

**Political affections: a theological
enquiry**

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2010**

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Introduction

Human affections are the focus of our enquiry. We will enquire about the nature of affections, their role in human morality and their place in political relations. We will investigate whether discussions in philosophical ethics and moral psychology can assist political theory in conceptualising political society more clearly with respect to affections and whether, in turn, theological ethics can assist philosophical ethics, moral psychology and political theory in this task. We will seek to discover whether inadequate psychological, political and, indeed, theological concepts and language have contributed to an improper account of affection and thereby undermined healthy political thought and practice.

This line of enquiry seems very necessary in light of the current challenge to the development and maintenance of the practical unity of peoples within their particular political jurisdictions amidst the growth of global communications and the internationalisation of the popular consciousness. The oft-repeated lament over the “democratic deficit” within many western nation-states and continental authorities such as the European Union leads us both to question the nature of the deficit and to find out what would conduce towards that moral unity which maintains a political society in reflective, deliberative and active pursuit not only of its own common good but also that of its neighbours. Analysis of such a deficit in terms of voter turnout holds some interest. However, it is hardly the deepest way of describing a political society’s engagement with its own affairs. What then do we find in the profounder reaches of a society’s self-consciousness and activities? What is there in these depths that constitutes and sustains common life together?

The thesis we will advance is that affections are attracted, participative understandings of God's creation vindicated in Jesus Christ and, as such, are of the utmost significance for these deep political relations. Instead of solely analysing what affections are in individuals – a worthy task in itself – we will endeavour to paint on a broader political and theological canvas. Forgetfulness of the political context has been a weakness in non-theological and theological accounts that, with understandable eagerness to define personal affective experience, have not adequately addressed the affections' innate interpersonal quality. We will argue that affections are basic to the moral unity of political societies in pursuit of their common goals since people are bound together morally in their enduring, cognitive evaluations of common goods over time. Affections are the beginnings of that evaluative understanding in that they recognise good and evil, thereby opening up reflection on the nature of good and evil and deliberation about what it is right to do with respect to good and evil. Such affections endure by the power of memory especially the memory made possible by political institutions, political representation and law. We will argue that Christian theology explains the nature of affection most coherently since it accounts for the cognitive, attracted and potentially enduring nature of affection through examining the intelligible goodness of creation and its Creator and Redeemer. Inasmuch as they construe particular values within this larger canvas, affections will also be seen to be endings as well as beginnings. We will show how affections participate in the thick particularity of creation and, potentially, new creation as well as exploring how political conceptions which do not take sufficient account of the localised, institutional quality of human identity are liable to eviscerate political communities of their common affective understanding and hence

of their potential for genuine moral unity. Lastly, we will propose that Christian affections serve local churches by constituting their right understanding with respect to creation, new creation and Jesus Christ in whom all things hold together. These right affections then serve the common good by directing a political community towards an affective consensus which will ground and sustain its common practical communications.

Our goal is threefold: first, diagnostic – a theological examination of ‘emotions’ will involve scrutiny of fundamental concepts which have contributed to the formation of modern political society; second, constructive – theological ethics will have its own distinctive conceptual organisation concerning the place of affections in political relations; third, reparative – a theological account of the place of affections in politics will offer help and healing to a world in need.

Terminology

To address our questions and sustain the thesis it will be necessary to consider, learn from and account for major streams of thought in the field. Unfortunately, the study of “affections” or “emotions” has been characterised by considerable linguistic and conceptual disagreement and, in most modern accounts, little disciplined attention to those theological resources which might offer ways to assess and improve upon the numerous popular and scholarly options. Nonetheless, as we shall see, there has been a sea-change in philosophic ethics whereby “emotions” are now widely thought of as forms of knowledge. The turn towards this “cognitive” account reflects what much Christian theology has understood very well, namely that knowing is at least partially

constituted by “affections”. On the linguistic front, our prevarication here between “emotion” and “affection” points towards the difficulties of terminology. This discussion will hold that a conceptually coherent and comprehensive account will be assisted by utilising the language of “affections” instead of “emotions” and that such an account will reveal more precisely why and how affections play a role in social and political relations. There are two advantages of this terminological preference.

The first is pragmatic and relates to the contemporary moment. “Affection” has fewer popular associations with irrationality than “emotion” and our enquiry will precisely be concerned with examining whether and how affections might be cognitive aspects of human life. Furthermore, “affection” does not necessarily have the sense of suddenness which often characterises “emotion” and we will be looking to establish the possibility of stable as well as episodic affections. We should distinguish our term “affection” from the common usage of the term. In popular conversation, “affection” means something like ‘kindness’ or ‘goodwill’ but would not include phenomena such as ‘anger’. But here “affection” is meant to cover the full range of emotion-type phenomena such as envy, fear, anger, joy and hatred among others.

The second advantage is also pragmatic to some extent but relates to principled historical usage. Pragmatically, “affection” is a word in less common usage in the twenty-first century than “emotion” and so is more susceptible of redefinition. Moreover, in previous periods leading Christian thinkers in this area have written extensively of “affection” or its cognates. Jonathan Edwards expounded his account of ‘religious affections’ as a key component of experimental religion. The source for Edwards was, to a considerable extent, Augustine who, in *de civitate*

Dei, returns on a number of occasions to the theme of ‘affectus’ or ‘affectiones’, especially when considering rival philosophical theories such as Stoicism and Platonism. The term arises especially in relation to these rivals’ accounts of the place of *passiones*, *perturbationes* and *motus* in the life of the wise man. Augustine’s approach is not to hold tenaciously to any one term but rather to focus attention on the nature of the phenomena themselves, as disclosed by Christian revelation. He is particularly concerned to move the discussion of the phenomena away from whether any particular soul experiences *passiones* (or *motus* or *affectus*) and towards why and in relation to what it has the experience. The concern is thus with the cause and object of affections that they may be instruments of justice and not with whether *passio* itself is, as some Stoics and Platonists would claim, an essentially vicious aspect of human nature which requires control, subjection and even extirpation.¹ Augustine will not tolerate this latter view because of its doctrinally unsound roots either in a Platonic devaluation of the body, wherein *passiones* were thought to reside,² or in a Stoic rejection of certain *affectus* which are given clear approval in Scripture, not only in the lives of Paul and Jesus but also throughout the biblical text.³ In the end, though he is happy to use the terms *passio* and *motus*, especially though not exclusively when in dialogue with rivals, he more often favours *affectus* or *affectio* in constructive phases of his writing.⁴

In the present discussion, we should certainly follow Augustine’s lead and avoid quarrelling unnecessarily about words or about the frequency of their usage in any particular author. What is at stake for Augustine is not any particular word itself

¹ Augustine, *City of God (de civitate Dei)*, trans. Bettenson, H., Penguin Books, 1972, 9.5

² *ibid.* 14.5

³ *ibid.* 14.8-9

⁴ *ibid.* especially 14.9

but the meaning which the word bears. However, there is a need for terminological clarity in today's crowded marketplace of ideas. A return to the term "affection", held lightly and for largely pragmatic reasons but maintained consistently, is a promising move. The combination of its present disuse and prior theological usefulness makes it a good candidate for the cup of meaning⁵ which we will need for such a time as this. In what follows, I will reserve the term 'affection' for the concept which this research is aiming to elucidate but will continue to use the term 'emotion' when discussing those theories which utilise that terminology. Augustine adopted this practice by willingly using the term *passiones* when in dialogue with those who preferred it despite the conceptual accretions with which it had become encumbered. Thus our present approach seems in keeping with the best of the theological tradition.

An objector to our choice of "affection" might suggest "love" as a better alternative. While this would have strong support in the tradition – Augustine himself classified joy, fear, desire and sorrow as forms of 'amor'⁶ – it will not be so serviceable on this occasion. For the term "affection" is a term which is primarily deployed in the plural to describe diverse "affections", such as anger, fear, joy and hatred, phenomena which are the chief subject of our enquiry. But "love" is not like this since its primary usage is singular, drawing together different types of love under a single head. Our concern here is with the multiplicity of the affections and their diverse contributions to the common life of a community. Though it would be a useful project to indicate the political interrelation of love and the affections, we will not be proceeding down that line in this research. For since the theological tradition

⁵ Cf. Augustine, *Confessiones*, Scutella (ed.), Teubner, 1996, 1.xvi.26

⁶ Augustine, *City of God*, 14.7

has used “love” in highly complex ways, using the language of love would involve entering a lengthy engagement with sources which, while highly interesting in themselves, would lead us astray from the specific enterprise which we have in hand. Use of the term “affections” frees us from having to follow such a path and allows us to carry out the investigation which lies before us. We should also note in passing that “love” has been so blown about by the modern consciousness as to make conceptual headway very difficult. It has been so driven into the private and romantic that a connection to political affairs is hardly thinkable. So as an apologetic concession to the moment, we will adopt another term, namely ‘affection’.

The way ahead

With this terminological clarification made, I will now briefly outline the course of the argument. In chapter one, I review the work of cognitivist theorists of emotion who oppose both rationalist disavowals of the reasonableness of emotion and empiricist fascination with physical sensation. Such theorists hold that emotions’ intentional (object-directed), evaluative quality suggests that they possess a cognitive aptitude. This finding represents a measure of consensus between theological and philosophical ethics. The work of Martha Nussbaum, a leading cognitivist, receives sustained attention. The thesis takes this qualified agreement as a starting point from which to address substantial philosophical and political questions about the nature and role of emotion. Though the Jewish and Christian Scriptures are prominent later in the argument, they are less so in chapter one. This allows sophisticated treatments such as Nussbaum’s to be heard on their own terms and highlights issues which will

need to be addressed in the succeeding chapters. Exploring the political and legal questions raised by Nussbaum's account will be particularly important if the theological account of 'affection' is to be effective in illuminating the problems concerning moral unity experienced by people today. Her work, which is self-consciously attuned to religious conceptions, will return repeatedly in the course of the research.⁷

Chapter two proposes an account of "affection" which is intrinsic to individuals' and communities' complex interrelation with their political identity, the created order and creation's God. Drawing on cognitivist, phenomenological and spiritual approaches, the argument enquires as to the nature of affection and its relationship to memory and virtue. Jonathan Edwards' account of affections and his doctrine of excellency are also critically considered. With particular attention to joy, shame, anger and awe, the affective dimension of political life is then explored in chapter three through consideration of certain institutions, practices and traditions of modern political societies, ancient Israel and the early church. Affective wisdom within institutions of political representation and law are discussed in light of secular and Christian political eschatologies.

Findings from this discussion then guide chapter four's conversation between European 'constitutional patriotism' and British conservatism which explores the connection between affections and locality. The possibility of the development of a post-national consciousness is considered in light of the enduring attachments formed by the development of the modern nation-state and the loyalties sustained by

⁷ Because of the focus on emotions (affections) and *politics*, certain important voices will not be addressed in depth, most notably Robert C. Roberts' important contributions: Roberts, R., *Emotions: An Essay in Aid of Moral Psychology*, CUP, 2003; Roberts, R., *Spirituality and Human Emotion*, Eerdmans, 1982; Roberts, R., 'What an Emotion is: A Sketch', *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 97, No. 2. (Apr., 1988), 183-209.

national and ethnic traditions. The concluding passage of the thesis in chapter five considers further possibilities in this direction by examining the contribution of local churches to the renewal of localised affective understanding.

In many parts of the argument as a whole, we will be drawing on the Jewish and Christian Scriptures of the Christian bible (“the Scriptures”) to furnish us with moral concepts.⁸ Therefore, it is important to specify the nature of our approach to these writings and to recognise certain assumptions which will be made. We will hold that the Scriptures present a rich account of the significance of affections for human political relations. The biblical record of the activity of Yahweh in the history of Israel culminating in the ministry of Jesus Christ purports to offer profound insight into the affective dimension of human creaturely life. The details of this claim must be worked out over the course of the discussion and the proof of the pudding will be in the eating. However, by way of a preliminary roadmap, we may say that the focus in the Old Testament will be on the uniquely affective political consciousness designed by Yahweh for Israel, especially as seen in the book of Deuteronomy, selected because of its combination of sophisticated legality and nuanced affectivity. Without abstracting from the eschatological biblical narrative, we will gain insights from Deuteronomy into the affective dimension of human life which are applicable to our concern for political relations in general. The New Testament’s account of the interrelation of Israel with Christ purports to give the fullest definition to the place of affections in creaturely human life today. We will focus on the gospel of Luke and on the work of the Spirit in the life of the church as represented in Acts and 2 Corinthians. This will provide fertile ground for exploring the affective dimension of

⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, the text of the English Standard Version will be used throughout.

humanity and the possibilities for that dimension which the gospel has opened up. Our method to some extent mirrors Augustine's concern to enquire whether any particular usage or account of affections 'scripturis sanctis congruat'.⁹ Our pattern will be to move between moral concepts and the Scriptures, developing and correcting our concepts through exegesis of the Scriptures. It is through this Scriptural lens that we expect to discover wisdom concerning the political relations between governed and government and among the governed.

Such wisdom is much needed in political theory at the present time and thus has considerable apologetic value. For our political landscape is drenched in affective or "emotional" language but lacks the wherewithal to understand its meaning. The 2009 crisis over the integrity of the UK Westminster parliament, following the revelation of elected representatives' expenses claims and the attitudes which at least appear to have pervaded some parts of the political establishment, has been closely linked to the "anger" of the people. This anger has led to a shame and embarrassment (even humiliation) that has in turn brought about an awakening of the representative and the people to the need for action. However, although members of parliament have been quick to *say* that they understand how people feel, there has been very little conceptualisation of the situation to make sense of these communal emotions and their relation to political action. Our claim here is that the Scriptures provide powerful apologetic resources to address our need for an understanding of affection both in political situations such as this and in the broader matrix of relationships which constitute political society.

⁹ Augustine, *City of God*, 14.8

Roads not travelled

Our focus on a theological conceptualisation of affection in social and political relations will mean that, for reasons of time, space and lack of expertise, some important roads will not be travelled or will only be gestured towards. Four of the most important will be highlighted now. First, it has been suggested that gender is highly significant when discussing affections or ‘emotions’. This suggestion often appears on a popular level in terms of simplistic gender stereotypes whereby women are often construed as essentially more emotional or intuitional while men are essentially more rational though there are those who argue, with philosophical, sociological and neuroscientific reasons, for careful distinctions to be made between forms of male and female understanding with attention to affections.¹⁰ These arguments cannot be taken up here although their seriousness is recognised.

Second, there is a highly legitimate and important set of questions concerning emotions and mental illness. Although this discussion will engage with specific psychological theories, it will not trespass into territory which is properly reserved for the medical profession and those skilled in medical research. Thus, although a critical investigation of, for example, cognitive behavioural therapy would be an useful endeavour, it cannot be pursued here. This is not to say that there is no relation between social and political relations, emotions and mental health – the NHS and the prison system, for example, are clear loci for examining it – but only to say that

¹⁰ Cf. Chodorow, N., *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*, University of California Press, 1978; Nussbaum, M., *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, CUP, 2001, 161ff, 219ff

detailed discussion of clinical illnesses should be carried out by those with expertise in the matter.¹¹

Third, there is the line of research which explores emotions on the level of physiology and sometimes on the level of physiology alone. A significant representative researcher is Paul Ekman who has suggested that certain emotions are universally accompanied by certain facial expressions.¹² Though we will have reason to discuss this theme to some extent, we will not endeavour a detailed interaction. Our focus will be elsewhere mainly because of the *intentional* (object-directed/attracted, cognitive) quality of affection which we will explore in chapter one. This suggests that, although physiological factors may have a very strong connection to affection, they are not all that affection consists in.

Fourth, and most briefly, we will not be venturing into the technical, scholarly question of divine impassibility. Our focus is on human affections. However, in light of the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, we will consider the way in which God has experienced our human affectivity and the implications of this for our major concern.¹³

With our terms of reference and direction set and with some significant but untrodden by-roads noted, it is now time to begin our investigation. The task of the following chapter is to elucidate the questions we are seeking to answer, critique

¹¹ Cf. Bowlby, J., *Attachment and Loss*, Volumes 1-3, Basic Books, 1973-1982; Winnicott, D., *The Maturation Process and the Facilitating Environment*, International Universities Press, 1965; *Holding and Interpretation: Fragment of an Analysis*, Grove, 1986

¹² Cf. for example, Ekman, P., 'Facial Expression and Emotion', *American Psychologist*, 48.4 (April 1993), 384-392. Ekman has gathered evidence that there are facial expressions which occur universally across cultures in connection with specific emotions and in relation to specific events. He does not claim that facial expression alone individuates emotion but rather suggests that brain science can supply data which complements external expression and that the two together may effectively enable classification of certain families of emotion. For an alternative view see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/8199951.stm>.

¹³ For a recent study, see Weinandy, T., *Does God change?: the Word's Becoming in the Incarnation*, St Bede's, 1985; and *Does God Suffer?*, T&T Clark, 2000

some possible approaches and to gather, sift and coordinate conceptual resources which will make our investigation possible.

