the person-relativity of the

[511] see Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 184
[512] Janine M. Idziak, 'God and Emotions' (Michigan, 1975), p. 36, cited Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 186

tolerance for pain and other sensations. As Sarot puts the point, 'God might have sensations that for us would be intolerable, because His tolerance might be greater and His circumstances more favourable.'[513] However, Sarot observes, this would mean that *for God* even intense sensations would be undisturbing and therefore trivial.

Sarot also questions the idea that an urge to display behaviour towards the body is essential to the more disturbing sensations. Disturbing sensations necessarily involve an urge to do something about them, but this need not be an urge to act towards the body. Admittedly, when humans experience a disturbing sensation, it is almost always an urge to act towards our body (for example, to scratch a foot, or to cool down a burned finger). But, argues Sarot, we could imagine a person who, on having an unpleasant sensation, merely had to whistle a certain tune in order to make the unpleasant sensation disappear. This person would have no urge to act towards the body, but just an urge to whistle the magic tune. So this person would have an urge to do something about the unpleasant sensation, but would not have an urge to act towards the body. Similarly, the fact that an incorporeal God would not be able to display behaviour towards his body would not mean that he could not have disturbing, as well as trivial, sensations.

In connection with bodily sensations and the body Sarot also discusses the alleged localisation of bodily sensations in the body (i). In order to avoid misunderstanding over the meaning of the terms, Sarot distinguishes between localisation and location: Localisation is the act of identifying where something is, whereas location is the place in which something is situated.[514] An unlocalisable sensation is a sensation the location of which cannot be ascertained. An unlocated sensation is a sensation that has no location: It isn't anywhere. Whereas unlocated sensations are necessarily unlocalisable, unlocalisable sensations do not *need* to be

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[513] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 186
[514] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 187

unlocated. Sarot notes that while it is generally held that bodily sensations are located, in fact they can never *literally* be located in some part of the body. This is because in most cases bodily sensations have a dual aspect: Body and mind. 'When I feel a pricking pain in my left shoulder, this pain is located in my shoulder, but there would be no pain at all in my shoulder if my shoulder was not part of an animal with body *and mind*. When I am dead, my body may be wounded, but there can be no pain in my shoulder any more.'[515] Therefore if bodily sensations were literally located in the body then an incorporeal being could not have them, but the fact that they are mental events as well means that it may be possible for an incorporeal being to have bodily sensations if an incorporeal being can have mental events. The question therefore becomes, can an incorporeal being have mental events?

With a view to answering this question, Sarot distinguishes between two phenomena, both of which are sometimes called localization. First, the locatedness of bodily sensations in the body, where the sensory receptors lie. An example for this would be a stitch in the side, where the stitch is located in the side (of a torso). Second, the localization of bodily sense perceptions outside the body. Sarot then asks whether unlocated sensations are possible:

> ...When a patient comes to the doctor complaining about a serious pain, and the doctor asks 'Where do you feel the pain?', and the patient answers 'Nowhere!', what do we say then? Is it conceivable that one feels a pain that is located nowhere?[516]

In looking for examples of unlocated sensation, Sarot begins by considering mental pain. The failing of an exam may be a painful experience, but it would not make sense to ask where that pain is located. However, Sarot argues, the kind of unlocatedness that is characteristic of mental pain is not the kind of unlocatedness we need to be able to understand how bodily sensations could be unlocated. As Sarot has already shown,

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[515] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 188
[516] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 190

mental pain is one of the emotions. Mental pain is thus unlocated in the way in which emotions are unlocated. That emotions are unlocated is generally accepted. As Wittgenstein says of emotions: 'Distinction from sensations: they are not localized (nor yet diffuse!)'[517] Therefore, if someone is fearful we could not ask where her fear is located, whereas *constituents* of emotion (such as butterflies in the stomach or a lump in the throat) may be clearly located. The reason that we would not locate the emotion in the stomach (for example) is that not all of the constituent elements of emotion are clearly located. For example, one constituent element of an emotion is evaluation, and evaluation is not clearly located. There are several constituents of emotion that are located (such as bodily sensations and physiological changes) and several constituents of emotion that are not located (such as evaluative and motivational aspects), and the presence of the latter means that the emotion *as a whole* is not located. This shows why it is that one cannot use the unlocatedness of an emotion like mental pain to understand how bodily sensations could be unlocated. The kind of unlocatedness emotions display is the unlocatedness of involving one or more unlocated constituents. It is possible to focus on one or more of the apparently located constituents and to inquire whether they are really located (this, in fact, is precisely the approach Sarot is taking with bodily sensations). However, this means that we cannot argue that bodily sensations can be unlocated because some of the other constituents of emotion are unlocated – for this is what the claim that emotions are unlocated amounts to. To do this would be to confuse the constituent (in this case, the bodily sensation) with the constituted (the emotion as a whole). Sarot concludes that therefore the unlocatedness of emotions is not the sort of unlocatedness we would need in order to be able to understand how a bodily sensation could be unlocated.

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[517] Wittgenstein, *Zettel* §488, cited Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 191

So far, Sarot has argued that it is very difficult to prove that bodily sensations are necessarily located and so has opted instead to *show that several forms of* unlocalizability and unlocatedness that come to mind when one tries to see how bodily sensations could conceivably be unlocated are not of much help. He then turns to the task of showing the absurdity of the idea of unlocated bodily sensations.

Having already argued that it is the mental and physical duality of bodily sensations that gives some credibility to the idea of unlocated bodily sensations, Sarot argues that bodily sensations can be of two kinds. First, sensations of something that cannot be known in any way other than by sensation (such as pain). Second, sensations of something that can be known in another way than by sensation (such as temperature). Sarot concentrates on the second of these in his discussion. Spatial extension, he notes, is a pre-requisite of temperature, in that something without spatial extension could not have a temperature: 'Thoughts, ideas and prime numbers cannot have temperatures because they do not have spatial extension.'[518] If an incorporeal God can have a sensation of temperature then it would have to be an unlocated sensation of heat. But it is impossible for something or someone without spatial extension to have a temperature. Thus in order to be able to feel heat, an incorporeal God would have to be able to have an unlocated sensation of heat. But this is a logical impossibility: 'God cannot see square circles, and God cannot experience unlocated sensations of heat'.[519]

This argument shows that some bodily sensations cannot exist in an unlocated form, so an incorporeal God would not be able to experience them. This can be shown of all those bodily sensations the object of which can be known in another way than by sensation, though it is far more difficult to prove of those bodily sensations the object of which cannot be known in another way than by sensation. For example, pain does not exist independently of bodily sensation, and so it is impossible to prove that pain in

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[518] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 192
[519] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 194

itself (independently of bodily sensations) involves spatial extension. However, if we think again of the idea of a patient complaining about a pain he feels nowhere, we realise that locatedness is necessary for the bodily sensation of pain.[520] Therefore we cannot ascribe unlocated bodily sensations to God, as bodily sensations are necessarily located. It is also (*contra* Idziak) impossible to have experiences that are like bodily sensations in every respect except in not being located.[521]

Bodily sensations are among the constituents of emotion, so the fact that an incorporeal God could not have bodily sensations suggests that God could not have emotions. This, however, raises a preliminary question: Are bodily sensations essential to emotions? If not, an incorporeal being could have emotions without needing to have bodily sensations.

While the issue of whether bodily sensations are essential to emotion is seldom discussed in literature on emotion, the question is dealt with implicitly in discussions of whether bodily feelings are essential to emotion. Bodily sensations are essential to bodily feelings, so the essential involvement of bodily feelings in emotion would entail the essential involvement of bodily sensations in emotion. The question then becomes, are bodily feelings essential to emotion?

We often distinguish in ordinary language between *being* emotional and *feeling* emotional: This may be interpreted as an indication that we may be emotional without the involvement of specific feelings.[522] But if this is the case, Sarot maintains, one does not need the capacity for feeling in order to be able to undergo an emotion. Therefore we need to ascertain whether emotions necessarily involve feelings. Sarot appeals to William James to answer this question:

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[520] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 194

[521] See Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 195

[522] I am not sure that Sarot is correct here. It seems to me that being emotional and feeling emotional are simply used as virtual synonyms in everyday speech – so being emotional carries connotations of feeling one (or more) emotion/s? 'Being emotional' may also imply that one is acting emotionally but it would still imply that one was also feeling emotion.

> If we fancy some strong emotion, and then try to abstract from our consciousness of it all the feelings of its characteristic bodily symptoms, we find we have nothing left behind, no 'mind-stuff' out of which emotion can be constituted, and that a cold and neutral state of intellectual perception is all that remains. The task proposed... is the purely speculative one of subtracting certain elements of feeling from an emotional state supposed to exist in its fullness, and saying what the residual elements are. I cannot help thinking that all who rightly apprehend this problem will agree with the proposition above laid down. What kind of an emotion of fear would be left, if the feelings neither of a quickened heart-beat nor of shallow breathing, neither of trembling lips nor of weakened limbs, neither of goose-flesh nor of visceral stirrings, were present, it is quite impossible to think.[523]

Sarot extracts two methodological points from James. First, we should proceed in our analysis of emotion by using introspection and speculative imagination. Second, James suggests that we should distinguish between strong emotions, which necessarily involve feelings, and weaker emotions, which do not.[524] In the light of these two points, Sarot discusses two classes of experience which are arguably emotional in character despite the fact that they do not involve feelings: 'These are (1) the weak or calm emotions: doubtfulness, mild irritation, fear of having muddled one's tenses, intellectual joy and (2) the extreme emotions: extreme indignation, panic, the tender emotion after 'making love''.[525] Sarot claims that the weak and calm emotions (which some may argue are not emotions but just evaluative and volitional states) can be had without the involvement of feelings, while the stronger and more violent emotions cannot. This, Sarot claims, is an issue on which all writers are more or less agreed.[526]

Concerning extreme emotions, Sarot notes that it is sometimes said that they do not necessarily involve feelings. As Solomon says:

> 'We sometimes find that our passion is so intense that we can feel absolutely nothing. In the most extreme indignation, one finds oneself completely numb. In panic, running from fear, one might find that one feels nothing. Or, more positively, there are those tender moments of love