Chapter 1: Emotions and affections

Theories of emotion: an exploratory examination

A survey of philosophical contributions to the understanding of 'emotions' will begin to reveal the nature and importance of the questions under discussion. Initially, we will see that Cartesian, Humean and sensualist theories have been rightly set aside by modern philosophy because of their failure to account for the intentionality and openness to rational assessment which characterise human emotions. David Hume accepted the Lockean insight that passions were 'internal sensations' of pleasure and pain and 'no more contain any thought than do the bodily sensations that are their simple counterparts.'¹ As such, passions were designated as mental sensations, akin to physical sensations but constituting internal mental activities.² Hume denied the rationalist claim, largely influenced by René Descartes, that such sensations were in need of subjection to reason if they were not to pervert but rather support good moral agency. Hume argued that passions were impressions of reflection, secondary features of moral psychology which, as material particles in the mind, interact by association with each other. In this way, he sought to rescue the passions from a rationalist assessment and to argue instead both that reason was and should be the slave of the passions and that passion itself was basic to the sympathetic mechanism

¹ Deigh, J., 'Cognitivism in the Theory of Emotions', *Ethics*, Vol. 104, No. 4. (July 1994), 824-854, 825

² Hume, D., *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. Selby-Bigge, OUP, 1978, esp. Book II, Part I, Section 1

which sustains the obligations we hold in society.³ Hume's stance puts clear water between reason and passion. Though he does seem to allow for cases when passions are unreasonable as when 'accompany'd with some false judgment' he then goes on to explain that it is 'not the passion, properly speaking, which is unreasonable, but the judgment.'⁴ On this reckoning the passions are not judgments, cognitions or thoughts of any sort and so can never be properly classed as reasonable or unreasonable. On other accounts, emotions have been classified as inextricably linked to and individuated by particular sensations of our bodies. William James, for example, focussed on the connection between sensual stimuli and conscious passions, arguing that an emotion is simply a feeling of bodily change and is caused by environmental factors such as running away to avoid a hungry bear.⁵

Twentieth and twenty-first century philosophy of emotion, responding to these earlier trends, has largely denied that emotions should be identified with mental or physical sensations and has argued against the claim that emotions are essentially irrational. Philosophers have asked instead whether emotions may be classed as cognitive phenomena of some sort. John Deigh helpfully summarises the basis for this trend.

Two criticisms are chiefly responsible for the demise of feeling-centered conceptions...One is that feeling-centered conceptions cannot satisfactorily account for the intentionality of emotions. The other is that they cannot satisfactorily represent emotions as proper objects of rational assessment.⁶

³ Penelhum, T., 'Hume's moral psychology', Norton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hume*, CUP, 1993; Hume, D., *Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals*, ed. Selby-Bigge, OUP, 1975; cf. Deigh, J., 'Cognitivism in the Theory of Emotions', 825

⁴ Hume, D., *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book II, Part III, Sect. 3, ed. Selby-Bigge, 416

⁵ James, W., 'What Is an Emotion?', *Mind* 9, 1884, 188-205

⁶ Deigh, J., 'Cognitivism in the Theory of Emotions', 824-5

Cognitivists reckon that the “intentional” nature of emotions and their amenability to rational enquiry and assessment indicate that emotions have a cognitive quality. By “intentionality”, cognitive theorists mean the way that emotions are typically *about* or *directed at* something or someone. ‘We are rarely, if ever, simply angry, proud, or afraid. Rather we are angry *at* someone, proud *of* something, afraid *of* something or someone.’⁷ We say that we are angry *at* our enemies, that we are indignant *about* a particular case of injustice, that we are sorry *for* our neighbour whose cat has died, that we have an ongoing fear *concerning* the fidelity of our spouse or that we rejoice *in* the political leader whom we have elected. The italicised words indicate the way that the particular emotion is about or directed towards a specific object. Cognitivist theorists claim in various ways that this feature reveals that emotions are some form of thought, evaluation, apprehension, understanding or knowing. For ‘if anger...is always anger about something, then anger will include reference to belief and judgment in a way that feeling or sensation does not. We do not ask about the object of a stomach ache nor about that of fatigue. But we ask about the object of anger.’⁸ In this way, the intentional quality of emotion indicates that it is akin to other such intentional operations. The emotion thus seems to be a form of belief or judgment and hence is cognitive. Moreover, such theorists observe that we typically allow that emotions are open to enquiry and assessment. It is common not only to ask questions such as ‘why are you sad?’ or ‘do you think your anger is reasonable?’ and to expect answers but also to assess whether sadness or anger of this sort is appropriate to the situation. For example, if someone is angry at her political representative over some apparent failure to uphold justice or some abuse of office, it is possible to enquire

⁷ Lauritzen, P., ‘Emotions and Religious Ethics’, *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 16 (1988), 307–24, 312

⁸ *ibid.* 312

concerning the anger and to assess it in relation to factors such as whether there really is injustice or abuse, whether the representative is responsible and so on.

George Pitcher was one of the first to develop an account of the “intentionality” of emotions. He emphasised that emotions are ‘very often, and perhaps always, directed towards something’ but he also recognised that there may be no *particular* object of an emotion. For example, the fear of falling off a bridge into a gorge is not directed at any particular object but is nonetheless intentional in the sense of referring outwards beyond the subject of the emotion.⁹ Pitcher’s critique of those feeling-centred conceptions criticised by Deigh depends on the distinction of emotion from physical feelings such as pleasures, aches and pains which are typically not about or directed towards objects. Anger is normally directed towards an object such as a person or inanimate item. However, physical or mental sensations of pleasure and pain do not have any such referent and so cannot be an exhaustive account of emotion. To this we should add the observation that it is hard to imagine what a mental sensation which is *purely* pleasurable or painful might possibly be. The mind’s emotions may of course know *about* something concerning which it may experience pleasure and pain. But to say this is already to admit that emotions are intentional in the way Pitcher suggested and so to rule out the possibility that the emotions are purely sensations.

For these reasons the idea of emotions as purely sensory phenomena must simply be dismissed.¹⁰ Pitcher sensibly allows that some emotions may be accompanied by particular sensations on some occasions but he rightly argues that

⁹ Pitcher, G., ‘Emotion’, *Mind* 74 (1965), 326-346, 326-7

¹⁰ Deigh, J., ‘Cognitivism in the Theory of Emotions’, 826; for a good summary of the cognitivist position, cf. Elliott, M., *Faithful Feelings: Emotion in the New Testament*, IVP, 2005, 17-47

this is very far from the claim that the emotions are identical with any particular physical sensations let alone any putative mental sensations.

Despite all this, there remains a strong popular and scholarly opinion that emotion and sensation are identical. Robert Roberts explains persuasively why this is so.

Why are people inclined to identify emotions with physical sensations? Experimental psychologists no doubt find bodily states attractive because they are more readily measurable than other factors. But the mistake is not just a professional liability; ordinary people can be easily induced, with a few leading questions, to think they feel their emotions in their bodies. The reason, I think, is that these sensations are conceptually simpler and easier to identify than the emotions themselves. This homely theory is just an instance of our pre-reflective tendency to alight on the simple and obvious.¹¹

So emotions are more complex than people think and intentionality is a good philosophical starting point for understanding that complexity more deeply. Two clarifications and one rebuttal will qualify what we mean by intentionality. First, the term “intentional” is not being used here to refer to all deliberate decisions, choices and actions made or done by an agent. Certain philosophical traditions commonly use it to cover a wide range of phenomena whereby agents act with respect to an object in a deliberate way. The meaning of “intentional” relevant here, quite specifically the quality of being directed towards an object, is partially related to this in that it focuses on an agent’s relation to an object concerning which he may choose to act. However, the similarity is only limited because, as we will see, the nature of emotion (affection) suggests that the attractive power of objects has more influence on human agency than accounts of deliberate action often recognise. Second, intentionality should not be confused with the moral power-plays with which

¹¹ Roberts, R.C., ‘What an Emotion is’, *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 97, No. 2. (Apr. 1988), 183-209, 208

“emotivism” is concerned and which Alasdair MacIntyre has so ably elucidated.¹² The use of ‘intentionality’ here is not to be associated with the idea of *ulterior* intentions. Indeed, our constructive account of “affection” will have almost nothing to do with emotivism. Rather, our interest is in what we will call ‘cognitive intentionality’, the intentionality which Deigh and Pitcher have helpfully observed in the object-directedness of emotion.

Third, the objection that some emotions, such as a generalised anxiety, seem to be objectless does not cause an insurmountable problem to the claim that emotions are commonly intentional in the way described. Cognitive theorists have rebutted this objection by either recategorising such apparently objectless emotions under “moods” or claiming that there are actually implicit, unrecognised objects in view which have not yet appeared to the consciousness of the person but are nonetheless attracting his sub-conscious emotional attention. The rebuttal may be further strengthened by observing that feeling anxious about apparently objectless anxiety itself – a common feature of depression, for example – is evidence that emotions are after all intentional.¹³ Indeed, such is the confidence that modern theorists of emotion have about intentionality that Penelhum can denounce Hume’s whole theory as fatally flawed by ‘a wildly implausible denial of the intentionality of passions’.¹⁴

However, theorists who agree that emotions are essentially intentional and cognitive have disagreed about whether *evaluation* of the intentional object is essential to this intentionality. For example, sorrow over a failure of a business itself seems to include some evaluation of that business and its parlous state. There is a

¹² Cf. MacIntyre, A., *After Virtue: a Study in Moral Theory*, Duckworth, 1985, chapters 2-3 for a summary of emotivism.

¹³ Cf. Nussbaum, M., *Upheavals of Thought*, 132-5; cf. Kenny, A., *Action, Emotion and Will*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963, 36ff, 42

¹⁴ Penelhum, T., ‘Hume’s moral psychology’, 128

recognition of the value of an object and of some goodness or badness about the condition of the object towards which emotion is directed. Indignation evaluates a situation as wrong; fear typically evaluates a situation as dangerous in some respect. A further step is to claim that certain emotions only evaluate certain types of objects. Deigh helpfully summarises this refined, evaluative approach.

If the object of fear must be something that is seen to threaten harm, then fear entails an evaluation of its object as the potential source or agent of some bad effect. If the object of pity must be someone who is seen to have suffered misfortune, then pity entails an evaluation of its object's condition as bad and undeservedly so.¹⁵

If emotion is evaluative in this way, then it follows that emotion is potentially partially constituted by having a certain propositional belief, articulating that evaluation, about the object of one's emotion, and that such a propositional belief is inseparable from the emotion itself.¹⁶ The presence of propositional content clarifies the way that emotions are cognitive since it would render emotions as of the same sort as beliefs, precisely with respect to propositional content. The propositional content may not be articulable at the time of the emotional experience but nonetheless would seem to be a constituent part of the emotion.

With all this said, it may still seem counterintuitive to class emotion as cognitive, evaluative and intentional. After all, non-evaluative visual perception of a snake or a loved one seems sufficient to evoke fear or gladness. However, such a challenge is not difficult to rebut. Either one allows that the emotion in question does lack evaluative content but then categorises it as peripheral to the normal cases¹⁷ or one argues that there is an implicit, pre-reflective evaluation occurring which is

¹⁵ Deigh, J., 'Cognitivism in the Theory of Emotions', 836

¹⁶ *ibid.* 827-830

¹⁷ Pitcher, G., 'Emotion', 337

intentional and so cognitive. Cognitive, evaluative intentionality of some sort is thus the most persuasive account of emotion to have emerged in philosophy of emotion. The account of emotion as purely sensual must be dismissed as inadequate to account for this quality in emotions.

Modern neuroscience lends some support to the cognitivist position by its close association of cognition and emotion. For example, Joseph LeDoux is especially critical of modern psychology's tendency to ascribe reality to vague departments of the mind and to

carve the mind up into functional pieces, such as perception, memory and emotion [since these] are useful for organizing information into general areas of research but do not refer to real functions.¹⁸

LeDoux particularly focuses on the way that neural networks interact in the brain and aims to show that 'cognition and emotion are best thought of as separate but interacting mental functions mediated by separate but interacting brain systems.'¹⁹ He even wonders whether brain evolution may develop so that with 'increased connectivity between the cortex and amygdala, cognition and emotion might begin to work together rather than separately.'²⁰ In light of this, LeDoux is sceptical of those who fail to take seriously the study of neural connections and reify 'reason', 'will' and 'sense perception' as faculties in some vague interrelationship without considering the brain science which is now available. He is also sceptical of views which do not distinguish both conscious and unconscious emotions and the concomitant influence that such emotions have on our lives. In light of this, he is

¹⁸ LeDoux, J., *The Emotional Brain: The Mysterious Underpinnings of Emotional Life*, Phoenix, 2004, 16

¹⁹ *ibid.* 69

²⁰ *ibid.* 303

critical of the trend in cognitive science to adopt emotions as simply the same as ‘cold’ reasoning and logic.²¹ On some psychological accounts emotions are classified solely as forms of cognition in the narrow sense of thinking and reasoning. This has been a particularly important development since the 1960’s and has emphasised the possibilities of introspective awareness of emotional states as a reaction against the behaviourist school.²² According to LeDoux, ‘more and more cognitive scientists are getting interested in emotions. The problem is, instead of heating up cognition, this effort has turned emotion cold – in cognitive models, emotions, filled with and explained by thoughts, have been stripped of passion.’²³

Martha Nussbaum, a leading cognitivist theorist, is favourable to LeDoux since she believes that emotions ‘are, like other mental processes, bodily’,²⁴ opposes the behaviourist tendency²⁵ and wishes to account for their urgency (or heat)²⁶ rather than reducing human minds to ‘souls on ice’.²⁷ Nussbaum’s appropriation of LeDoux is instructive for it shows how a political philosopher who takes seriously the intentionality of emotion does not need to be afraid of research in neuroscience as if discovering more about how emotion works neurologically will necessarily be at odds with a philosophical or indeed theological interpretation of the role of emotion in political societies. From a theological perspective, we may agree with LeDoux that emotions (or ‘affections’) are considerably more complex than departmentalised psychological thinking seems to allow and are certainly not icy cold. However, it will

²¹ *ibid.* 38; cf. *ibid.* 27 where the functionalist development in cognitive science is traced in which minds and machines were closely associated. Cf. Putnam, H., ‘Minds and machines’, Hook (ed.), *Dimensions of Mind*, Collier, 1960

²² For an analysis, cf. LeDoux, J., *The Emotional Brain*, 67ff

²³ *ibid.* 38

²⁴ Nussbaum, M., *Upheavals of Thought*, 25; for a criticism of a fifth century version of this position, cf. Augustine, *City of God*, 8.6

²⁵ Nussbaum, M., *Upheavals of Thought*, 26, 93ff

²⁶ *ibid.* 78

²⁷ LeDoux, J., *The Emotional Brain*, 25

not be necessary to follow him by adopting a solely physiological account of affection (emotion) in order to propose a fruitful interpretation of the phenomena which benefits from neuroscientific discovery. The behaviourists' ridicule of mental states, consciousness and mind as ghosts in the machine can be pushed to the margins not only by closer examination of brain function but also by the observation that there is more to affectivity than meets the microscope, an invisible and even spiritual dimension to human life. This is far from special pleading unless all serious theological and much philosophical thought counts as such. Moreover, although theology is not competent to judge the workings of the limbic system or the thalamo-hippocampal pathway, it can at least be attentive to lessons learnt from neuroscientific research, while not being constrained to consider solely physiological findings.

Political implications

If cognitive, evaluative intentionality does characterise emotions, this will affect descriptive conceptualisation of and normative recommendations for political society. For if emotions are cognitive then they may be articulated and shared in common by a number of subjects; and if emotions are evaluative then they will be constitutive of a political interest for that group of subjects. Emotions are thus highly significant for political relations and understanding more clearly their role in human morality and in political life is very important. For example, a project for educating the emotions would be much more plausible if emotions are not essentially irrational but rather have a cognitive aptitude, an evaluative facility and an intentional nature.

Contrasting accounts of emotion will yield differing political conceptualities. In Plato's *Phaedo*, reason is likened to a charioteer controlling, restraining and coercing the emotions. On this account, emotions have no potential to contribute to reasonable agency but are rather essentially disorderly and non-cognitive. One may learn to handle emotions but emotions are not themselves essentially educable. Our account of emotions' cognitive, evaluative intentionality is sufficient to set aside the approach of the *Phaedo*. Instead, we may take up the political role of emotions for individuals, families, communities, institutions and nation-states. For taking a position on the cognitive, evaluative or other properties of 'emotion' will have a bearing on the relevance of emotion to a range of issues in political societies. Consider mitigation in criminal trials, the strength of bonds in professional guilds such as medicine, the durability of military regiments, the role of rhetoric and the nature of political representation. Emotion seems to play a significant role in all these cases, some of which will be taken up in the course of our discussion. If emotions do have cognitive aptitude, then neglecting them on account of their supposed irrationality will not be a wise political practice.

There is still considerable confusion with respect to this political dimension in both academic and popular discourse. Leaving his neuroscience behind, LeDoux ventures to trace the history of traditional thought about emotion. Having (rightly) rejected the Platonic opposition of reason and passion he claims that

Christian theology has long equated emotions with sins, temptations to resist by reason and willpower in order for the immortal soul to enter the kingdom of God. And our legal system treats "crimes of passion" differently from premeditated transgressions. Given this long tradition of the separation of passion and reason, it should not be too surprising that a field currently exists to study rationality, so-called cognition, on its own, independent of emotion.

This judgment on two thousand years of Christian thought stands as an invitation for Christian theology to give an account of the phenomena which LeDoux calls ‘emotions’. Moral theology may have done and be able to do rather better than LeDoux imagines and may not be so associated with Platonic moral psychology as he seems to think. Were LeDoux’s charge not so serious, it would be amusing to note that the crime for which he arraigns Christianity is precisely that of which Augustine finds Virgil and Plato guilty, namely the equation of ‘cupiditatem’, ‘timorem’, ‘laetitiam’ and ‘tristitiam’ with the ‘origines omnium peccatorum atque vitiorum’.²⁸ In contrast, Augustine takes time to specify the affective richness of the life of the city of God in the new heaven and the new earth, a fully bodily life of righteous affection, living according to the Spirit and not the flesh.²⁹

Unfortunately, LeDoux fares no better in his unguarded summary of jurisprudential wisdom on emotion. For he actually describes the legal tradition moving *in an opposite direction* to what he perceives to be the theological error. Emotions would be irrational and culpable according to LeDoux’s theology but would be reasonable mitigations of culpability according to his assessment of legal theory. This assessment is all confusion and invites more considered attention of actual legal traditions, such as that of ancient Israel and the common law, in which emotion has a role quite unlike the Platonic idea of emotions as wild horses.³⁰ This thesis will seek to show that, in stark contrast to LeDoux’s charge, Christian

²⁸ Augustine, *City of God*, 14.3; cf. 14.5: ‘hinc eis sint morbi cupiditatum et timorum et laetitiae siue tristitiae; quibus quattuor uel perturbationibus, ut Cicero appellat, uel passionibus, ut plerique uerbum e uerbo Graeco exprimunt, omnis humanorum morum uitiositas continetur.’

²⁹ *ibid.* 14.9

³⁰ LeDoux, J., *The Emotional Brain*, 24; cf. Kahan, D. and Nussbaum, M., ‘Two Conceptions of Emotion in Criminal Law’, *Columbia Law Review* 96, 269-374

theology's sophisticated account of emotion (affection) actually clarifies the role of emotion in politics and philosophy.

Popular discourse also tends in diverse and often confused directions concerning the place of emotion in political relations but often adheres by default to the rationalist account that reason should restrain emotions which are, like wild horses, threats to our rational ability to perform duty to self, society and political authority. It is often said that judicial authorities should be "unemotional". British Home Secretaries are criticised for taking account either of the "emotion-laden tide" of popular opinion about certain crimes such as child abuse or for allowing that the sorrowful remorse of a reviled offender, such as Myra Hindley, might change our emotional understanding of her and our political judgments concerning her future. Such popular opinions suggest that emotion is essentially non-cognitive and should be shut out from the cognitive work of political judgment. In contrast to emotional interference in politics, the responsible democratic cast of mind is one of cool calculation, the rationality of the informed chooser. This chooser is not assisted by his or her emotions but requires only a weighing of options and a calculation before decision is made. This is our culture's Kantian inheritance. However, people are inconsistent and, alongside their rejection of emotion in public, they often want government to be sensitive to the emotional ties which bind them to certain institutions such as military regiments threatened with abolition. In recent British history, we might think of the rationalisation of regionalised military regiments such as the Black Watch into apparently more efficient units. The popular and governmental outcry against this suggested that emotional connections were intelligible, community-building features of life, which should be in some way

protected by government.³¹ Or again, consider the differing views of Gordon Brown's suspension of normal political affairs when David Cameron's son, Ivan, passed away. Was the cancellation of Prime Minister's Questions an inappropriate incursion of a family grief into what should be an arena free of such essentially private emotions and focussed more on the thousands of people dying in Iraq and Afghanistan?³² Perhaps most obviously, was the extraordinary behaviour of the British people after the death of Diana reasonable, unreasonable, essentially irrational or something else? It was certainly quite different from Gordon Brown's sombre, orderly leadership which expressed a national sympathy for David Cameron and his family but was it is any more or less qualified to play a part in the political process?

These disagreements signal something of importance for our national life. What we think of emotion will impact how we organise ourselves in order to sustain communities of common action. Consider the recent proposals to inaugurate a yearly "British day" analogous to the United States' Independence Day.³³ What would such plans for a government-supported attempt to deepen patriotism mean about the nature and role of emotion? Similarly, consider the proposals that all schoolchildren at the age of sixteen should participate in a citizenship ceremony as an aspect of their overall education.³⁴ Some continue to hold up a banner of 'Britishness', depending on an underlying, already agreed upon loyalty in which all somehow share. But what is this "loyalty" and what would be the conceptual basis for it to be fostered by a day or a ceremony?

³¹ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/4089351.stm>

³² http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7911573.stm; www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/matt_hewd_ancona/4885300/The-tribute-to-Ivan-Cameron-was-the-opposite-of-a-Diana-moment.html

³³ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7692933.stm

³⁴ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/7287984.stm

These illustrations point towards larger difficulties in political theory in which emotions are often inadequately conceptualised or even excluded. If one cannot say with some definition what emotions are, then one will find it impossible to explain persuasively why and how they are important for political life. This is the case in so-called ‘conservative’ or communitarian thinkers as well as ‘liberal’ theorists. Edmund Burke and Roger Scruton, for example, appeal to ‘public affections’³⁵ or ‘deeper emotions’³⁶ but do not define what they mean by these terms. There is a nonchalant presupposition that people will instinctively understand and value the affective dimension of political existence. Once such instinctual knowledge has been lost, the only response which they think can be offered is elegiac rather than reconstructive. Indeed, Scruton self-consciously adopts this elegiac register, like a Jeremiah proclaiming to all that the nation is in ruins but, unlike Jeremiah, failing to tell us where we may find balm for our healing (Jeremiah 8:22, 46:11).

The difficulties are even more apparent in mainstream liberal contractarian narratives. Even though ‘affect’ is sometimes addressed seriously, as in Jürgen Habermas’ intriguing account of constitutional patriotism, Patchen Markell notes that modern discussions of patriotism have ‘treated “affect” very flatly and have not addressed differences among affects, much less the possibility of a plurality of affects towards a single object’. Beyond discussions of patriotism, Markell rightly notes that his assessment is ‘in large part true of political theory more generally.’³⁷

³⁵ Burke, E., *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, OUP, 1999, 77-78

³⁶ Scruton, R., *England: An Elegy*, Continuum, 2006, 49-50

³⁷ Markell, P., ‘Making Affect Safe for Democracy?: On “Constitutional Patriotism”’, *Political Theory*, 2000 (28.1), 54; cf. Lacroix, J., ‘For a European Constitutional Patriotism’, *Political Studies*, 2002 (50), 944-958; Habermas, J., ‘Struggles for recognition in the democratic constitutional state’, Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism: examining the politics of recognition*, Princeton University Press, 1994, 107-148

Although emotion is often discussed by psychologists and in some branches of philosophy, political theory is reticent on the topic.

There are important reasons for the paucity of subtle political analysis of emotion among contractarians in particular. First, the focus on the location of sovereignty has been at the expense of analysis concerning how decisions are reached and the reasons for them. Reasoning about political practice has become organised around the authority of the autonomous chooser, an approach which has not been conducive to examining the role of emotions. Whereas in reality, people's emotional connections with political leaders do constitute at least a part of the reason why they vote for them or act in support of their policies, much contractarian political theory has encouraged citizens to conceptualise the democratic process as a way to become emancipated from other people's decisions by enthroning everyone as the ultimate decision-takers. In John Rawls' original position, for example, there is no *political* validity to grief over one's neighbour's lost job, joy concerning the arrival of a significant festival, wonder at a politician's life story or hate for one's enemy in war. There is no contribution which these emotions make which is worthy of serious moral examination. They are ruled out from rational discourse in favour of principles – such as the difference principle – which promise to preserve the sovereignty of each and to secure rights and equality for all.³⁸

However, there seems no good warrant for neglecting an emotional contribution to public reasoning nor does it seem that the laudable aims of achieving a just society (however that is then defined) will be best pursued by theoretically setting aside a basic aspect of people's engagement with each other and the world

³⁸ Rawls, J., *A Theory of Justice*, Harvard University Press, 1999

they share, namely their emotions. Contractarianism is a theory which does not correspond to the reality of the world and, in its earnest attempts to preserve sovereignty, misses large aspects of people's lives, most especially the affective dimension of their existence.

A second reason for this neglect of emotions in political theory, arising from the influence of Humean and rationalist thought, is the common belief that emotions are non-cognitive or, at least, not cognitive in a way which can contribute to public discussion. There will be a spectrum of opinion as to the extent and significance of emotions' lack of cognitive aptitude. However, as we have seen, one mainstream claim is that emotions are uncontrollable impulses which arise and cloud judgment, having a physiological rather than rational basis. As such they are akin to hunger and thirst but quite unlike rational discourse about how to organise political life to deal with challenges such as hunger, thirst, conflict and justice. This common move has a double lineage not only in a certain sort of rationalism which strictly divides reason from emotion but also in a behaviourist psychology which interprets the physical sensation involved in emotion as a sufficient description of the emotion. Through this latter line of descent has come the idea that emotion is not an interpretation of the world but rather a strictly physiological response to the impact which the world has on the individual. If this were the case, then emotion could hardly have a reasonable contribution to make to political discourse. It might be the subject of discussion but could never constitute any part of the reasonable content of discussion itself as a form of cognition.

One possible, practical effect of the trend in contractarian thought is suggested by Michael Walzer's distinction between moral community and legal

community.³⁹ Justine Lacroix helpfully expounds the former as ‘the social, geographical and cultural unit in which individuals are united by their shared understandings’ and the latter as that which ‘defines the scope of policy measures that legally bind a community of citizens.’⁴⁰ According to Lacroix, the moral and the legal do not overlap in Europe today since, despite strenuous efforts at integration, there is no common political awareness across nation-states since the people’s ‘shared understandings’ do not cohere with the representative, legislative authorities. This mismatch has created what Cécile Laborde describes as ‘resentment towards aloof and acculturated elites’.⁴¹ In Europe today, this is politely glossed – between the gritted teeth of European visionaries – as the “democratic deficit” and is illustrated by the European Parliament’s current low status in the eyes of those whom it governs and the consistently low turnout at European elections. But there are more subtle, anecdotal signs of resentment in cases such as the metric martyrs of London markets whose traditions of weighing and measuring have been assaulted by distant powers and enforced by local authorities. The growing hatred of far away authority which disrupts the warp and woof of local economic and social practices points towards a deeper psychological meaning to the democratic deficit.⁴² From another perspective, the resurgence of neo-Nazism in Germany and other nationalist movements across Europe seem to be further signs of disillusionment with the European experiment.⁴³

³⁹ Walzer, M., *Spheres of Justice*, Blackwell, 1985; Walzer, M., *Politics and Passion: Toward a More Egalitarian Liberalism*, Yale University Press, 2004

⁴⁰ Lacroix, J., ‘For a European Constitutional Patriotism’, 944

⁴¹ Laborde, C., ‘From Constitutional to Civic Patriotism’, *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Oct. 2002), 591-612, 601

⁴² <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/profiles/3180491/Janet-Devers-the-metric-martyr.html>

⁴³ <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,648086,00.html>; for the British situation, consider the rise of the British National Party http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/8088381.stm

The normal turn in political theory at this point is to address the legitimacy question. Laborde responds in this way and claims that to be

fully legitimate, political institutions must be perceived by citizens as democratic forums of self-rule, where debate is inclusive and comprehensible, representatives fully accountable, and decisions publicly justified.⁴⁴

Such a move is a serious attempt to reconnect the moral and legal communities thereby stabilising polities and diminishing resentment. Our discussion will explore whether the deficit may be more fruitfully described and addressed through a reconsideration of the place of affections in political societies. Such an approach does not diminish the importance of inclusive deliberation, justified decision-making and accountable representation but rather seeks to go deeper than the legitimacy question to ask about the nature of ‘shared understandings’⁴⁵ and whether understanding these understandings is more fundamental to the nature of political life than is commonly recognised.

The inchoate yet insistent quality of the popular claim that our emotions are *somehow* important is one of the most obvious features of modern life: it is a media commonplace that people, especially the youth, are ‘disaffected’. However, the phenomenon of disaffection is scarcely investigated and so barely understood. There seems to be *some* definite reality which the appeals to ‘emotion’ are attempting to pick out, an ‘affective dimension’⁴⁶ which is inextricable from all participation in social life. But this dimension has been neglected or misunderstood in mainstream works of political theory. If currently used popular, political and theological

⁴⁴ Laborde, C., ‘From Constitutional to Civic Patriotism’, 601

⁴⁵ Lacroix, J., ‘For a European Constitutional Patriotism’, 944

⁴⁶ O’Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, Eerdmans, 2005, 163

conceptualisations of emotion are in a state of more or less acknowledged disrepair, then there is a need for some reparative work.

Martha Nussbaum's cognitive-evaluative theory of political emotions

Before developing an explicitly theological account of 'affection', it will be beneficial to take soundings from the best philosophical attempts to describe the affective dimension of reality. Some justification is required for a detailed attentiveness to philosophy since its status with respect to theological questions is hardly without its difficulties. The widespread exclusion of revelation from its considerations distinguishes it from moral theology which follows from dogmatic claims concerning God and his works that disclose the nature of reality. Nonetheless, as structured human attempts to understand human nature in a particular social context, such philosophical accounts both point helpfully towards the affective dimension of Yahweh's design for human community and demonstrate the intriguing and sometimes troubling paths societies may travel when they disregard the Trinitarian God. Moreover, if our account of 'affection' is to have any persuasive power within political theory and practice, it would be as well to be in dialogue, from the beginning, with those who currently have command of the field, not only to offer any correctives which theology might bring but also to learn from such thinkers, thereby acknowledging in practice the truth of general revelation.

Martha Nussbaum's work, especially in her books *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*,⁴⁷ seeks to fill the void left by discredited Cartesian, Humean and sensualist theories of emotion. Her fascinating, moving and insightful approach shows how philosophical and occasionally theological concerns influence an analysis of the nature of emotions and their role in political society. Since she is one of the few who have endeavoured to apply a thesis about emotions to specific political structures and laws, her work is particularly important for any writing which attempts to understand the place of emotion in the legal and social structures of modern nation-states. It is also important to engage with her because she is held in high esteem by legal institutions and university faculties in the United States, the political and academic structures of which have complex global influence. Moreover, Nussbaum is highly suitable as a conversation partner because of her professed Judaism and her willingness to take seriously Christian theologians such as Augustine. Thus an extended analysis of Nussbaum's theory will be of peculiar importance in highlighting the nature of the field into which Christian moral theology must venture. If theology is to offer a compelling account of affection, then it will do well first to study, learn from and assess the best offerings of non-Christian philosophy.

Broadly speaking, Nussbaum's account can be described as part of the cognitive-evaluative school of thought outlined above. According to Nussbaum, basic human 'emotions' are 'intelligent responses to the perception of value' which 'involve judgments about the salience for our well-being of uncontrolled external

⁴⁷ Cf. Nussbaum, M., *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame and the Law*, Princeton University Press, 2004; Nussbaum, M., *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, with respondents, Cohen (ed.), Beacon Press, 2002

objects'.⁴⁸ She argues forcefully for the intentionality of emotion – their 'aboutness' – and their openness to rational assessment. She takes this to be quite obvious when contrasted with the way that the wind is not *about* the object it crashes into and pounding blood is not *about* the reason for its pounding.⁴⁹ She particularly criticises any conception which cannot effectively individuate emotions. For example, feeling-centred conceptions cannot sufficiently account for why anger is different from grief since the same physical feeling or change may occur with both emotions. Moreover, emotions cannot be individuated by characteristic modes of behaviour such as running since the same behaviour with similar physiological change may indicate fear or compassion depending on whether one is running from a bear or towards a loved one in distress. Instead she argues that what must individuate emotions is the cognitive content they have with respect to the objects they are directed towards. This crucial move organises emotion around belief rather than physical sensation since the belief is a necessary condition of the emotion. She then argues that beliefs are not intellectual acts separate from the emotion but rather are constituent parts of the emotion. Thus emotions are themselves at least partially constituted by beliefs about objects rather than simply parasitic on belief.⁵⁰

Having established this, her account then adopts the stoic claim that a judgment about the world is an 'assent to an appearance' of reality.⁵¹ When a stoic has observed that something appears to be the case, her judgment is an assent to that appearance, an acceptance that it is the case. Nussbaum adapts this account by arguing for a neo-stoic position: namely that a judgment about a valuable object

⁴⁸ Nussbaum, M., *Upheavals of Thought*, *ibid.* 1-2. Nussbaum also expends great energy on animal emotions; however, this aspect of her theory lies beyond the reach of the present discussion.

⁴⁹ *ibid.* 27

⁵⁰ *ibid.* 33ff

⁵¹ *ibid.* 37

which is not under the agent's total control will be an emotional evaluation of that object not a mere assent to its appearance. Thus she 'claims that grief is identical with the acceptance of a proposition that is both evaluative and eudaimonistic'.⁵² For example, when Nussbaum considers the death of her mother from cancer – an event or object which was by no means under her total control – her perception of reality involves an evaluative content, namely the emotion of grief by which she intelligently responds to this uncontrolled death. Her emotion is intentionally directed towards an object (her mother's death) in the sense that, by her grief, Nussbaum sees the object internally, interprets it from her own perspective and believes certain things about its value. All human emotions involve these evaluating judgments and are characteristically directed to 'intentional objects', such as other human beings, which are 'external' to the subject, that is, beyond her total control. We note that 'external', for Nussbaum, does not necessarily mean beyond one's physical body since there are many aspects of one's own body (including the brain) that are not under one's total control.