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[523] William James, 'What is an Emotion?, p. 22-3, cited Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 197
[524] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 198
[525] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 198. This seems like an arbitrary distinction. One could imagine an academic who experiences intellectual joy as a strong emotion and the tender emotion after making love as a weak and calm emotion. One might also imagine someone who has a phobia of muddling their tenses, and who experiences this fear as an extreme emotion.
[526] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 9

> after 'making love' when all the feeling has been drained from us, but the emotion is at its peak.'[527]

However, Sarot argues, Solomon does not succeed in showing that in the extreme emotions our feelings are sometimes unaffected: Solomon's examples show not that extreme emotions do not affect our feelings but, on the contrary, that they affect our feelings by annihilating them. These sorts of changes could not take place in a being that does not have feelings. Sarot also expresses doubts about the idea that one feels nothing when in, for example, an extreme state of fear. He suggests, rather, that in an extreme state of fear one feels something, but that one is not concentrating on one's feelings but on the object of one's fear, and so one does not notice the emotions one is feeling. For instance, if one is running away from a bear in a forest, one is not at leisure to discern and reflect upon one's emotions at that particular point, but that does not mean that one is feeling nothing. Sarot argues from this that Solomon has not succeeded in showing that in extreme emotions our feelings are not involved, concluding that he sees 'no reason to believe that extreme emotions in which our feelings are not involved are conceivable'[528]. This means that there is only one sort of emotion that need not involve feelings: Weak and calm emotions. Thus, Sarot concludes, bodily sensations are essential to all emotions except the weak or calm emotions.

Another constituent of emotion that requires a body is physiological change. It is easier to show that one needs a body for physiological changes than for bodily sensations, since it is part of the definition of physiological change that they occur in the body, and so they need a body in which to occur. The next question to ask is whether physiological changes are essential to emotion. It is factually impossible to discover whether there are any emotions in which no physiological changes are involved, since we do not have the instruments to measure this empirically or etically, and we cannot

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[527] Solomon, *Passions*, p. 161, cited Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 199
[528] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 200

perceive all physical changes taking place in our bodies introspectively or emically.[529] Since we can use neither empirical research nor introspection, we must use thought experiments and speculation. Are we able to conceive of emotions in which no physiological changes are involved? In order to explore this question, Sarot begins by looking at an argument given by William Lyons, who argues, *via* a thought experiment, that physiological changes are essential to emotion:

> That the evaluation causing a physiological upset alone is sufficient to constitute an emotional state can be seen by considering a deliberately pared down example of motion in which only these are present. A bird lover out birdwatching sees a golden eagle in full flight. She thinks it marvellous, rare and beautiful, and this strongly affects her physiologically, it stirs her up physiologically. But it does not lead her to want to do anything. She doesn't say anything, and nothing unusual shows in her expression and she makes no gestures. To an observer she would merely appear as a woman gazing at a bird in flight. It may even be that she is so taken up with the sight that she does not advert to her own emotion. She may feel nothing because she is so absorbed. Yet we would clearly call this a case of emotion, an emotional state of awe or excitement.[530]

Sarot argues that Lyons does not succeed in showing that feelings are not essential to emotion, because (as Sarot has already argued) it is possible to be in an emotional state and not attend to one's feelings, because one is caught up in something else. That Lyons fails to make the distinction between feeling nothing and not attending to one's feelings is demonstrated when he says 'She may feel nothing because she is so absorbed'. It is not clear here whether Lyons means that she feels nothing or that she is not attending to her feelings. Again, in a later chapter Lyons writes that 'The subject must always be aware of tightness of the throat, dryness of the mouth, and perhaps, an increased level of alertness if these are feelings, for you cannot have unfelt feelings, that is feelings of which one is unaware'.[531] Lyons thus holds that it is necessary to feeling that the subject is cognisant of it. Sarot disagrees with this analysis, and suggests three sorts of feelings

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[529] The use of etic and emic in the context of philosophy of emotion is mine and not Sarot's. In borrowing the term from anthropology and sociology I aim to draw a distinction between accounts of emotion that look at what it looks like from the outside to have an emotion (so measuring heart-beat etc.), and emic accounts that begin with what it feels like to have an emotion, from the point of view of the one having it.
[530] Lyons, *Emotion*, p. 58, cited Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 203
[531] Lyons, *Emotion*, p. 117

in opposition to Lyons' belief that one is necessarily aware of every feeling. First, there are the ordinary feelings of which one is aware – for example, when I have a headache or feel that I have a dry mouth, and am aware of these feelings. Second, there are the feelings one does not feel at all. For example, one may have a headache, but be distracted from it. Sarot suggests that these 'unfelt feelings' must be felt before and after the period in which they are unfelt, for 'It is nonsense to talk about a headache that is unfelt during the whole of its occurrence.'[532] Third, there are unfelt feelings: Those feelings of which we are unaware for their entire duration, such as panic when we are chased by a bear when we are not aware of the panic because we are too busy concentrating on the bear. The feelings of Lyons' birdwatcher are feelings of which she is not aware (ii), and not unfelt feelings (iii). If Lyons admits that his birdwatcher experiences some feelings, but may not be aware of them, we will have to concede that she undergoes an emotion. If, on the other hand, she experiences no feelings at all, and that only her physiological changes and her evaluation of the eagle remain, and when we cannot interpret these physiological changes as clues suggesting feelings, then they become completely irrelevant, for then the birdwatcher is not experiencing an emotion. Rather, the birdwatcher in this case is evaluating something in such a way that it causes unusual physiological changes in their body without them undergoing an emotion. If, on the other hand, the evaluation caused violent feelings, then the person would be in an emotional state, regardless of whether or not they experienced physiological changes. It is feelings therefore, rather than physiological changes, that are essential to emotion.

In conclusion, Sarot has argued that an incorporeal God cannot undergo bodily sensations because bodily sensations are necessarily located. Since feelings involve bodily sensations, and incorporeal God would not be able to experience feelings. He could therefore have only the weak and calm emotions that do not involve bodily

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[532] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 204

sensations. As passibilists ascribe primarily strong and intense emotions to God, an incorporeal God could not have the experiences ascribed to him by passibilists. The remainder of the book accordingly comprises an exploration of the possibility of divine corporeality.

Central to Sarot's argument is the following syllogism:

1. Bodily sensations entail a body
2. *Bodily feelings entail bodily sensations*
3. Strong and intense emotions entail bodily feelings
4. Therefore, strong and intense emotions entail a body

I agree with Sarot concerning 1 and 2, and I think that 4 *follows on logically* from the previous three steps. However, I think that 3 is problematic. At the root of this problem is that fact that Sarot either does not distinguish between mental and physical (or bodily) feelings, or else that he does not recognise mental feelings at all. That Sarot does not distinguish between physical feelings and mental feelings is shown in his treatment of whether feelings are essential to emotion, where Sarot skips from asking whether bodily feelings are essential to emotion to distinguishing between being emotional and feeling emotional which, he suggests, might erroneously be interpreted as an indication that we may be emotional without feeling emotional. Sarot moves from bodily feelings to feeling emotional without discussing whether the feelings involved in feeling emotional are bodily feelings or not – he just assumes they are. He then goes on to claim from this (on the basis of James' thought experiment) that the weak and calm emotions do not involve feelings while the strong and intense emotions do. But surely in confusing mental and physical feelings what he has in fact argued is that some kind of

feeling (and it is left open as to what kind) is essential to strong emotion – but as 'feeling' is a popular synonym for 'emotion' this comes as no surprise.

Sarot concludes this argument by saying that the stronger and more violent emotions cannot be experienced without the involvement of feelings, and that this is an issue on which all writers are more or less agreed. I would certainly agree that strong and violent emotions cannot be experienced without the involvement of mental feelings, but these mental feelings are not the sort of feelings in which bodily sensations are necessarily involved. Rather, bodily feelings are the sort of feeling in which bodily sensations are necessarily involved, while mental feelings are not the sort of feelings in which bodily sensations are necessarily involved. To be fair to Sarot, I think that the failure to distinguish between mental and physical feelings is one that James also makes, in that James argues that if the quickened heart-beat, trembling lips etc. were removed from fear there would be no emotion left, but only 'a cold and neutral state of intellectual perception'. If Nussbaum is correct, however, then we could argue that what we would be left with after we had subtracted bodily feelings would be an evaluative judgement which would remain emotional in character because of its eudaimonistic content, and that, in Dixon's term, it would remain a 'subjectively warm and lively state', a mental feeling. That Sarot does not distinguish between mental and physical feelings seems strange, however, given *that he does distinguish* between mental and physical pain, and argues that while physical pain is located, mental pain is not. In fact, Sarot seems to set up a distinction between physical pain (which is located and involves bodily sensations) and mental pain (which is non-located and does not have a sensory component) at the beginning of the chapter, as the following passages show:

> The distinction we have made between a sensory and an emotional component of pain also enables us to understand mental pain. In the case of mental pain the sensory component is absent. This suggests that the similarity between physical and mental pain must be looked for in a similarity between mental pain and the emotional component which is usually a part of the

> experience of physical pain. Mental pain, then, is an emotion of distress or displeasure which may be directed at situations, encounters, discoveries and the like.[533]
>
> As we have shown above, mental pain is one of the emotions. Mental pain is unlocated, then, in the way in which emotions are unlocated....[534]

It seems inconsistent that Sarot does not extend this distinction between mental and physical pain to mental and physical feelings more generally, and towards the end of the chapter he begins to push the category of mental pain out of the picture of emotions:

> Pain has a mental and a physical aspect; when one drops the physical aspect pain becomes purely mental. Then pain becomes like a prime number; one can entertain it in thought, but one cannot experience it.[535]
>
> In terms of the question with which we started this paragraph: bodily sensations are essential to all emotions except the weak and calm 'emotions.'[536]

Were Sarot to uphold and extend the distinction between mental and physical pain to a distinction between mental and physical feelings, I suggest his argument would be as follows:

1. Bodily sensations entail a body
2. Bodily feelings entail bodily sensations
3. Strong and intense emotions entail mental feelings (NB Weak and calm emotions may also entail mental feelings, but that is not relevant to the question)
4. Strong and intense emotions may involve bodily feelings, though they do not necessarily involve bodily feelings
5. Therefore strong and intense emotions may or may not require a body.