Nussbaum goes further by saying that, for her emotion to be an emotion, the object of her emotion – in this case, the death of her mother – must be of significance *for Martha Nussbaum*. Emotions are focused on objects beyond the agent's control which are *significant to the subject's 'eudaimonistic' plans to achieve a flourishing life*.⁵³ This eudaimonistic dimension is vital for her whole project since it organises the way in which valuation occurs and thus the objects towards which emotions can be directed. For the sake of conceptual clarity we should distinguish (a) the claim that emotions are focused on objects beyond the agent's total control, (b) the claim

⁵² *ibid.* 41

⁵³ *ibid.* 31-33, *passim*; Nussbaum explicitly announces her commitment to Aristotelian eudaimonism here.

that emotions focus on objects valued through eudaimonistic interpretation and (c) the claim that valuation is necessarily *eudaimonistic* valuation. None of these claims can simply be inferred from either or both of the others and all will be called into question as we proceed. However, Nussbaum links all three so that emotions focus on objects which matter to the agent's conception of her own happiness but which are not totally controlled by the agent. In so doing, she introduces the key notion of vulnerability into the heart of her account of emotions. On Nussbaum's story, objects which she fully controls cannot be objects of her emotions. However, once an agent eudaimonistically values objects which are beyond her total control, she has 'hostages to fortune [and] she lets herself in for the entire gamut of the emotions.'⁵⁴ For whatever befalls the uncontrolled, valued object – be it Nussbaum's mother or, on a more obviously altruistic note, the cause of homosexuals in the USA – will be perceived emotionally by the subject. Emotions will change as the fortunes of these valued objects change. Thus, as 'far as the passage from one emotion to the other goes, one is in the hands of the world.'⁵⁵ The upheavals of the world come upon us and upon the objects of our emotions and bring about corresponding upheavals of thought. Thus 'the geography of the world as seen by the emotions has two salient features: uncontrolled movement, and differences of height and depth.'⁵⁶ This move also accounts crucially for the urgency – which Nussbaum glosses as 'heat' without meaning anything physical – that accompanies emotion and which is often confused with irrationality by non-cognitivist theorists. As Nussbaum says, 'bringing thought

⁵⁴ *ibid.* 87

⁵⁵ *ibid.* 87

⁵⁶ *ibid.* 88

about well-being right into the structure of emotion, shows why it is *the emotion itself*, and not some further reaction to it, that has urgency and heat.’⁵⁷

The account follows a highly nuanced path which cannot be traced in full detail here.⁵⁸ Suffice to say that emotions, for Nussbaum, are cognitive, evaluative, intentional beliefs about external objects which are vulnerable to upheaval and which are valuable because of the subject’s eudaimonistic outlook. What is of particular interest here is how she specifically develops this theory in the matrix of political society. To grasp this element of her theory, one final component of Nussbaum’s thought must be briefly reviewed. As we will see, she considers the education of emotion an important political goal. But education is conceived in the context of a certain account of how children develop psychologically. She analyses human emotions by beginning in the infant human experience of attachment to uncontrolled objects in the world such as food and care-givers which appear and disappear in ways which both support and run counter to the infant’s awareness that all things are apparently coordinated to the infant’s needs. The infant’s experience of being totally dependent on uncontrolled objects of great importance to its well-being forms early object relations and emotional attachments.

Nussbaum shows how these emotions arise again in a seemingly uncontrolled way at inexplicable moments in adult life and are thus mistakenly thought of as non-cognitive, uncontrollable forces like the wind. What is happening in adult emotions is that our complex infantile and childhood experiences are continuing to shape our thoughts about reality. As infants, we struggle with our lack of control and utter dependence; we only come to understand it later when our self-consciousness

⁵⁷ *ibid.* 78

⁵⁸ Cf. *ibid.* 24-88 for Nussbaum’s full cognitive account.

emerges and we learn to distinguish ourselves from our carers and appreciate them as others. But because of these infant experiences, Nussbaum argues that the

roots of anger, hatred and disgust lie very deep in the structure of human life, in our ambivalent relation to our lack of control over objects and the helplessness of our own bodies.⁵⁹

Nussbaum is by no means suggesting a return to a rationalist thesis that we should bring these infantile emotions under the control of reason or that we should “grow up” into unemotional, adult choosers. Nor is she inviting us to become ashamed of our human neediness, fragility and lack of control from which emotions stem. Rather her goal is to explain how our emotions, as thoughts about the world derived from our contingent, uncontrolled, initially infantile personal narratives, *should* evaluate our fragile reality and thereby contribute to an emotionally healthy common life. Such a life will not be one of infantile dependence nor of atomic independence. Rather, since we all live needy lives, what we all need is ‘mature interdependence’. In this state,

the child is able to accept the fact that those whom she loves and continues to need are separate from her and not mere instruments of her will...[She is then willing to] establish the relationship on a footing of equality and mutuality.⁶⁰

Adult love is not possessive but rather respects the separateness of the other while identifying with the other as a fellow vulnerable person. From here one can see why Nussbaum believes that the central emotion which *ought* to characterise this mature interdependence in political relations will be compassion since others with whom we

⁵⁹ *ibid.* 234

⁶⁰ *ibid.* 225

share interdependence are vulnerable to suffering just as we are. For we are all equally 'in the hands of the world'.⁶¹

In developing her psychological account, she is highly sensitive to the way that political authority operates to educate emotions in *particular traditions and cultures*. One tradition may favour some emotions over others such as the Norwegian preference for the gloominess of the forest. Others may have cultural practices which must be considered when implementing a political programme such as the tendency of Western mothers to gaze into the eyes of their children when contrasted with the Indian practice of carrying children on the hip and so out of eye contact.⁶² Thus she perceives that 'beliefs can be powerfully shaped by social norms'⁶³ and that the 'nature of this framework [of beliefs] will shape the emotions.'⁶⁴

It is in light of these observations that Nussbaum develops her political programme. She strongly supports the study of literature and especially tragedy in schools. Such studies, she believes, enable the 'extension of concern' among citizens. Tragedy deepens 'the ability to imagine the experiences of others and to participate in their sufferings.'⁶⁵ Through witnessing such performances, people can learn an emotional repertoire which is then turned to making appropriate judgments in real life when facing comparable circumstances. Such education is but one example of Nussbaum's political programme which also touches visual art, music, the media,

⁶¹ *ibid.* 87

⁶² *ibid.* 161

⁶³ *ibid.* 142

⁶⁴ *ibid.* 147

⁶⁵ *ibid.* 426; cf. *ibid.* 304ff, 408-9 where Nussbaum highlights this common human experience of weakness through the appeal to Sophoclean tragedy especially the story of Philoctetes. The chorus in the play realise that Philoctetes' suffering, caused by an accidental act of sacrilege, could have been their own and their evaluation of him is deeply coloured by their awareness of their own fragility, that his tragedy could have been theirs.

welfare provision and criminal procedures.⁶⁶ The overall goal is ‘to overcome mental obstacles to full political rationality’ which includes ‘rationality in emotion.’⁶⁷

Having established that mature interdependence is the core of a healthy political society and that compassion is the paradigm political emotion, Nussbaum proposes three cognitive judgments which are intrinsic to the emotional reasoning by which compassion is directed to another human being in any given situation. Nussbaum reckons that each of these judgments is a constituent part of and necessary condition for compassion, that all three judgments are jointly sufficient for compassion and that the simultaneous presence of the three judgments will constitute compassion.⁶⁸ The first judgment examines the seriousness of the situation which another human being is experiencing – whether it has ‘size’ or is merely trivial. A traffic jam would normally not be sufficiently serious to warrant compassion (unless the jam was making one late for a funeral, for example) but an abusive husband would almost certainly qualify. The second judgment considers whether it was the person’s fault that she was in trouble or whether a dreadful calamity had befallen her or, as often happens, there was a mixture of the two. In a mixed case, further discernment is required though this discernment is left somewhat vague by Nussbaum. Compassion will be more appropriate, nonetheless, in the case of calamity than in the case of fault.

The third judgment ascertains whether the predicament affecting the other person (the external object) – perhaps starvation, poor schooling or an unjust tax burden – falls within the subject’s own plans for the good life yet is not fully under her control while also – though this is less important – being a predicament which the

⁶⁶ *ibid.* 433-454

⁶⁷ *ibid.* 433

⁶⁸ *ibid.* 304ff

subject herself can imagine suffering. This third is the eudaimonistic judgment which restricts compassion to cases where the one feeling compassion (the subject) understands the external object to have significance for her.⁶⁹ The imaginative-epistemological qualification to this third act of judgment stems from Aristotle's and Rousseau's criterion concerning the similarity of persons. This criterion works by reckoning that each person is acutely aware that the predicament another person finds themselves in could potentially become their own predicament. Thus an awareness of one's own weakness and vulnerability is an epistemologically valuable aid to becoming aware that the cognitive-evaluative requirements for compassion have been met in any given situation. When these three judgments are present together, compassion – a belief about the situation of the person (or animal) in question – will also be present.

Compassion is open to rational assessment on Nussbaum's account. Since we are at least partially responsible for our development into mature interdependence so that we no longer remain in the infantile state, it would be a failure in maturity if we were not to be compassionate when appropriate. This is not to say, as we will see, that Nussbaum simply blames people for not displaying compassion. A failure to grow out of infantile emotional fantasies is a moral failure for which we may be partly responsible but for which others, such as early childhood carers, may well share responsibility. However, it does mean that, for Nussbaum, emotions such as compassion are essentially ethical and political since they shape our view of the world and so our understanding of the kind of actions which are appropriate. Although emotions are not actions, they are intrinsic to practical reasoning as

⁶⁹ *ibid.* 315-6

evaluations of objects concerning which action might be taken. Thus emotions are open to ethical scrutiny along with other aspects of practical reasoning.⁷⁰

Nussbaum applies this basic thesis about the ethical nature of human emotions to a variety of human social and political experiences. Emotions are not simply psychological adjuncts to practical reasoning but rather, as cognitive-evaluative forms of judgment, are of the essence of a particular subject's view of the good life or flourishing. Since similar emotions are often commonly experienced by many people in the same society, emotions are also essential to a society's view of the common good. For emotions, as acknowledgements of value, will influence what we do in some way with respect to that value.⁷¹ And so it matters enormously whether and concerning what and on what grounds a society feels compassion. Emotions, including compassion, which do not accord with mature interdependence will not value what serves the good of a particular subject or what conduces to the good of society. Immature emotions will not see and judge the world rightly. Without mature emotions, the actions of individuals and of the political representatives of society are unlikely to be informed by the truth of the experience of mature interdependence.

Assessment

Further elements of Nussbaum's theory of emotion will be examined at a later stage in the thesis. At this juncture a preliminary assessment of her contribution will

⁷⁰ *ibid.* 304ff

⁷¹ *ibid.* 135-137; esp. Nussbaum's distinction between her account and the Humean belief-desire account of action in which desires are 'hardwired in psychology' and 'lacking in intentionality' and beliefs serve desire simply by providing 'information about how to obtain its object.' (136)

introduce issues which will be of repeated interest. This assessment will come in two parts: first, more briefly, examining the account of emotion itself; second, considering the broader political implications of the account.

First, the thesis proposed here will cohere to some extent with Nussbaum's central claim that emotion (affection) is at least partially defined by cognitive intentionality. The critical arguments against feeling-centred conceptions of emotion which were presented above seem conclusive. Moreover, the arguments in favour of a cognitive account of emotion are also persuasive: philosophy of emotion in the twentieth century has been wise to observe that emotions have objects and that they are *some kind of* thoughts or beliefs about those objects. Our concept of affection will be likewise intentional and cognitive. More precision concerning what kind of intentional thoughts affections are and how they relate to valuation and agency will be taken up in detail in chapter two. However, it is hoped that enough has been said by this point to establish that any account of emotion (affection) will have to take very seriously their intentional, cognitive, evaluative nature.

In order to assess what bearing Nussbaum's thesis may have on a theological account of affection, we should observe that she focuses her analysis on emotions such as fear, anger, envy, jealousy, grief and compassion. Nussbaum's attention to the weakness and neediness of human experience is exceptionally sensitive and thorough, illustrated by her own careful introspection on her experience of her mother's death while she, a helpless daughter, was still in an aeroplane on her hurried way to the hospital. However, her understandable focus on human vulnerability in a world of upheavals means first that the emphasis falls on those emotions which relate to frailty and weakness and second that other emotions which

might seem to pertain to more settled objects assume an ambiguous position. This is particularly apparent in her treatment of joy. Grief and fear are common features of Nussbaum's account of vulnerable objects but joy is seen much more rarely in the text and is given a much less significant place in the system. Its first important appearance is at the funeral of Nussbaum's mother where 'joy masters grief' because of the 'judgment that [her] mother was in certain crucial respects not gone from the world.'⁷² Nussbaum reports that this judgment was itself based on 'the speeches of many whose lives she had helped...since they proved the continuity of her influence in the world.'⁷³ Later we come close to a systematic account of joy which says that only '[s]ome varieties of joy' are characterised by 'vulnerability to reversal' while other varieties are not like this but are still emotions.⁷⁴ Such an account shows intellectual honesty since Nussbaum is not trying to press all emotions into one definition all of the time. However, it raises the suspicion that her focus on vulnerability and her way of dealing with it bring about a certain implausibility. This suspicion only grows with respect to Nussbaum's account of 'background' joy.⁷⁵ Background emotions are emotions which continue to be present even when they are not felt and which are judgments that are enduringly present as acknowledgments of what is valuable in life. Specifically, background joy may be present 'when one's work is going well, when one's children are flourishing, when an important relationship is going smoothly.'⁷⁶

The central difficulty for Nussbaum's approach comes with reconciling this account of joy with the idea that emotions are characteristically directed towards

⁷² *ibid.* 87

⁷³ *ibid.* 21

⁷⁴ *ibid.* 43

⁷⁵ *ibid.* 67ff

⁷⁶ *ibid.* 70

unstable, vulnerable objects. It seems that most forms of joy are quite different from this and are directed towards apparently stable, relatively safe objects. The descriptions of the kind of objects Nussbaum specifies are just like this. Things seem to be going along well and there are no obvious threats or perils to contend with. Even Nussbaum's delicately expressed joy at her mother's funeral was a joy in some sort of stability which arose after the death of her mother in the form of memory. But such joy is quite different from an emotion focussed on a vulnerable object in a world of upheaval. No doubt Nussbaum's emphasis on vulnerability is traceable to her neo-stoic position which rightly counters stoicism's approach to emotion which denied that vulnerability was the mark of the wise man. However, it seems as though her way of handling vulnerability and her concomitant attention to grief and fear makes a thorough or plausible account of joy harder to attain. If a steady joy corresponds to anything in her account it must be to those varieties of joy which, contra the Stoics, are emotions but are not really typical emotions. If this is her view, then settled joy is not a mainstream emotion. Nussbaum's account of the world's upheavals and our helplessness in face of them renders that kind of joy illusory and a relatively unimportant emotion-type. For her, the joy of an infant in being held is coloured by the infantile narcissism which believes that the world revolves around him.⁷⁷ Dispelling the illusion of such joy and replacing it with emotions geared to interdependent fragility is what the learning experience of maturity is substantially about. While taking very seriously the fragility of earthly life, Christian theology offers a substantially different account of joy which has a contrasting approach to vulnerability and will be explored in chapter two.

⁷⁷ *ibid.* 139-173 for 'Emotions and Human Societies'; 174-237 for 'Emotions and infancy'

A further observation is that Nussbaum's particular understanding of intentional emotion reflects a concept of the moral subject as the centre of a world which stands in sharp distinction from and over against that subject. Although little rests on etymology *per se*, 'emotion' has a linguistic bias which is peculiarly appropriate to Nussbaum, stemming from a Latin root indicating a "moving-out-from". What *is* important is Nussbaum's conceptual emphasis on emotions as unstable outwards movements. This "moving outwards" does not necessarily refer to any sense of physical distance since Nussbaum has already argued that 'external objects' are not necessarily physically outside the agent in question. Rather, Nussbaum's concept of emotion renders the individual subject the uncontested centre and prime determining feature of any emotion and thereby designates the rest of the world as something alien to the subject, that out towards which the subject eudaimonistically thinks and acts. The radical subjectivisation of emotion within a eudaimonistic framework implies a conceptual dissociation of the subject from the world. The subject appears apart from and at odds with a world which at any moment may itself lunge into the subject's deep wounds like a knife and then be grasped in emotion.⁷⁸ Thus, although for Nussbaum emotions are judgments about the world and although these judgments are carefully located within social and psychological narratives,⁷⁹ they are still judgments about the world from within a significantly individualistic account of human existence in which the emotional individual is not of the same order as the world but encounters it as something other than herself and normally threatening. Although the Christian doctrine of the Fall will share something with Nussbaum's account of a dangerous world, the Christian doctrines of

⁷⁸ *ibid.* 75

⁷⁹ *ibid.* 17

a good created order within which creatures are at home and a new creation towards which creatures journey as pilgrims run quite counter to the view of the world as a knife.