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[533] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 168 - 9
[534] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 191
[535] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 194
[536] Sarot, *Passibility*, p. 200

It follows from this that an incorporeal God may experience strong and intense emotions without needing to have a body, just as humans can feel sad without feeling a knot in the pit of their stomach, or feel fear without feeling the trembling of their lip.

Are emotions essentially physiological?

There are three questions to be asked here. First, are emotions types of bodily feeling? In other words, is the emotion of anger essentially the increase of blood pressure, the going red and the increase of heart rate, and other physical aspects that are measurable in some way? This is clearly an attractive view for physiological reductionists, and has had several supporters among scientists, psychologists and philosophers. It is exemplified in the penile blood volume experiment that was undertaken in the early 1980s and which epitomises many of the errors of other instances of physiological reductionism.

The penile blood volume experiment, undertaken by J. Weinrich, involved a penile plethysmograph: A volume-measuring device connected to a small chamber that is placed over the penis to measure the degree of erection and, allegedly, thus of sexual desire. According to Nussbaum, 'If it proves possible for the man to have an erection while hooked up to the device, it measures the change in penile blood volume. This new measure is now taken to be the measure - not just of sexual *arousal*, but of sexual *desire*, and not just of sexual desire, but of *'the emotion'* (sometimes called 'a sexual emotion' and sometimes called 'being in love').'[537]

Although the experiment doesn't have obvious theological connotations, it is worth noting because it highlights some of the assumptions that are going on in physiological accounts of emotion: As Nussbaum observes, many forms of

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[537] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 99

physiological reductionism contain similar errors but in a 'less transparent and charming form'.[538]

Nussbaum criticises several basic assumptions that Weinrich makes. First, Nussbaum criticises Weinrich's belief that the plethysmograph measures sexual *arousal.* Nussbaum questions that this is the case for the following reasons.

a) Anti-depressants can cause an increased ease in having an erection with a decreased sensation and decreased ease in attaining orgasm. Therefore someone on anti-depressants might have a large erection for a very long time, but actually be less aroused, because they are not experiencing the same intensity of pleasure and may be unable to attain an orgasm. Conversely though, some medical conditions, such as diabetes, impede erection without affecting sensation and/or orgasm. Therefore there might be a man who has only a partial erection but who is nevertheless very aroused. Given this, it is far from clear that the plethysmograph does in fact measure sexual arousal at all.

b) Regarding the *interpersonal* comparisons of arousal Weinrich makes Nussbaum asks whether one should conclude (as Weinrich's definition seems to entail) that a man with a larger penile blood volume is more aroused, or more capable of arousal, than a man with a smaller blood volume. The blood volume potential of a penis is closely related to the amount of spongy tissue in the corpus cavernosum and corpus spongiosum tubes (the three tubes surrounding the urethra), and thus the amount of spongy tissue will naturally correspond to some degree to the length and girth of the penis. However, there may be variations in tissue composition, such that two men with similar penis lengths and girths may still have different blood volume potential, and thus the hardness of their erections may differ. For Weinrich's experiment to work, he

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[538] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 99

would have to take account not only the different sizes of the penes involved, but also the variation of tissue composition.

c) Nussbaum also questions whether one should grant that an erection is either necessary or sufficient for sexual arousal. Erections are certainly not sufficient. For example, some men have erections on waking up in the morning (according to Nussbaum, this is not sexual arousal, because it lacks object-directed intentionality). Erections do not seem to be necessary for arousal either; if they were, one would have to grant that a person with an injury that makes erection impossible is incapable of sexual arousal.

Second, Nussbaum criticises the idea that a plethysmograph measures sexual *desire*, for the following reasons.

a) The plethysmograph does not measure sexual desire for the same reasons that it does not measure sexual arousal.

b) In addition, because desire is an intentional notion, no description of a subject's non-intentional physiological state will do as an account of it.

c) Nussbaum also criticises the idea that a plethysmograph measures sexual desire because when speaking of desire the problem about whether an erection is *necessary* becomes more acute: It seems obvious to Nussbaum that a man without an erection might still have sexual desire.

Third, Nussbaum criticises Weinrich's belief that a plethysmograph measures love. As Nussbaum puts it, 'Does Viagara really make men more loving, or even more in love?'[539]

One might add to Nussbaum's criticisms that there are just too many other factors that might get in the way when measuring penile blood volume for sexual arousal. For example, the blood volume of an erect penis is, to some extent, age

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[539] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 100

dependent. It is generally accepted that older men are less likely to be able to have frequent and sustained erections, but older men do not lose their sexual desire. Again, the blood volume of an erect penis is also fitness and health dependent. Factors such as obesity and tobacco and alcohol consumption may impede the body's blood circulation and so stop a man from having, or sustaining, an erection. This is doubly true of alcohol, for it is the case with alcohol consumption, as with tobacco and obesity, over a long period of time, but heavy alcohol consumption in a short period of time may also impede the ability to have an erection in an immediate, but not long-lasting, way. As the porter in Macbeth observes, the effect of alcohol is often to induce lasciviousness (in so far as it depresses the inhibitory mechanisms that normally keep sexual desire under wraps) whilst giving rise to short-term erectile dysfunction:

> Lechery, sir, it provokes, and unprovokes;
> it provokes the desire, but it takes
> away the performance: therefore, much drink
> may be said to be an equivocator with lechery:
> it makes him, and it mars him; it sets
> him on, and it takes him off; it persuades him,
> and disheartens him; makes him stand to, and
> not stand to; in conclusion, equivocates him
> in a sleep, and, giving him the lie, leaves him.[540]

In addition to age and health, the ability to have a full erection is related to the psychological confidence and happiness of a man. Someone might experience sexual desire, but be unable to have an erection because he is too nervous or worried that he cannot have an erection. While a woman who was worried or nervous would be likely to be less aroused because of her anxiety, men are more likely to be able to be aroused while anxious because of the tendency of men to be able to compartmentalise different psychological states.

In conclusion, a plethysmograph could measure sexual arousal *ceteris paribus*, but they rarely are; and if they were, it would still be unable to measure sexual desire,

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[540] Macbeth, Act II Scene III, 26-33, in *The Norton Shakespeare*

even less the state of being in love. This suggests that emotions are not reducible to bodily feelings; that being in love is not reducible to a high degree of penile blood volume, that fear is not reducible to a trembling lip nor grief to a lump in the throat.

The second question we have to ask regarding whether emotions are intrinsically physiological is whether we need a body in order to experience an emotion, that is, as a prerequisite of an emotion. The answer here very clearly seems to be 'yes': Humans do need a body to experience emotions, just as they need a body (e.g. a physical brain) to *experience thoughts. However, this fact is not especially* important for the discussion of divine impassibility. After all, traditionally Christians have *not ascribed a physical brain* to God, and yet this has not stopped them attributing intelligence, understanding and thought to God. Thus it seems reasonable to say that *for humans* a physical body is a prerequisite for emotions, such that we cease to have thoughts and emotions when we die, but that a physical body would not be a prerequisite for emotions and thoughts for a non-physical being. This may mean that thoughts, emotions, etc. are to be interpreted analogically when predicated of God, because God does not think like we think (he does not utilise any grey cells), though it is important to say that they can be predicated nonetheless. Were we to object to this predication and claim that a physical body is a prerequisite for all emotions and thoughts (and sight [eyes], hearing [ears]), we would have to attribute inanimate (i.e. non-mental) existence to God, and as inanimate existence consists only in physical existence, and classical theism holds God to be incorporeal, we would not be able to attribute any sort of existence at all. Therefore, it seems that the fact that emotions require corporeality in the case of humans should not mean that emotions require corporeality in the case of God, and so divine incorporeality does not pose a serious threat to divine passibility (or *vice versa*) with respect to this question.

The third question is about whether the physical experiences we have when we have an emotion are intrinsic to the emotion, or whether they are something extrinsic that just accompanies it. For example, is going red, feeling hot and having a fast heartbeat intrinsic to anger, or might we feel angry without having these physical experiences? If the latter, what would the experience of anger be like, and would we still want to call it an emotion? I think that here is where we need to make a distinction between different emotional experiences: Some emotions are intrinsically physiological, and others are not. In what follows I shall provide a case study of the emotional experiences involved in sexual desire, which seems to be deeply connected to the body. This will enable us to explore how emotions and the body can be related and can interact, and will provide us with an example of an intrinsically physiological emotion, thus providing a counter-balance to the more intellective emotions or affections discussed in chapters four and five.

Sexual desire

Sexual desire is interesting for our discussion, partly because it is sometimes understood as an emotional experience, while at other points it is characterised purely as a bodily appetite, and so highlights the emotion-body question in a particularly acute way. In his discussion of divine impassibility, Richard Creel obviously regards it as relevant to the debate (and thus emotional in some sense) when he satirises Hartshorne's view that God experiences every human feeling with us, asking whether Hartshorne's view entails that God gets 'horny'.[541] However, lust and sexual desire are also often categorised as bodily appetites, or as like bodily appetites, and are clearly experienced in some way by non-human animals, some or all of which we would not wish to ascribe emotions to more generally. A discussion of sexual desire thus helps us to understand the similarities and differences between emotions and bodily appetites, and how might these interact with

[541] Richard Creel, *Impassibility*, p. 129

one another. I shall begin this discussion of sexual desire with a consideration of the similarities and differences between emotions and bodily appetites, and of the category into which sexual desire falls.