Second, Nussbaum's far-reaching philosophical framework has particular implications for the political role of emotions. In itself, this is unexceptional. All definitions of emotion will operate within some implicit or explicit philosophy which will have some bearing on politics. However, for Nussbaum, the philosophical framework has assumed an impressively organising form so that all human life is conceptualised eudaimonistically and emotions are only conceptualised in relation to those partially or totally uncontrolled factors which surround an agent's and a society's eudaimonistic plans with uncertainty. This philosophical commitment does important political work for Nussbaum. It enables her to coordinate her theory within a liberal democratic framework which aims to secure an individual's freedom to choose concerning his or her vision of the good over against a world which might seek to threaten that freedom. Such a description of emotions operating at the frontiers of an individual's area of control amounts to a psychological version of the Millian harm principle.⁸⁰ Emotions are the way in which individuals psychologically negotiate the difficult terrain which sets the scene for life in a fragile world where other-dependence is essential and yet where threats to vulnerable objects are pervasive. Emotion towards objects within the agent's area of total control is typically not possible on Nussbaum's account; it is almost always when valuable objects are out of the agent's control that emotion comes into play. However, as noted above, she wisely does not make the dogmatic move that emotions are thus

⁸⁰ Nussbaum, M., *Hiding from Humanity*, 16-17, 335-340. This interpretation has also been confirmed through personal interaction during a public conversation with Professor Nussbaum at a roundtable in the Faculty of Law, University of Edinburgh, June 22nd, 2007

essentially to do with objects that are vulnerable to surprise and reversal. Indeed, she moderates her initial series of claims about emotions by saying that ‘most of the time’, emotions are about uncontrolled objects. She admits that some ‘varieties of love and joy’ may not involve ‘instability’ in the sense of vulnerability to surprise and reversal and she distances herself from the Stoic position that these are not really emotions. However, it remains the case that the typical emotion will record a ‘sense of vulnerability and imperfect control.’⁸¹

The implications of this position are intriguing when set in a political context. For emotion, on Nussbaum’s reckoning, is perfectly suited to a person who is navigating between other citizens in a liberal democracy where relationships are organised around control. A citizen has some level of control of himself as a bodily being and certain other objects such as his vote, property, labour, children and activities to achieve social justice. According to Nussbaum, emotions are directed towards those objects inasmuch as they are partially uncontrolled by the citizen in the context she finds herself. Other citizens, government authorities or simply changing circumstances are all potential threats (or supports) to the citizens’ eudaimonistic plans. But the overwhelming factor which determines whether and what emotion is appropriate remains whether or not valued objects are totally ‘controlled’ by the individual.

Two observations are pertinent here. On the one hand, one might object that, by allowing ‘external objects’ to dictate our emotions which have substantial influence on action, Nussbaum is diminishing the dignity of human agency by defining it so closely in relation to uncontrolled aspects of human experience.

⁸¹ Nussbaum, M., *Upheavals of Thought*, 42-43

Nussbaum is able to escape this critique by challenging this view of autonomous, autarkic control with her account of mature interdependence which recognises the inevitability of uncontrol. Interdependence contrasts with traditional Kantian accounts of autonomous control which promote the illusion of self-sufficient imperviousness to the world and especially to our need for others. Nussbaum is particularly critical of political environments which encourage this illusion such as the cult of impenetrable, steely German soldiers⁸² and the modern American ‘cultivation of a body image of perfect muscular power and hardness’.⁸³ She is also critical of the contractarian myth which she reckons fuels such illusions of independence. On these points, her analysis seems persuasive.

On the other hand, not all cultures or worldviews conceptualise human subjectivity with respect to control of an uncontrolled and substantially ‘ungovernable’ world.⁸⁴ In a world conceived in this way, however, the role of government as a form of control is essential in order to provide a relatively peaceful environment for people to grow into mature interdependence. Although Nussbaum gives a sophisticated treatment to some cultures, she seems to think *politically* solely in terms of a certain kind of constitutional liberal democracy. This is especially clear in her defence of ‘compassion’ as the paradigm political emotion. Compassion, on Nussbaum’s account, is constituted by the three judgments (seriousness, fault, eudaimonistic-epistemological considerations) and acknowledges that another person is in need and that that need is not totally controlled by the one feeling compassion. So far, so clear. However, difficulties arise on a political level when one seeks to define what counts as an appropriate object of compassion. Nussbaum comments that

⁸² *ibid.* 222-4, 345-7

⁸³ *ibid.* 425

⁸⁴ *ibid.* 75

we want not just any and every type of compassion, but, so to speak, compassion within the limits of reason, compassion allied to a reasonable ethical theory in the three areas of judgment.⁸⁵

That standard turns out to depend on ‘basic rights and liberties’ guaranteed by the constitution and concerning ‘certain basic goods’ which are in turn ascertained ‘through a process of judicial interpretation.’ Nussbaum names these rights and liberties as a set of ‘*capabilities*, or opportunities for functioning’ and then proceeds to list and briefly to describe the core capabilities which define the way that compassion should function. Two examples will suffice: according to Nussbaum, compassion will be appropriate towards those who do not have the opportunity to fulfil their capability to form affiliations with others involving the giving and receiving of concern and respect; compassion will also be appropriate towards those who do not have opportunity to fulfil their capability of bodily integrity which includes ‘choice in matters of reproduction’.⁸⁶ Consideration of capabilities like these is intended to bring a rational conclusion to any disagreement about what constitutes public compassion and, as such, will bring an end to emotional disagreements.

This treatment of compassion makes explicit Nussbaum’s rationale for the political significance of emotions. She believes that societies need people who have matured in such a way that they conform to rational compassion and so acknowledge that they themselves should be concerned for others’ needs. Such an acknowledgement will influence people’s view of society and so assist political

⁸⁵ *ibid.* 414

⁸⁶ *ibid.* 416ff; other capabilities are life, bodily health, bodily integrity, senses/imagination/thought, emotions, practical reason, relations with other species, play and control over one’s environment both political and material.

action in addressing the needs which have been acknowledged in emotion. Without the acknowledgment, people's needs will be neglected.

Nussbaum's belief that judicial process is the key to determining the rationality of any particular example of compassion is not without its difficulties. Her account is dependent on 'judges who exemplify rationality...[which means] judges who are properly emotional.'⁸⁷ In this moment, she recognises that she cannot herself adjudicate between possible examples of rational compassion and instead entrusts that task to the discretion of judges. This seems to be an evasion of philosophical responsibility. For such a move by no means decides what the right kind of compassion is and furthermore opens up a whole new question as to what constitutes the right sort of judge. Philosophers may of course theorise about the discretion of judges but it seems that Nussbaum is actually recruiting them to complete the unfinished aspects of her theory. One wonders whether she would be quite so willing to move in this direction were the voting majority of the US Supreme Court such as not to feel compassionately for the woman whose capability legally to abort an unwanted fertilised embryo was not supported by her state legislature. A trust in judges seems hardly suited to serve Nussbaum's own political programme.

In any case, grounding compassion in the decision of judges who preside over lists of rights/capabilities is far too closely tied to quite particular claims about constitutional liberal democracy for it to gain widespread support. An appeal to the courts to determine the rationality of compassion is not an obvious move in many cultures, even democratic ones. Traditions and institutions which are not essentially bound up with coercive judgment may well provide much more coherent ways of

⁸⁷ *ibid.* 445-6

thinking about compassion than legally enforceable judgment. Nussbaum would be far from denying that institutions are of great importance for creating what she would call ‘facilitating environments’.⁸⁸ However, it seems uncertain whether her commitment to the judicial and procedural elements of liberal democracy is as hospitable to institutional emotions as she believes. The claim that institutions, tradition and the memory they contain should be conceptualised differently cannot be defended in any detail here but will be explored in the rest of the thesis, especially chapters three and four.

But how is all this related to control, that essential element in Nussbaum’s concept of emotion? Quite simply, the appeal to the judicial process is a bid for some sort of control in an otherwise uncontrolled world. Just as, on the standard liberal contractarian story, autonomous individuals are limited by the government they have jointly established, so emotion needs some ordered limits lest consensus about what counts as appropriate compassion be constantly overturned by the upheavals of the world. Government and the courts provide those limits and so regulate the central political emotion. However, this bid for control is only necessary because of the prior claim about the nature of the world we inhabit, namely that it is essentially uncontrolled and needs to be tamed by the forces of man, especially their political force. Grief, fear and indignation will receive greater attention than joy in such a world since politics is essentially about engagement with uncontrolled objects which give rise to those negative emotions.

Human control exerted amidst uncontrolled disorder is hardly the only way of understanding the place of politics in the world. Christian political thought has

⁸⁸ *ibid.* 224-9

offered a variety of ways of interpreting reality which allow both for the sovereign presence of Almighty God and for an ongoing order within creation which political authority is called to preserve and foster. On this reckoning, politics does not create order but rather is itself created and given to humanity for its benefit by God. There is theological disagreement about whether such authority was given before or after the entrance of sin into the world. On an Augustinian reading, for example, human political authority is a necessary provision against sin and is treated as a temporary expedient for the sake of the maintenance of peaceful creaturely life in a providentially governed moral order rather than as the ultimate form of control in an otherwise ungoverned and ungovernable world of upheavals. On a Thomist view, political authority was already given in creation that humanity might hold it for the common good but was then adapted in function in light of the Fall. Whichever approach is taken, the sovereignty of God is recognised. Without some assumption of the sovereignty of God in human affairs whereby political authority is raised up, political theory must establish its own account of sovereignty. The contrasting Christian account of politics undermines the need for humans to create control first because order is already present within the structure of the created order which, though fallen, is still good and second because it is God who raises up the political authorities that exist. As we will see, modern political philosophy's lack of aptitude and plausibility with respect to affections can be traced to some extent to this self-imposed quest for self-sufficiency. Nussbaum's marked tendency to prioritise negative emotions and uncontrol in political relations and to theorise order through the courts rather than primarily through God is one highly sophisticated instance of this approach.

In summary, Nussbaum's account of emotions systematically lays out issues and questions which this account of affections must address. The problems of intentionality, evaluation and cognition are given sensitive, sustained and, at times, compelling treatment. She also indicates the reason why emotion is relevant to political considerations in her analysis of the cultural and social formation of emotion and her proposals for education, media and law reform. Whether the expensive metaphysical and eudaimonistic postulates adopted by Nussbaum actually pay their way as explanations of human life remains to be seen. This discussion will return to whether Nussbaum's account is sufficiently supple to explain those human "affections" which a theological account would have great concern for namely gladness, joy and wonder. It will be particularly important to see whether an account of the settled nature of a created and vindicated moral order and, indeed, the presence of extraordinary forms of control or ordering, such as God's eschatological, providential activity and the work of the Holy Spirit, have greater explanatory power. Notwithstanding these possibilities, this survey of Martha Nussbaum's weighty contribution to the theory of emotions has opened up some important issues which will be of central concern to the theological approach we will be developing. We now need to examine in more detail the nature of "affection" and its role in human morality. This will be the task of chapter two and will lay the groundwork for our discussion of the place of affection in political relations in chapters three, four and five.

Chapter 2: Affections

We began by asking about the nature of affections, their role in human morality and their place in political relations. We will now explore the first two of these questions in greater depth. To conduct this exploration, we will first argue for and describe the way that affections are the beginnings of our understanding and thus key to human morality. We will then proceed to enquire whether and how affections might endure over time, might be shared by a number of people and might also have a role at the end of our understanding as well as at the beginning.

Section I: Affections as the beginnings of understanding

To begin with “beginnings” requires some explanation. Our claim in this section is that affections are the beginnings of understanding. What is intended by “beginnings” is the way that moral reflection and deliberation are *initiated* or *entered into* by a person or group of people. A beginning is the start of a process of moral thinking, the way that individuals and communities get going in moral reflection, deliberation and action. When we claim that affections are the beginnings of understanding, we are saying both that people have some understanding of the world in which they plan to act before they set about their moral reflection, deliberation and enterprises and that their understanding is at least partially affective. Whether or not this initial, affective understanding is a right understanding of the world is another question. The focus of our argument at this point is towards showing how affections

have an initiatory role in understanding the world which is then followed by further moral reasoning.

So what is not intended by the term “beginnings” is an aspect of life which is abstracted from the narrative of a particular moral agent, community or political society. A “beginning” is not a completely fresh start, an unattached, de-historicised foray into the world. Beginnings are always beginnings within a particular life which is, in turn, set within a certain culture, history and tradition. Moreover, beginnings will be preceded and followed by other beginnings. Thus we might have a process of moral reflection and deliberation which begins, proceeds and reaches a conclusion which then, in turn, leads on at some point to further beginnings of moral reflection and deliberation.

Investigating how we begin our moral reflection and deliberation is important for our purposes primarily because what we think about how we begin will affect what we count as an acceptable beginning. For example, we may regard our own or others’ moral reasoning and practical enterprises which are initiated in the midst of ‘emotion’ as of more dubious moral worth than those begun without the presence of strong feelings or, indeed, feelings of any sort. Moreover, whatever view we take concerning beginnings has the potential to affect how we actually do begin which in turn may affect how and whither we proceed in our thought and action. Were we self-consciously to determine that our emotions or some other feature of our cognitive abilities were to initiate all our subsequent decision making, then this would be highly significant for the conduct of our lives. Thus when we investigate the beginnings of our practical enterprises we are, in an important sense, investigating the whole of morality. This is not to say that the beginning one makes

determines the end one reaches but rather that the nature of the journey which our practical reasoning and engagements takes will be substantially organised by what kind of beginning we make.

Beginnings in Aristotle

In order to explore what might be an accurate account of beginnings, we will now consider several different conceptions of beginning. We turn first to a classic problem in Aristotle's writings which concerns just this issue of how moral thought and practical enterprises are begun. Aristotle is peculiarly important to our research both because of the account he gives of emotions (*pathe*, πάθη) and because of the influence his ethics have had on Christian moral epistemology as we shall see both in this chapter and later on. On the specific question of beginnings, scholars contest whether Aristotle's practically wise man has a highly defined, reflective knowledge of the nature of the supreme good for man, *eudaimonia* (εὐδαιμονία), before he begins to deliberate about action. The practically wise man is able to engage in moral reflection concerning the supreme good inasmuch as he is able to see the structure of goods in which the supreme good consists. Moral deliberation about what to do in relation to the supreme good and its constituent parts journeys from that reflective knowledge of reality towards decision about action. The controversy surrounds how *comprehensive* a reflective knowledge is possible before deliberation begins.

An illustrative exchange appears in David Bostock's discussion of Sarah Broadie.¹ Broadie holds that Aristotle did not believe that a highly detailed pre-

¹ Bostock, D., *Aristotle's Ethics*, OUP, 2000, 82-96

deliberative knowledge of the good was possible. She supports this claim by observing that Aristotle neither describes the supreme good in detail, nor any people who have such an end in mind nor an indication of how we might come to specify what such an end is.² By contrast, Bostock believes that Aristotle's detailed argument indicates that he did think that the practically wise man must have an exhaustive account of the end. Although Aristotle may not claim to be able to define such an end himself, he seems to believe that the practically wise man, since he has all the virtues – what Bostock calls 'full virtue'³ – must have what Socrates called 'knowledge of the good' which, in Aristotle's terms, is a 'true apprehension' of *eudaimonia*. Thus to make sense of Aristotle's claim that 'as soon as this one thing, practical wisdom, is present, all the virtues will be present too'⁴ one 'must take it that [Aristotle's account of 'true apprehension'] includes a clear view of *all* the different things that go together to make up *εὐδαιμονία*, and of how they fit together.'⁵ Thus, though Aristotle does not hold simply to the Socratic thesis that virtue is knowledge, he does believe that there is a clear knowledge of the end which goes hand in hand with virtue. With this and other arguments, Bostock persuasively sets aside Broadie's position.

According to Bostock, the full, reflective knowledge of the good prior to deliberation is arranged around a certain teleological conception of moral reality. Aristotle's teleology is thoroughgoing in the sense that it permeates not only the natural order of relations but also the form of the moral life, so that the two are construed as one organic whole. By this move every kind of question about what the

² Broadie, S., *Ethics with Aristotle*, OUP, 1991, 198

³ Bostock, D., *Aristotle's Ethics*, 86-7

⁴ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bywater (ed.), OUP, 1894, 1144b32-1145a2

⁵ Bostock, D., *Aristotle's Ethics*, 87; italics original

good is and what to do about it can be considered and decided on in advance by being coordinated teleologically within the supreme good. In Aristotle, reflection is not a matter of constant, engaged exploration and consideration of the world. Rather, according to Bostock, Aristotle posits the possibility of attaining complete, reflective knowledge of the good before deliberation about how to achieve the good begins, thus excluding the necessity of an ongoing process of investigative reflection.

Bostock asks whether Aristotle holds that this knowledge of *eudaimonia*, as a necessary first principle of action, is provided by socially habituated virtue of character or by *nous* (νοῦς), an intellectual capacity which is capable of apprehending both particulars and universals perceived through those particulars. He shows that *nous* is the key to attaining this knowledge while habituated virtue prevents vice from obscuring the intellectual grasp of the supreme good specified in the detailed account of *eudaimonia*. On Bostock's thesis, when Aristotle describes virtue of character as a mean disposition to have the right feelings which are themselves in harmony with reason and thus lead to right actions, those virtues, feelings and actions are all organised towards a highly detailed, intellectually defined vision of the good life, a vision already known and depended upon at the beginning, before deliberation may begin.

With Bostock's interpretation in mind, we consider Aristotle's treatment of emotions or 'feelings' (πάθη). Aristotle proposes that just as actions need to be done at the right time and in the right way so too feelings, as belonging to the semi-rational part of the soul which can listen to reason (as a child listens to his father) but does not have reason 'in itself',⁶ should be similarly coordinated to the mean.