Nussbaum observes that both emotions and bodily appetites are similar in that they are situationally focused and pervasive, are related directly to the subject's flourishing, and respond to the presence or absence of a salient object. In addition, both either contain or presuppose some cognitive awareness of their own condition and of the salient object to which that condition corresponds. One possible difference between emotions and bodily appetites, highlighted in Plato's *Republic*,[542] is that bodily appetites are always directed towards a certain sort of object, from which they never diverge: Thirst is always the desire for drink, and hunger is always the desire for food. However, bodily appetites, unlike emotions, are not evaluative: They contain no further thought of the value or goodness of the object beyond its necessity for the fulfilment of our need. Emotions, by contrast, contain (as we have seen Nussbaum argue at length) internal to themselves an evaluation of the object. Moreover, the evaluation is the primary way in which the emotion characterises its object. In other respects, emotions such as fear, grief, love and anger are very flexible about the sorts of object they can take: 'One may love people or things, one may grieve for an animal or a child – what is crucial to the emotion is the value with which the object has been invested. Emotions, then, are *value-suffused* and (to some extent at any rate) object-flexible.'[543] Another distinction between bodily appetites and emotions that Nussbaum suggests is that a bodily appetite is a 'push': It comes from the subject's own bodily condition, independently of the world, and causes the subject to seek an object to satisfy it. Emotions, in contrast, are 'pulled' into being by their object, so that intentionality is intrinsic to emotion.

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[542] Plato, *Republic*, trans. Tom Griffith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), IV, 435*ff*
[543] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 130

In examining these criteria more closely, the criterion that seems most questionable to me is Plato's idea that bodily appetites are object-fixated while emotions are object-flexible. This is highlighted in the case of sexual desire, which (as I have already suggested) seems to have characteristics of both emotion and bodily *appetite, but for which the ideas of object-fixatedness and object-flexibility* seem a counter-intuitive way of characterising the respects in which sexual desire is an emotion and the respects in which it is a bodily appetite. Sexual desire is object-flexible in that it seems that sexual desire can be redirected to some extent (there is some evidence to suggest that mystical experiences have a strongly subverted sexual element, for example), in a way that hunger and thirst cannot, so following Plato's criteria we would have to say that in some respect sexual desire is not object-fixated enough to be classed as a bodily appetite, and must be an emotion. On the other hand, however, sexual desire can also strongly object-fixated, to the extent that it is not just the case that the subject will wish to have sexual relations with someone else who is of the same species, and possibly age, and so on, but that the subject may actually wish to have sexual relations with a *specific* other person, such that no other person would fulfil their need. (An analogy to a bodily appetite such as hunger would be if someone had a desire for crème brulee, and for no other food.) In this respect, sexual desire is very clearly a bodily appetite on Plato's criteria. The problem here, it seems to me, is that the respect in which sexual desire is characterised as a bodily appetite (i.e. its object-fixatedness), is precisely the respect in which most people would want to characterise it as an emotional experience: The fact that George desires sexual relations with Barbara and not with Jane, Fred, or Mary seems to be what makes George's sexual desire an emotion whereas, were George simply to go to a nightclub with the intention of having sexual relations with anyone he could persuade, we might be more inclined to regard his sexual desire as a bodily appetite. Furthermore, the idea that the psychological phenomenon is

value-suffused seems to be a natural ally not of the idea that it is object-flexible, but of the idea that it is object-fixated: George's lust for Barbara is precisely because he perceives her to have certain positive qualities he values highly and to which he is attracted, and his evaluation of the object is likely to make him more, rather than less, object-fixated. Thus I would question 'object-fixatedness' as a condition of a bodily appetite, and 'object-flexible' as a condition of an emotion.

The idea that emotions tend to be both evaluative and to be 'pulls' from the outside world seems to be a good way of distinguishing emotion from bodily appetites, though there are clearly some grey areas here. Someone may fall in love with someone else precisely because they have a need to love that comes from inside them, regardless of any perceived value on the part of the beloved, and yet we would not want to characterise that love as a bodily appetite. Conversely, hunger (conceived as a bodily appetite for food) may be increased or even caused by the presence of particularly appetising food, and the subject may choose to ignore all food excepting that which has attracted her; in this respect hunger may, like an emotion, be both evaluative and object-fixated.

In addition, it is difficult to see whether some phenomena are bodily appetites or emotions. Sexual desire has elements of both push and pull. As Nussbaum observes, sexual desire is both a drive arising independently of the presence of an object, demanding satisfaction (as evidenced by the phenomenon of masturbation), and something that is pulled into being by the perceived value of the object, exhibiting, in Nussbaum's terms, rich and selective intentionality.[544] Thus we might say that sexual desire is both an emotion and a bodily appetite, and that some instantiations of it are more 'emotional' while others are more appetitive. Of course, the two elements can interact with one another, as when sexual desire is pulled into being by an attractive

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[544] Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, p. 131

object, and the desire feeds off the already existing bodily appetite and so increases the 'emotional' element of sexual attraction, which in turn increases the subject's experience of sexual desire as bodily appetite.