⁶ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1103a1-3

Feelings are important for Aristotle because the virtuous action is only virtuous if the agent has pleasurable feelings for the virtuous action for its own sake. Moreover, such feelings in accord with right reason can only come about by habituation and training from one's youth.⁷

This account is not without its difficulties. Not only does Aristotle suggest that the mean may apply to feelings independently of its application to actions⁸ but he also does not specifically connect particular feelings to all particular virtues. Instead he interprets some virtues as dispositions simply to act but other virtues as dispositions to feel and then act: neither the generous man nor the magnificent man, for example, is described in terms of their feelings.⁹ Feelings are thus not thoroughly integrated into Aristotle's account of virtue and action in his doctrine of the mean, which, as the notorious example of the virtue of honesty shows, is itself hardly without its problems.¹⁰ Moreover, there are further difficulties as to exactly how feelings might hit the mean since it is clear that feeling in a middling way in some situations would be inappropriate (e.g. only feeling anger in a middling way about something which one should be extremely angry about). Although there are charitable readings of Aristotle which seek to interpret the doctrine of the mean as emphasising the frequency of emotion or the object of emotion, even such readings do not attempt to excuse him from all confusion.¹¹ Most important for our purposes

⁷ *ibid.* 1104b3-11

⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1107a8-12

⁹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1107b8-21; Bostock comments that 'Neither of them are characterized in terms of any emotion, but simply with respect to their actions.' Bostock further notes that honesty, ready wit and friendliness are similarly unconnected to particular feelings and that the attempt to connect justice to a particular feeling is 'notoriously unsuccessful.' (Bostock, D., *Aristotle's Ethics*, 48)

¹⁰ *ibid.* 45-50

¹¹ *ibid.* 43; also 35fn10: 'The truth is that Aristotle's division of the soul (in the *EN*) is not given in sufficient detail to allow us to answer many of the questions that one might wish to raise about it.' Moreover, it seems that there are occasionally direct contradictions between Aristotle's views in the

and in light of modern theory of emotions, the intentional quality of emotion which indicates that emotions do have an essentially cognitive quality did not impress Aristotle sufficiently to allow that emotions have reason in themselves. This is a significant parting of the ways, a conceptual separation which is not overcome by Aristotle's claim that emotion can listen to reason. For it is this subordination of emotion to reason in the wise man which suggests that the right sequence is that emotion is not a suitable beginning to moral reflection and deliberation. By contrast, the idea that emotion is essentially cognitive suggests that it is at least possible that it does and should have an initiatory role.

A more lengthy discussion of Aristotelian doctrine – if there is one single, coherent Aristotelian doctrine – is not required for our purposes. From what has been said, we may make the following five substantial points which assist us in answering our basic questions: first, that what Aristotle thought about the humanly possible level of specification of *eudaimonia* is much disputed though it seems that the weight of the evidence of the *Eudemian* and *Nicomachean Ethics* points towards Aristotle holding that a highly specified knowledge of the end is both accessible to the virtuous, practically wise man and is the necessary precursor to deliberation; second, that the way to grasp this specified end is by *nous*, supported by habituated virtue; third, that the success of the work of deliberative moral reason in reasoning about the means to the end (*ta pros to telos*, τα προς το τέλος) must then depend on the prior excellence of the work of *nous* in establishing the end; fourth, that feelings, since

Nicomachean Ethics and in the *Politics*. This is especially striking with respect to βούλησις (*boulesis*): in the *Ethics* it is distinguished from ἐπιθυμία (*epithumia*) and θυμός (*thumos*) as that which has reason in itself compared to the other two which only partake in or listen to reason (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1166b7-8; 1095a10-11; cf. 1111b11-30 for the basic division into the three varieties of appetite; cf. Bostock, D., *Aristotle's Ethics* 34fn6); but in the *Politics*, βούλησις is explicitly assigned to the unreasoning part of the soul.

they ‘partake in reason’ only by ‘listening to’ the deliverances of *nous*, do not precede reflective knowledge of the nature of *eudaimonia* and are thus not “beginnings” in our sense; fifth that feelings, although they may, when obedient to reason, have some role in the pursuit of *eudaimonia* with respect to select virtues of character, are not convincingly or fully integrated into Aristotle’s account of the virtuous life.

Thus, for Bostock’s Aristotle, the necessary beginning for deliberation is knowledge of a highly specified account of the end of the good life. This beginning is arrived at by *nous*, assisted by the virtues of character. Feelings thus come after that beginning and then only in a supporting but not integrated role. The full knowledge of the end from the beginning is the first and last principle of the pursuit of the end.¹² The fact that only very few people have the requisite intellectual virtue to know the end at the beginning is not a problem for Aristotle. For he proposes that this knowledge is not for the people at large but for certain virtuous men as leading members of a particular *polis* (πόλις). Only these men, bearing the responsibility of government, have a need for such knowledge in order that they might deliberate and act on behalf of the many.

¹² Support for this claim is found in the fact that the terms in which Aristotelian deliberation is conducted and the direction in which deliberation proceeds are decided before deliberation has begun. His occasional equivocation between ‘practical wisdom’, which relates to finding a way to good ends, and ‘cleverness’, (*deinotes*, δεινότης) a form of practical understanding which is simply a matter of finding a way to achieve any already established end, hints that this is the case. For if cleverness can be a synonym for practical wisdom, the process of deliberation would not itself involve openness to discover something new but would rather consist in putting into practice what has been already decided from the beginning. (Cf. Bostock, D., *Aristotle’s Ethics*, 88-90 for a general discussion of ‘cleverness’.)

However, this hardly seems the only possible version of the beginnings of moral reflection and deliberation, still less one, as has already been noted, which is impregnable to criticism. As an alternative, consider the conception of beginnings in Jean-Yves Lacoste's account of "affections" as it emerges in his discussion of the phenomenological work of Max Scheler.¹³ Lacoste holds that values appear to the affections and that we should thus understand affections as 'affective recognitions of value'. Such recognitions are the beginnings of processes of moral reflection and deliberation which lead to the disclosure of moral norms. He prepares for his account of affective recognition through a critique of Scheler who holds that sentiment (*Fühlen*) is epistemologically monarchical in the recognition of value. Scheler's view is that sentiment is a moral 'intuition (affective intentionality in its moral application)...armed with a cognitive power that is as strong on its own ground as the cognitive power of perception is.'¹⁴ Scheler's sentiments are intuitions which, coming neither before nor after but *with* perception, hold the same force of certainty as perception. As one sees a painting, one simultaneously experiences a sentiment concerning it, a sentiment *demandé* by the object. These sentiments are experienced by the individual as first and last words on the value of any particular features of reality as they appear, such as the goodness of an object or the rightness or wrongness of any particular courses of action. This position elides any distinction between moral reflection about the nature of the good and moral deliberation about

¹³ Lacoste, J.-Y., 'From Value to Norm', trans. O'Donovan, O., (unpublished) from 'Du phénomène de la valeur au discours de la norme', in Lacoste, J.-Y., *Le Monde et l'absence d'oeuvre et autres études*, Presses Universitaires de France, 2000, 107-27

¹⁴ *ibid.* 114

what it is right to do with respect to that good. For if the right is simply felt as right just as the good is felt as good, then the distinction falls away – both are known directly by one sentimental, epistemological movement without the necessity or possibility of discussion. As Lacoste says, what is

supremely important...is that on Scheler's account, the approval with which we greet the appearance of values enjoys the privileges of a unique foundation, and so can always dispense with the demonstrations of moral argument...there is no other moral evidence than that which sentiment supplies; there is no other way that values are present to us than by their appearance in the realm of the affects.¹⁵

In common with Scheler (and Nussbaum, though she is not mentioned), Lacoste holds that affections have an intentional quality¹⁶ and a cognitive aptitude.¹⁷ But Lacoste disagrees with Scheler's way of interpreting cognitive intentionality, criticising him on the grounds that his monarchy of sentiment fails to allow for the very possibility of moral enquiry. In contrast to Aristotle, for whom feelings were a secondary feature of ethics dependent on reason's prior epistemological guidance within the overall account of the good life, Scheler's approach elevates the affections to a place of total epistemological authority. This, however, leaves no meaningful role for moral reflection and deliberation after the sentimental experience. For there is no need for further investigation of the good or consideration of the right once value has been perceived by sentiment.

On this basis, Lacoste claims that Scheler 'sinned in wanting to know too much',¹⁸ 'and to know it too quickly',¹⁹ and that this had a result of paramount importance: that Scheler had developed a phenomenological version of emotivism. If

¹⁵ *ibid.* 117

¹⁶ *ibid.* 115

¹⁷ *ibid.* 116

¹⁸ *ibid.* 122

¹⁹ *ibid.* 123

sentiment discloses a first and final word on value then there can be no further discussion. In the case of disagreement between two people perceiving value, there may only be sentiment and counter-sentiment, the phenomenological equivalent of two people saying what C.L. Stevenson summarised as ‘I approve of this; do this as well.’ This is a ‘rationality beyond rationality’ and of no use to those who see the need for persuasive moral argument.²⁰ The unbridgeable chasm for Scheler lies, therefore, between “I feel” and “we feel”, between an individual’s affective recognition of a value and an inter-subjective affective agreement on the value. For Scheler, there can be no ‘interaffectivity’ or ‘communities of affective recognition.’²¹ His theory inevitably tends to the position that an individual’s affective recognition of value is an incommunicable sentiment which cannot contribute anything to a shared, social enterprise of reflecting on value and deliberating about right action towards the common good. The basic reason for this is by now obvious: that he has placed too heavy an epistemological burden on our powers of affection by equating them unreasonably with our powers of perception. Contra Scheler, value is not immediately perceptible in the same way as one sees a pipe.

Having established this critique, Lacoste undertakes the charitable task of elaborating Scheler’s thought to show how it might be adapted to have ethical weight and escape the charge of emotivism. Explaining this elaboration requires further elucidation of what Lacoste means by ‘value’. On Lacoste’s view, value may take many forms, whether good, bad or some point on the range that lies between. By way of examples (not his but mine), consider the beauty of the call of a bird of paradise, an environmentally damaging oil slick, the aesthetic splendour of an English

²⁰ *ibid.* 118

²¹ *ibid.* 116

Cathedral, the sorry condition of an abandoned orphan or the face of an apparently charismatic and far-sighted political representative, such as Barack Obama. Furthermore, although Lacoste does not say this, it is reasonable to suppose that value may appear to a person in a remembered action or situation from centuries ago or in a remembered action of the more recent past which was witnessed by the person. Consider a past act when a man saved a drowning child, who was previously unknown to him, by diving into a dangerous river. As such, it seems likely to have been the right action to have done and it is valued objectively by the subject as a good of the near or more distant past. Equally, an agent may remember wrong past acts or states of affairs and, through affections, recognise their value as less than good. We note here then that the distinction between the good and the right depends on the passage of time. The right about which we deliberate is singular in the present for it refers chiefly to the open moment which we inhabit in the here and now – one must do one thing or another. As that moment moves into the past, the action done may be reflectively valued with respect to its goodness as well as its rightness since it takes its place among the *range* of remembered actions which we may consider and evaluate.

Lacoste's elaboration of Scheler allows that affective recognitions of value, whether past or present, may potentially be shared by a (possibly large) number of individuals. Lacoste draws on the idea of a shared ranked order of value (or *ordo amoris*) to explain this and suggests that affection 'discerns value in a *ranked order*. Any given discernment of value may indeed afford a valid *entrée* into that order'. That is, any recognition may provide a way into a shared value system in which

common, ongoing, moral reflection and deliberation may then occur.²² Entry into an order does not presuppose an exhaustive knowledge of the order as a whole nor that value has been rightly recognised. Rather, according to Lacoste, an order of value should be viewed as a shared way for a number of subjects to sort and reflect on values grasped in affective recognition rather than a total account of the good which itself can be comprehensively known.

Lacoste's move here relies on Heidegger's account of worldly affectivity whereby the 'world' is reality as it appears to us, known affectively but dimly by moral recognition, a beginning of moral understanding which is not yet moral knowledge.²³ Lacoste distinguishes this 'world' from the 'cosmos', the moral order as it actually is. He argues that 'The life of the affections gives access to a moral logic, yes; but it is the logic of a "world", not a "cosmos".'²⁴ Scheler's fault was that he 'overlooked the worldly conditions of affectivity that prevent the perpetual parousia of values.'²⁵

At this point, we can see how Lacoste's own account of beginnings emerges as a genuine alternative to both Scheler and Aristotle. Whereas (Bostock's) Aristotle argued that the first and last principle of action was a vision of the good attained by *nous*, supported by habituated virtue of character and whereas Scheler argued that the first word is the last word and is spoken by sentimental intuitions, Lacoste denies the possibility of a comprehensive knowledge of the good under the conditions of worldliness, agrees with Scheler on the importance of a phenomenology of value but argues that values appear to the affections as the *first* ethical facts, the *half-light* of

²² *ibid.* 118

²³ Cf. Lacoste, J.-Y., 'Existence and Love of God: Concerning a note from Being and Time', trans. Mumford, J. (unpublished)

²⁴ Lacoste, J.-Y., 'From Value to Norm', 124

²⁵ *ibid.* 123

ethics. The valuable facts recognised are thus not like the bright ‘facts’ of natural science but rather are the dimly lit first facts of ethics. This Heideggerian worldly affectivity is a crucial one step removed from the perceptual immediacy which Scheler championed. There are shared ranked orders of value (or *ordines amoris*) in the world by which affections may be shared and discussed. But the light affections shed on an order of value is a half-light not a bright light. This half-light is precisely what is necessary if the disclosure of norms is to follow the recognition of values.

On this thesis, facts, grasped affectively and normally incompletely as first words and not last words, are value-laden but are preliminary to the process by which moral norms are disclosed, a process which is conducted through patient moral reflection and deliberation. Although affective recognition remains cognitive, intentional and evaluative, its fundamental mode of evidentiality²⁶ is thus ‘penury’, the penury of worldly – not cosmic! – epistemology.²⁷ This recognition of the penury of the affections will be of importance as the argument proceeds. Although there will be reason to differ from Lacoste at points, the penurious challenge to an over-hasty intuitionist account of affections seems to be at least part of a plausible account. Reflection and deliberation precisely *follow* affection since affection does not know everything. As Lacoste rightly says, ‘is not the most self-evident thing about our feelings precisely the fact that we need to discuss them?’²⁸ The necessity and possibility of discussing affections, which depend upon affections’ cognitive intentionality, opens up the project of ‘intersubjective verification’ of values recognised in affection.

²⁶ Lacoste here reflects the thought of Edmund Husserl.

²⁷ Lacoste, J.-Y., ‘From Value to Norm’, 121

²⁸ *ibid.* 117. This is not to say that affections may not also be recognitions which *follow* reflection and deliberation but only that, if they are, then they are themselves provisional and so discussible and suitable beginnings for further moral thought. We return to this point in section III below.

Intersubjectivity of affection (or ‘interaffectivity’) is the sharing of affective understandings in order that any particular recognitions might be verified as true recognitions or set aside as false recognitions. Penury and intersubjectivity are closely linked. First, affections’ penury enables human discovery of new features in the moral order as it is or, more precisely, things which only appear new to the agent but ‘which are yet not new but were there...from the first’.²⁹ Since they are constitutionally incomplete reports about the nature of the moral order they are fit beginnings to moral thought especially ‘Christian thought [which] has tended to insist that every moral decision should be approached *de novo*, with complete openness to the moral field’.³⁰ They are fit precisely because they have not already decided on the nature of reality but are dependent, for their epistemological power, on engaged, committed, attracted participation with the reality they seek to discover.

Affections are thus indispensable to moral thought but insufficient to do all moral thinking; indeed, their insufficiency is of the essence of their indispensability precisely because through them we are attracted into the world, no longer lingering tentatively on the edge nor skating over its surface. They are fit for their purpose, namely to enable the participatory beginnings of moral thought. Affections are our way of being *committed* to making moral discoveries and thereby being attentive to reality but also, through their insufficiency to carry out all the work of moral reflection and deliberation, to the fact that it is truly a *moral discovery* that we are making. Their nature shows that we do not engage with the world knowing all the answers about the good and the right beforehand.

²⁹ O’Donovan, O., *Resurrection and Moral Order*, Apollon, 1994, 92

³⁰ *ibid.* 216

Second, their penurious insufficiency combined with the cognitive quality precisely invites intersubjective discussion of the recognitions they make. By way of a visual illustration, affections are like watchmen on the walls of a city whose job is partially constituted by their alertness to newness. As the dawn rises in the east one watchman will cry to another, “The dawn, the dawn! Do you see it?” and the other will reply, “Yes, I see it! The dawn, the dawn!” The initial perception of the one is “intersubjectively verified” by the perception of the other, their common perception is objectively verified by the first of the sun’s rays and so the trumpet sounds and the city awakes to a new day of reflection, deliberation and activity. But on the next day one watchman looks out and cries, “The dawn! The dawn! Do you see it?” and the other looks hard to the east and responds, “No, it is not the dawn but only the morning star rising.” So the intersubjective verification does not occur, the watchmen continue to wait and the city’s reflective, deliberative activity is postponed. Affective recognition has some resemblance, as Scheler argued, to visual perception or a way of seeing but, *contra* Scheler, may be seriously mistaken and must be submitted to intersubjective verification followed by the process of moral reflection and deliberation which the affective recognition has initiated. Thus, just as the first watchman’s incorrect perception was intersubjectively corrected by the second’s response and objectively corrected by the rising of the morning star, so affective recognitions may be corrected. People, in the course of further reflection and deliberation, may come to some deeper understanding which in turn casts doubt on the original quality of the affective recognition. Setting aside the metaphysical disagreements which we have with Martha Nussbaum, there remains some correspondence between this account of affections in politics and hers. For she too

emphasises the communicability and corrigibility of emotion though, for the latter, she appeals, as noted, not to the moral order as it is, but rather to the courts who arbitrate with respect to capabilities.

Thus, over against Scheler's privatised, incommunicable sentiments, we see a public role for the affections as the beginnings of corporate, discursive moral reflection and deliberation. As cognitive beginnings, affections themselves require discussion and this discussion gives intelligible structure to intersubjective verification for, in discussion, we may reflect more fully about the nature and object of a particular affection to enquire whether such a recognition is jointly and appropriately experienced. Thus affections, when intersubjectively shared, are ways that we engage with and awaken together both to the world as it appears to a community and to the world as it is. They are commitments concerning value which will, at some stage, concern what we should do for our neighbour. The stability remains in the moral order whereas the people, in their affective recognitions, come to that order, via their own order of value, to discover what is actually there.

Beginnings as attracted participations in the moral order

If the worldly penury and initiatory role of affective understanding is accepted, an unmistakably theological question presents itself, namely whether there are possibilities for the convergence of a worldly, shared order of value (*ordo amoris*) with the moral order as it is (cosmos). Such a convergence would result in a person coming to a closer cosmos-attentiveness and even becoming more ordered to the world as it is (cosmos). On this hypothesis (mine not Lacoste's), a person would

approach the world as it appears in epistemological humility, affectively recognising value in first ethical facts, not claiming exhaustive knowledge of the moral order as it is but rather hoping to reflect on the values recognised by herself and others through her and her community's shared order of value in order that she might sort and reflect on them intersubjectively within her community. However, she would also know that such an order stands in relation to the moral order as it is and so seek penetrating, affective understanding of that moral order. An order of value, such as the tradition of a society, family or even of a church, would not, therefore, function in the same way as the comprehensive account of *eudaimonia* in Bostock's Aristotle nor even as in Lacoste's Heideggerian elaboration of Scheler. Instead, it would be a structured, social way of bringing together the world as it is with the world as a person or community perceives it to be, a way begun in affection. Affection offers itself as the suitable candidate for beginning moral reflection and deliberation in this way since (a) the recognition of value is what must come first by way of entry into both an order of value and *the* order of value within the cosmos and (b) only by affection can value be recognised. Thus affective evaluation emerges as the beginning of our understanding of our own orders of value and, via them, the cosmos itself. This is our basic account of how affection is the beginning of a genuine moral understanding that is able to move between the world as it is and world as it appears to us in order that our affective recognitions might be more ordered to the world as it is.

In considering the possibility of becoming ordered to 'the world as it is', the objective reality of the cosmos or moral order, we walk in contested epistemological territory. The post-modern challenge, by attending to the diversity of cultural

perspectives, categorises epistemological claims of this sort as power-plays rather than pointers to human possibilities. By suggesting that ‘the world as it is’ is accessible, we have suggested that there might be a meaningful relationship between the recognition of value which occurs through a particular order of value and an objective moral order. Such a claim does not imply that the objective order can be exhaustively mirrored by a particular order of value so that subjectivity and objectivity are collapsed one into the other, a Hegelian or communitarian claim which will always fall prey to sceptical and post-modern critique. Rather, the claim is that there is a created, objective moral order of ‘ends’ and ‘kinds’ which has been vindicated in the resurrection of Christ, a reality in relation to which other ranked orders of value *should* stand to attention. Thus the created moral order provides ‘the only [epistemologically certain] point of reference’³¹ by which human creatures may reflect on the good and deliberate concerning the right.³² Affective recognitions of value enable entry into a particular order of value and so serve to bring the community together to discuss *the* order by which value is judged, the moral order created by God which has been decisively vindicated and whose future has been revealed in Jesus Christ. On this account, affections are not only communicable forms of understanding which may lead a person from their particular perspective on

³¹ O’Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 311

³² O’Donovan, O., *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 31-52. This claim will not be defended at any length though its implications will be seen. Objections to conceiving the creation as teleologically and generically ordered have been dealt with sufficiently by O’Donovan. The critique of a Humean or Kantian voluntarism which opposes generic *and* teleological ordering is particularly important here. O’Donovan comments that the voluntarist programme covertly retains an idea of generic categories since ‘there would be no way of distinguishing the moral affections from other affective impulses, feelings and desires, unless the former were bound to respond to all like things in like ways, that is, consistently, and so justly.’ (46) The account of affective understanding which has been developed through Lacoste does not suggest such a uniform consistency. Instead, affections have the subtlety of evaluating particularities in terms of the generic and teleological structure of the moral order. We may not demand the same affection for every similar ‘X’ since ‘X’ may have complex characteristics which make the term ‘consistency’ inapplicable, not because ‘X’ is totally unlike anything else but because its particular instantiation of a *genus* is precisely in some relation to the *telos* of that *genus*.

reality into an activity of intersubjective communication. Affections are also, by general grace, revelatory forms of understanding, as they are drawn to penetrate through a particular order of value to grasp the world as it is and, by special grace, revelatory forms of understanding of the world as it is in Christ.

Such a claim in part depends on particular orders of value being in an intelligible relation to the created, vindicated moral order. Inasmuch as the order is created, this is what we might call a natural law account of affective recognition whereby the order of value in a human community is to the generically and teleologically arranged order of value within the created cosmos as the human law is to the natural law. Affections are naturally drawn out by the created order which, though fallen, yet retains an intelligibility which the human mind may understand. Created value continues to make demands upon our affective attention despite our own and the world's corruption. In awakening through natural affection to such an interconnection between the self and the world, the human comes to a measure of self-understanding. That self-understanding is not a reckoning of the self as over and above the created order but precisely as a member of it, a creature among the creatures. In this way, the Christian view retains an appropriately anthropocentric view of creation while avoiding the elision between self-understanding and eudaimonism which characterises Nussbaum's thought. Her 'emotions' refer to the self only as they refer to the self's eudaimonistic projects. Emotional self-awareness is at the service of eudaimonistic self-consciousness not of consciousness of self within an objective created order. She fails to see the deep interconnectedness of self with creation and may only gesture somewhat despairingly towards it, conceiving the agent as in the hands of the world.

The interrelation of natural loves and natural law is a precursor to the affective possibilities which follow from the accomplishment of Jesus Christ by whom the true nature of moral order was disclosed, in whom the cosmos now holds together and before whom all orders of value are now judged. Moral theology has, among other tasks, the peculiarly apologetic task of describing the evidence for these claims in a way which may be persuasive to moral philosophers and giving them alternative imaginative resources. This work is begun by observing that the moral order of creation is not immediately accessible in bright, sharply defined detail – such a claim would simply fall back into Schelerian intuitionism and the endless disagreement which follows radically different claims to intuitive knowledge. Nonetheless, despite the partial opacity of the created order there is, according to Oliver O’Donovan, a moral learning (or ‘sanctification’) which can occur which is

the intellectual penetration and exploration of a reality which we can grasp from the *beginning* [my italics] in a schematic and abstract way, but which contains depths of meaning and experience into which we can reach.³³

What O’Donovan is describing in terms of ‘penetration’ and ‘exploration’ is the Christian approach to ‘reflection’ which holds that human knowledge of the teleological and generic goodness of the cosmos and its God is never final but always open to further depths and correction. The beginning by which we grasp the *gestalt* of the cosmos seems necessarily affective in light of the theological claims that the moral order as created by God is, as Genesis 1:31 announces, ‘very good’ and that the resurrection of Christ from the dead reaffirms that ‘very good’ and promises its eschatological fulfilment. Affections evaluate this goodness in its many and varied forms and lead on to the deeper understanding of the nature of the moral order which

³³ O’Donovan, O., *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 92

reflection achieves. Christian moral reflection is the creaturely task of knowing-and-valuing the objectively value-laden, vindicated, created moral order which exists now in fallen state. Such a position stands opposed to the familiar modern separation between fact and value. “Knowing” information as “bare fact” is different from that knowing-and-valuing which is the substance of Christian reflective knowledge. Indeed, the Christian claim is that knowing which does not value is not a true form of knowing. By contrast, Christian reflective knowing is an ongoing, repeated form of moral thought which may always involve deeper penetration of the created moral order as its different aspects and their interrelation come into sharper focus. This good vindicated creation is the object in relation to which affective recognitions of value, though mediated by diverse orders of value, stand as subjects.

The goodness of the created moral order vindicated in Christ points towards a key feature of affections as beginnings of understanding, namely the unity of affective attraction and affective intention. Affections’ cognitive intentionality towards objects is not simply at the disposal of the subject who may choose or not choose to deploy his affections. Instead, affective understanding, refracted through a particular order of value, is attracted by objects which are themselves features of the generically and teleologically structured created order. The world as it is, the cosmos, draws out, evokes and even demands affective understanding. The subject’s affections are dependent to some extent on the way that her particular order of value sorts and reflects on the attraction which the cosmos naturally elicits. Thus the intentionality of affection is not simply “up to us” but is correlated both to the attractiveness of the good creation and to the particular cultural situation in which we find ourselves which represents to us a particular version of that goodness.

This *attracted* intentionality is a significantly different concept than that of Nussbaum who explained the ‘heat’ of emotion in relation to our experience of instability impinging on our eudaimonistic plans.³⁴ By contrast, the Christian claim is that it is the very goodness of the moral order which draws forth our affective recognitions. Its living energy organised within the matrix of generic and teleological ordering attracts us. Indeed, such is the goodness of creation that even its fallen form has an attractive power, drawing forth from us affective understanding. Thus the attraction of intentional affection is dependent on the goodness of the created order which, though now fallen, is yet firmly established and cannot be moved. The nature of the affection attracted will vary widely depending on the way that the world appears to the subject (her order of value) and on the particular feature of the created order which is the object of attracted, affective cognition. By highlighting the fallenness of human epistemology without denying the possibility of epistemological sanctification this move accounts sufficiently for the Heideggerian description of worldly affectivity as dimly-lit. Despite the Fall, there is an ongoing, created moral order, a generic order of valued goods with teleological orientation, which calls forth from us an ordered affective understanding which is then reflected in diverse orders of value. Again, this contrasts with Nussbaum’s account especially her idea that we are ‘in the hands of the world’, a claim linked to her eudaimonism. For we are saying that we are creatures among other creatures, drawn affectively into an understanding of our place within the created order, not assaulted by the world as with a knife. Attracted affectivity is a form of intentionality which makes sense of both the givenness and responsibility of our moral situation. Affections as the beginnings of

³⁴ Nussbaum, M., *Upheavals of Thought*, 78

understanding are deeply embedded within an already given structure of valuation in the form of the created, fallen, vindicated moral order.

Our account of attracted, affective, cognitive penetration of the moral order can be helpfully illumined through Daniel Hardy and David Ford's discussion of participatory knowing and praise. Although one may affectively recognise that the moral order is good, one also understands that the moral order is not immediately and clearly accessible because of the fallenness of human knowledge in a fallen world. What is required is a way of conceptualising our entry not only into the shared order of value of any community but also the moral order itself, thereby gaining a critical distance on the particular shared order which we inhabit. Hardy and Ford write of divine and human knowing as 'being knit into all that there is', a form of participative knowledge.³⁵ God is 'knit into all that there is' in

that [He] is open to all of [creation's] reality, including its distortions and agonies; [God] refuses to avoid the truth and so is involved in enjoying or suffering it. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the main Christian criteria of what knowing the world means for God. They are the wisdom of God in its greatest concentration.³⁶

We will return to God's knowing through the God-man Jesus Christ in chapter five. From the solely human side, the central and highest affective form of knowledge whereby we participate in God and his world is joy expressed in praise, the affective form of what we call 'dogmatics'. Praise is an affective expression of joy's recognition of goodness which begins our reflection on the pluriform nature of the good itself. Joyful praise has the widest possible range of recognition, acknowledging the goodness within every human society and within the full expanse

³⁵ Hardy, D. and Ford, D., *Jubilate: Theology in Praise*, Darlton Longman and Todd, 1984, 108

³⁶ *ibid.* 108

of creation's goods. From a theological perspective, it is the only right beginning of beginnings since it acknowledges not only value but also, in the same moment, the source of all value and object of ultimate joyful praise, the One who is alone good.

We will return more systematically to joyful praise in chapter five, where it will be seen to be the beginning and the end of all affections but will now take a step towards that conclusion by taking up Hardy and Ford's language of "participation". This language equips us to say that affections are creaturely, participatory forms of knowing, the proper preliminaries to reflection and deliberation and the beginnings of being knit into all that there is, when 'all that there is' is interpreted by the name of 'moral order vindicated in Christ'. Human affective recognitions of value are the first moments of moral understanding in that they initiate a weaving of human moral thought and enterprises within the teleological warp and generic woof of the world. They are the beginnings of participation and the form of initial committed, attracted engagement open to us as human creatures in the moral order. Indeed, there is no other way of being human than being committed or engaged in the world in some way. Affections are inescapable for we cannot stop ourselves from valuing and from reflectively exploring those values. The ultimate reason for this, as we have seen, is the created, attracted relation in which we stand to the cosmos which draws us as creatures into its order of value.

The emphasis on the preliminary or initial work of affection which was suggested by Lacoste requires further theological examination in light of these claims. Lacoste holds that 'an affective grasp may be weak, and it may be mistaken: the important thing is that it may be dead right.'³⁷ But he modestly holds back from

³⁷ *ibid.* 113

an account of how affections might become permanently ‘dead right’ about the world as it is, about whether ‘feeling will ultimately have the answer to everything’.³⁸ Thus it remains unclear whether Lacoste believes that the penury of affection is due to humanity’s created nature or to the fallenness of that nature. He does not disclose whether penury is a permanent characteristic of human affectivity or a temporary indigence suffered by a fallen humanity in a fallen world. Hints of eschatology emerge in the course of the essay but, as Lacoste says, he has been focussing on the first word rather than the last.

Saint Augustine’s eschatological reflections on affections enable us to go further in accounting for penury than philosophy can venture. According to Augustine, Adam and Eve experienced a rich affective life before the Fall. The overriding affection was a ‘grande gaudium’ (‘great joy’) which proceeded from a love of God.³⁹ This claim in book fourteen must be seen as an answer to Augustine’s unanswered question in 9.5 as to whether ‘ad vitae praesentia pertineat infirmitatem...huiusce modi perpeti affectus’⁴⁰ – i.e. whether humans experienced emotions in Eden and will experience them in heaven. There he ponders the apparent lack of emotions among the angels and in God but then seems unconvinced of this because the Scriptures do seem to ascribe an emotional life to God and the angels. Nonetheless we can piece together what must have been Augustine’s view by considering his account of joy and memory in *Confessions* book 10. He speaks there of a ‘gaudium pristinum’,⁴¹ a joy of long ago, reflection on which immediately makes him question afresh as to where and when he experienced the happy life. This

³⁸ *ibid.* 127

³⁹ Augustine, *City of God*, 14.10

⁴⁰ *ibid.* 9.5

⁴¹ Augustine, *Confessiones*, 10.xxi.30

joy seems to be the same as the ‘grande gaudium’ which Adam and Eve experienced in long time past. But Augustine’s concern in these chapters of book ten goes beyond Eden since he is seeking to explore humanity’s current condition. He finds that all now seek after and take joy in happiness though many mistake the proper object of joy by seeking happiness in the creation rather than the Creator. Nonetheless, the common human desire for happiness and for joy in the object which represents that happiness indicates that there is a ‘modicum lumen’ (a ‘half-light’, in Lacoste’s terms) which survives in people after the Fall whereby they desire happiness but with limited understanding. Augustine is entirely clear about the proper object of joy, God himself. There are many idolatrous versions of the truth in which joy may be rooted but genuine ‘gaudium de veritate’ is the joy which is both grounded in and attracted by God, the ‘beata vita’ which Christians are to experience in heaven.⁴² Three important conclusions follow: first, that Augustine did expect affections – specifically joy – to mark the human experience of heaven; second, that there are degrees of truthfulness which mark human affections; third, we may say that the current fallen state of the world has reduced affection to its initial, preliminary form of understanding – the ‘modicum lumen’ consists, at least partly, in a penurious affectivity.

The modest epistemological power of penurious affections fits well with an account of humans as sinful moral subjects in an objective, teleologically ordered, generically defined, moral field which is both fallen yet also vindicated by Christ’s resurrection. Though sinful, our ‘task as moral agents is to participate in this order,

⁴² *ibid.* 10.xxiii.33; cf. 10.xxii.32. ‘That is the authentic happy life, to set one’s joy on you, grounded in you and caused by you.’ (trans. Chadwick, H., *Confessions*, OUP, 1998, 198)

understanding it and conforming to it in what we think and do.⁴³ When set within such a grand canvas as the entire order of created goods, epistemological modesty makes good sense both because of our fallen condition and because of the dependence of our subjective, affective recognitions on a shared moral order of a particular society which may approximate more or less well to *the* moral order. The penury of human affections is thus a very plausible proposition. For if the first affective moment claimed to have revealed an exhaustive account of value, then intersubjective verification of value within a shared order of value would have no purpose. But, as Lacoste says, we really do want to talk and are able to talk about our affections. On the other hand, if the first affective moment had no possible connection at all with the world as it is, the moral order vindicated in Christ, then affections would collapse once again into radical perspectivalism or monarchical intuitionism. Discussion is terminated at its inception, reduced to an anti-social mathematical point.

But a theological account of the beginning of shared moral reflection and deliberation will avoid these dangers and combine both the epistemological penury and the epistemological possibilities of affections as attracted, intentional cognitions which are open to intersubjective sharing and verification. In summary, by insisting that the affective recognition of first ethical facts is the initial half-light of moral understanding, this account has a more modest epistemological role for the affections than Scheler and stands in sharp contrast to Bostock's reading of Aristotle's account of beginnings. However, at the same time, we are proposing a greater confidence about the possible accessibility of the created moral order to human affections than

⁴³ O'Donovan, O., *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 127

Lacoste ultimately exhibits in his insightful essay.⁴⁴ Despite the difficulties with his account, Aristotle has raised important questions. By suggesting that knowledge of the supreme good is available to man he has pointed us towards the question of the end of man. We have defined affections in terms of the beginning of understanding. But in what relation do affections stand to the end of our understanding? We have spoken a good deal of initial, affective participation in the goodness of the created order and its God by way of first ethical facts. How might affections contribute to our understanding of this good in its totality? To these questions we shall return in the concluding section of this chapter. For now we will pursue a more limited task, namely to enquire further about affections as penurious beginnings of moral understanding.