This brief discussion of sexual desire has helped us to define the similarities and differences between emotions and bodily appetites, and to see the respects in which the two may interact. In addition, it has also provided an example of a potentially emotional experience that is nevertheless strongly, and I suggest intrinsically, physiological. In Aquinas' terms then, we would want to characterise sexual desire as a passion (whether a virtuous or a vicious one) and not an affection, and, following Aquinas, we would want to say that if God is incorporeal then this is one emotion that cannot be attributed to him. Returning to Creel's question therefore, we may respond by saying that the sort of theology that is informed by the passion-affection distinction of Augustine and Aquinas may affirm certain emotional experiences of God, while excluding (among other things) divine sexual desire. This, of course, does not exclude from the divine life other emotions which are not intrinsically physiological such as some forms of love as divine *eros* or God's desire to be united with creation, which is at the root of the Platonic Christian view of divine love and which may be considered in some ways analogous to sexual desire. However, it does exclude from the divine life the sexual desire that is experienced by corporeal beings and which necessarily involves the possession of a body.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the objection to passibilism that an incorporeal God could not have emotions because emotions require a body. This question is related to the questions about whether an omniscient and omnipotent God could have emotions, in

that the idea that emotions are essentially bodily is related to the belief that emotions are unintelligent and passive. I have sought to show throughout the three chapters that the beliefs that emotions are, across the board, unintelligent, passive and physiological, are myths, though in this chapter I have counterbalanced the emphasis on the cognitive nature of some emotions with an emphasis on the physical nature of some emotions. In terms of the passibility debate, I have sought to show that while some emotions might be attributed to an omnipotent, omniscient, incorporeal God, other emotions are more physiological and it would not make sense to attribute them to an incorporeal God. In doing this I have followed Thomas' distinction between passions that are physical and passive, and affections that are mental and voluntary, and may be attributed 'to the angels and even to God'. By following this distinction I have sought to bridge the gap between what is, in modern theology, a thoroughgoing impassibilism on the one hand, and a limitless and indefinite passibilism on the other.

Conclusion

At the outset of this thesis I asked whether being able to experience emotions is a susceptibility and a weakness, or a capacity and a strength, what it means to experience emotions, and what sort of being can experience emotions. I have sought to answer this question by arguing that much emotional experience is a strength rather than a weakness because it contributes uniquely to our intelligence. Through a re-appropriation of the Augustinian and Thomist distinction between *passiones* and *affectiones*, I have suggested that some emotional experiences, far from being incompatible with divine omnipotence, might actually be part and parcel of God's omnipotence, and necessary to God's omniscience when omniscience is conceived in terms of wisdom and intelligence, while suggesting that other emotional experiences detract from the subject's intelligence and would be at odds with divine incorporeality. I have also suggested that the distinction between *passiones* and *affectiones* might be a more helpful way of approaching modern philosophy of emotion than the all-encompassing and less discriminating category of the 'emotion', and that this distinction would be useful in surmounting the impasse that dominates modern philosophy of emotion between philosophers who adopt a cognitive view of emotions and those who adopt a feelings view. In addition, I have sought to show that the distinction between impassibilism in the early church (which is often characterised as regarding God as 'apathetic' or emotionless) and passibilism in modern theology (which is sometimes portrayed as affirming God's emotions without due caution or qualification) is misleadingly simplistic, and that a qualified affirmation of the fullness of God's emotional life is more in keeping with traditional Christian theology, and has greater fidelity both to the Fathers of the early church and to Thomas Aquinas, than at first appears to be the case.

In terms of the wider implications of this thesis for the impassibility debate, I hope that I have made a case for the ongoing need for theologians and philosophers of religion to engage both with modern philosophy of emotion and with earlier Christian theology and philosophy of emotion. I have suggested that this approach would open the door to ideas and, in particular, to distinctions that prevent the impassibility debate from becoming simplistic, and that lead theologians and philosophers of religion to present artificially extreme views on impassibilism as the only possible theological alternatives. This methodological point is, I suggest, not only relevant to theologians and philosophers of religion engaged in the impassibility debate, but may be broadened to include other areas of theology and philosophy of religion where a nuanced account of emotion is required as the foundation for theological and religious ideas and discussions. In particular, contemporary christology, soteriology, harmartiology, discussions of divine attributes such as love, omnipotence, and immutability, considerations of the psychological dimensions of faith and religious belief, explorations of characteristically Christian virtues such as charity and forgiveness, and Christian philosophy of sexuality, are among the many theological topics that would benefit from interacting with ancient and contemporary philosophy of emotion in this way.

In terms of the wider implications of this thesis for contemporary philosophy of emotion, I have sought to show that it may be beneficial for philosophers of emotion to take account of philosophy of emotion before the rise of the secular psychological *category of the 'emotion'*, *and* to consider views of emotion that are formed within primarily theological and religious, rather than *secular psychological conceptual* frameworks and worldviews. This, I have suggested, would introduce important distinctions within the concept of emotion for which the modern concept of the

'emotion' taken by itself does not allow, while maintaining the coherence and value of the concept of emotion in contrast to attempts to discard it entirely.

There is much that this thesis does not do, and I am aware of the extent to which it is a very partial discussion of the debate about divine impassibility. However, I hope that rather than rehearsing or providing new arguments for or against the position that God suffers (though I have indicated that there might be reasons for believing that God *can* suffer), this thesis contributes to a groundwork for discussions of the emotional life of God that move beyond simplistic distinctions between passibilism and impassibilism and that take into account a more subtle and nuanced view of what emotions are.

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