Section II: Enduring affections

If affections normally have an initially modest epistemological role in human morality, then it seems sensible to enquire how important their role in human morality actually is. We may grant that the beginnings of moral reflection and deliberation are significant without seeing the lasting significance of beginnings and their ongoing influence in morality. With these questions in mind, we proceed to discuss how the affective beginnings of moral thought might come to endure. This

⁴⁴ For the avoidance of doubt and in light of the complexity of Schelerian and Aristotelian scholarship, we should say here that our use of these authors has been heuristic rather than structural. Specifically, Bostock's interpretation of Aristotle provides a helpful contrast to the theologically enriched version of Lacoste's discussion of Scheler. Our discussion of Scheler and Aristotle has accurately drawn out broader issues concerning affections and laid the groundwork for future analysis but should not be read as decisive findings concerning the whole of their respective *corpora* of writings. At this point we leave Scheler behind to face Lacoste's well-judged charge of anti-intersubjective emotivism. (Lacoste, J.-Y., 'From Value to Norm', 117; cf. MacIntyre, A., *After Virtue*, chapters 1-3)

line of enquiry is particularly important in light of our concern with the place of affections in political relations, the theme which will be taken up in later chapters. Political relations do endure over time. Therefore, if affections have a significant role in political relations, it seems highly plausible that affections too will endure in some way. On our thesis, enduring affections are tremendously important since they enable people repeatedly to begin to understand an order of value and the moral order in such a way that they may reflect, deliberate and act together in a relatively consistent, cohesive way.

To investigate further we will reflect on the differences between the O'Donovan-Lacoste approach and the approach represented by Bostock's interpretation of Aristotle. Implicit to this point has been a concept which Scheler, Bostock, Lacoste, O'Donovan and Ford hold in common in one way or another, and which we will here call "stability". "Stability" names the solidity of the epistemological foundation on which a people build as they begin their moral reflection and deliberation. Stability characterises the basis on which reflection and deliberation can, so to speak, put its weight before pushing out towards action, the epistemological rock beneath its feet.

Stability is especially important for a plausible account of affections as enduring aspects of human epistemology. It seems intuitively apparent that fear, joy, hate and other affections often have such an enduring quality. One thinks, for example, of the steadiness of many Poles' hatred of Russians during the twentieth century which has continued to this day. Stable or enduring affections are as constant a feature of human life as momentary or 'episodic' affections (the nature of their interrelation will be expanded further below). Thus if affections have epistemological

aptitude – if they are forms of understanding – the stability of a people’s epistemology will be partly constituted by the stability of a people’s affections, the joy, hatred and fear (for example) by which they repeatedly evaluate and understand some features of reality. Enduring affections, on our thesis, would thus be enduring beginnings, initial understandings which stably characterise an epistemological outlook.

The moral life of a people who perceive that they have a stable epistemological foundation will be characterised in a number of ways. First, perception of a stable foundation enables a community to believe that reflection, deliberation and action are repeatable – having launched out stably on one occasion, one can do the same again. Second, perception of a stable foundation leads people to believe that reflection, deliberation and action are adaptable since a secure foundation provides a context for trial and error. Adaptation of reflective, deliberative action is intelligible precisely in relation to a series of preceding, repeated actions, remembered and reflected upon. Third, repeatability and adaptability together present the appearance of stability back to the community which, when self-consciously recognised by the community, will further bind them together in reflection, deliberation and action. This feature of stability enables the construction and development over time of a common culture, shared by multiple agents, a theme to be developed in chapter three with respect to social and institutional memory.

That a political society is conscious of a high degree of stability is no sure sign that it has an actually stable epistemological foundation. For example, Bostock’s Aristotle saw stability in a highly specified account of the good life protected and

promoted by virtue of character. The stability of this particular foundation is a detailed specification of what counts as good and bad, right and wrong in the community which Aristotle's particular tradition developed by relying on a certain teleological account of social order and of the place of his particular social order within the cosmos. For him, the social order follows the same kind of teleology as all the natural order: just as vegetation is directed to a higher end, namely animal nutrition, so certain human beings – a slave-class, women – are naturally directed to a higher end, namely the ruling class of men. The city does not have a transcendent point of reference for its stable ordering which means that the relations between those who discern stability become grotesquely distorted to create a kind of pseudo-transcendence of *hoi aristoi* (οἱ ἀριστοί) over *hoi polloi* (οἱ πολλοί). This travesty is then deepened by the lack of awareness within Aristotle's tradition of alternative orders of value which would represent significantly different accounts of teleological order. One cannot blame Aristotle for not knowing, for example, the Hebrew Scriptures but one can observe, with the benefit of hindsight – specifically the eschatological hindsight afforded by the resurrection – that his conception of teleology is bound up with his own local community and tradition and that the epistemological stability of that tradition is thus significantly less sound than it appears. This kind of stability is really a shadow stability which we shall call “stubbornness”. It is a systemic refusal to allow for epistemological correction from external sources, especially God. For there might be a fixedness of affection which gains its solidity from a perception of unreality rather than through being ordered to the moral order as it is. The strength of a tradition may sustain such a fixedness and so effectively prevent true affective understanding. Stubbornness is thus essentially a

failure in moral understanding, a refusal to participate penitently in the world as it is. It stands in stark contrast to the penury of the affective for which we have argued, that humble poverty of initial understanding which depends for wisdom on God and his creation as well as looking intersubjectively to others' understanding.

Moral philosophy and moral theology have commonly suggested that actual epistemological stability for a political society requires foundations which do come from outside and transcend the culture and tradition of any one community. Kant wrote of the universal law, Eastern philosophers speak of the *tao* and Christian thinkers have described a natural law,⁴⁵ a created moral order⁴⁶ or a system of natural or 'inherent' rights and correlative obligations.⁴⁷ Common to such diverse conceptions has been the basic question of moral obligation concerning what is owed to one's neighbour, the question of justice. Whether or not natural and inherent rights are assumed to be basic dimensions of moral reality, the common and correct theological assumption is that there is a stable, objective moral reality in relation to which subjects have their being and perform their actions. Justice is inextricably linked to the created being of humans and the nature of the world they inhabit.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Aquinas, T., *Summa Theologiae*, Gilby (ed.), Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1963

⁴⁶ O'Donovan, O., *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 31-52

⁴⁷ Wolterstorff, N., *Justice: Rights and Wrongs*, Princeton University Press, 2008. The implications for affections of the disagreements about rights which subsist between Oliver and Joan O'Donovan and Nicholas Wolterstorff cannot be addressed here. Wolterstorff comments that '[r]ights de-center the agent. Instead of the agent's happiness determining his action, the worth of the recipient and of those others who will be affected by the action is to determine what the agent does.' (ibid. 178) This decentring is a neat way of expressing the common ground which both sides of the rights debate share – namely humans are members of a wider social order and creation order which renders eudaimonistic individualism inadmissible. Research on the relation between concepts of rights and affective epistemology will form part of a later project, especially in conversation with the themes of Wolterstorff's forthcoming *Love and Justice*. For a brief discussion of rights and emotions, see Lauritzen, P., 'Emotions and Religious Ethics', 318-321. (For Oliver O'Donovan's response to Wolterstorff's account of rights, cf. O'Donovan, O., 'The Language of Rights and Conceptual History', *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 37(2), June 2009, 194-207)

⁴⁸ For O'Donovan, justice is unintelligible without an explicit ordering of ends and kinds. For the judgments whereby particular *genera* are classified as morally relevant as opposed to other *genera* which are irrelevant is essentially a teleological judgment (cf. *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 48)

More than that, we can say that justice itself, as the morally ordering logic within the good order of the cosmos, has a warmth and power of attraction by which affections are energised and sustained.

Not so with Aristotle. As Nicholas Wolterstorff succinctly observes, Aristotle ‘makes no attempt at grounding justice ontologically’.⁴⁹ For Aristotle, justice as a particular virtue (as opposed to general justice which embraces all the virtues) is a matter of equality of recompense and proportionality of distribution.⁵⁰ Justice is thus not rooted in the very structure of the world but is a matter of more-or-less in particular circumstances. Both Wolterstorff and Oliver O’Donovan show, in different ways, that this conception is not acceptable.⁵¹ The question then remains for Aristotle: ‘whence stability?’ His answer, considering his inextricable linkage of his social order with cosmological teleology, can only be that stability is rooted within his own tradition and the virtues of those who represent it. We should, therefore, be distrustful of claims to stability from Aristotelian quarters and, remembering the lack of integration of emotion in his ethics, even more wary of the idea that stability of affection (feeling/emotion) might proceed from his teaching.

The approach described via O’Donovan, Ford and Lacoste suggests a different account of stability from Aristotle, one which takes seriously the structure of the moral order as defined by an objective moral order with objective obligations. Our proposal is that people enter moral reflection and deliberation in the ‘half-light’ afforded by an affective recognition of the first ethical facts and that this recognition becomes intersubjective through reference to a communally shared ‘ranked order’⁵²

⁴⁹ Wolterstorff, N., *Justice: Rights and Wrongs*, 14

⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1131a10ff

⁵¹ Wolterstorff, N., *Justice: Rights and Wrongs*, 13-15; O’Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 31ff

⁵² Lacoste, J.-Y., ‘From Value to Norm’, 118

of value which leads to an ‘intersubjective verification of what affective knowledge finds itself presented with’⁵³ and, ultimately, to a participation in the objective moral order as it is. This formulation of the beginnings of moral reflection and deliberation begins by recognising that affections are necessary at the dawning of a process of moral reflection and deliberation but that a particular community finds its stability neither in the affections nor in the self’s virtue nor in a pre-reflective, pre-deliberative, highly defined account of the supreme good but in a shared, ranked order of values (*ordo amoris*) which is entered in affection. The ranked order is the way that affective recognitions may be sorted and reflected upon; by it the community itself is internally ordered. It is precisely as this kind of shared order that the stability is that of a community, whether an entire political society, characterised by institutions, laws and practices which embody that shared order in its totality and sustain the practice of judgment which conforms to that shared order, or that of certain communities and institutions within any political society or between political societies.

The stability of this particular ranked order will itself be more or less correlated to the objective moral order of the world as it is, with its matrix of moral obligations and generic, teleological order. From a theological perspective, the moral order, to which the ranked order of values of a particular society is correlated, transcends the society in a way that Aristotle’s account stubbornly refuses to do. This moral order, precisely because it transcends other ranked orders, is always not exhaustively known by any society and so stands constantly available for deeper discovery and penetration by all. It has an objective stability which endures whether

⁵³ *ibid.* 116

or not it is perceived. Its stability lends stability to affections within societies. Enduring affections, stabilised in this way, are attracted by the moral order as it is via the shared order of value which the society upholds and constitute the normal ways of beginning moral thought within a community. The shared order of value participates in the natural order just as, in Aquinas, the human law may participate in the natural law. Moreover, from the subjective side, there is the possibility of an increased stability on account of becoming *more* ordered to the stable moral order, following committed, reflective, deliberative, attracted engagement in it. This movement represents the escape from stubbornness to which we shall return by another route when we come to consider memory below.

To see further the implications of the association of stability and affection for the endurance of affections, consider how this account differs from Martha Nussbaum's theory of emotions. In contrast to Nussbaum for whom the outwards emotional movement was a response to instability, the material world inasmuch as it is uncontrolled or not wholly controlled by the individual, a Christian account of affective, intentional recognition will involve affections being ultimately ordered and attracted towards the stability of the objective, fallen moral order vindicated in Christ and towards the Christ himself in whom all things hold together. On this account, every person's hate, sorrow, fear and joy are signs of a deeper awareness of the moral order – initial, cognitive gestures towards the stability of the heavens and the earth from within the fallenness of this present moment in salvation history and from within the multiplicity of earthly cities. In that sense, affections have a revelatory quality, disclosing the weighty attractiveness of the created world and understanding the beauty of God as it is reflected in creation, that beauty named by Augustine as

‘pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova’ (the ‘beauty so old and so new’), drawn up from the depths of memory and hoped for in the deepest reaches of human consciousness.⁵⁴ In Nussbaum, this movement from creation to fallen multiplicity and on to unified new heaven and new earth is boiled down into a monolithic, geological account of human experience amidst upheaval. There is no before and no after. There are no metaphysics. There are only events which plunge themselves like knives into our world.

We may now comment further on Nussbaum’s emphasis on emotions of fear and grief because of her significantly agent-centred, individualistic commitment to eudaimonism within a liberal democratic framework. The theological account of moral order depends on there being a created, fallen, vindicated universe containing generically and teleologically related features.⁵⁵ Such an account recognises stability in the created world and accounts for any hopes for blessedness within such an order precisely in relation to a transcendent God who became incarnate. In contrast, Nussbaum denies such stability and rather sees uncontrol of unstable objects as shaping all human emotions. This led to her emphasis on fear and grief and her partial and limited account of the place of joy. With no transcendent reference point, there is no stable place where joy could rest. Instead, emotions are conditioned solely by culture and child psychology. But the theological approach gives an account of the full range of affections by explaining their relation to the settled and attractive quality of the created though fallen order which calls forth both positive and negative affections. Moreover, rather than rooting the instability in the world – which, theologically speaking, though blighted by sin, is yet firmly established – our

⁵⁴ Augustine, *Confessiones*, 10.xxvii.38

⁵⁵ O’Donovan, O., *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 31ff

account calls people to examine themselves, their own unstable fragility and their failure to be fitted to the world as it is. Such a move relativises the liberal democracy which Nussbaum seems inevitably committed to defending by directing our gaze beyond such man-made shared orders of value to the created order of value itself and the Trinity by whom it is sustained. It is in this way that human creatures avoid separating themselves off from the moral order as it is and instead come in humility to begin to learn its ways through affective participation in its generic and teleological ordering. Indeed, it is in this way that we come to participate more truthfully in the particular orders of value that we do inhabit, including those that follow the patterns of liberal democracy.

Stability and virtue

If we hypothesise that affections gain enduring stability as beginnings of understanding through participation in the firmly established objective moral order albeit via particular, cultural orders of value, then we should next enquire further as to the nature of that stability within the subject. We may proceed on this line by drawing a contrast between virtue and memory as possible sources of subjective epistemological stability. John McDowell has proposed a highly epistemological account of virtue whereby the basis of a stable moral epistemology is and should be the agent's own virtue. Thus, when an agent encounters circumstances which pose the question of what it is right to do, he should depend epistemologically on his own virtue of character to determine right action. 'A conception of right conduct is grasped, as it were, from the inside out.' A virtuous person has a 'reliable sensitivity'

about what should be done in any situation and the ‘deliverances of a reliable sensitivity are cases of knowledge.’ Moreover, the sensitivity is that which accounts for the right action and so the ‘sensitivity turns out to be what the virtue is.’⁵⁶ He goes on to explain that the virtuous person is internally habituated to see a particular fact in a situation as the salient one to be concerned about with respect to action. This ‘perception of saliences’ is the heart of virtue.⁵⁷ McDowell is insistent that ‘concern’, the necessary *emotional* element of this virtuous perception, has cognitive qualities though he is also admirably honest in his admission that he does not have the resources to tackle the anti-emotional, rationalist challenge fully since he cannot properly account for the nature of emotion.⁵⁸

McDowell is interesting for us because thought-patterns similar to his have emerged in explicitly Christian ethics which rely on a virtue epistemology. There is a stream of Christian ethics which, fed by the mighty tributaries of Aristotle and Alasdair MacIntyre, have described moral understanding chiefly as a function of virtue achieved through the practices of Christian community. On this thesis, Christian communities of character form a virtuous people through certain common practices. I believe, and Brian Brock agrees, that this stream has issued in an ‘unbiblical anthropocentrism’.⁵⁹ A right concern for learning ethics from narrative has led thinkers such as Stanley Hauerwas wrongly to prioritise narrative over non-narrative, to diminish the role of the Holy Spirit and to promote church tradition and

⁵⁶ McDowell, J., ‘Virtue and reason’, Crisp & Slote (ed.), *Virtue Ethics*, OUP, 1997, 141-162, 141ff

⁵⁷ *ibid.* 154-158

⁵⁸ *ibid.* 160-1

⁵⁹ Brock, B., *Singing the Ethos of God: On the Place of Christian Ethics in Scripture*, Eerdmans, 2007, 31

virtue to become the epistemological powerhouse of ethics.⁶⁰ Thus the use of the language of moral formation has unfortunately tended to give the impression that the church is both potter and clay.

In order to substantiate this critique of contemporary neo-Aristotelians, we begin from Oliver O'Donovan's claim that character does not disclose how we should act but rather that acts disclose the character we have – there is an epistemological priority of action over character. The claim has a double target: first, it aims to cut off epistemological dependence on a consciousness of character from discernment of right action; second, it aims to puncture an over-confidence in the competence and reliability of character to discern right action – even if character is not consciously reflected on during the deliberation. The following four points enable O'Donovan to hit both targets. First, one's own virtue of character is normally little known to oneself and thus granting it a part in deliberation and decision about action is not a promising suggestion. The endemic human tendency to overestimate, underestimate or misunderstand entirely one's own moral state may be partially addressed by sober judgment concerning oneself but it is hardly a biblical expectation that such judgment is meant then to resource detailed moral thinking about what it is right to do in any given situation. Second, even if a *third* person evaluation of my virtue of character could be more accurate, such an estimation cannot itself provide information which short-circuits the moral deliberation about

⁶⁰ *ibid.* 33. *Admiration* of character does have a role in our account of affections, as we shall see, but, very importantly, '[w]e shall not learn to save our souls by talking about the formation of virtuous characters.' (O'Donovan, O., *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 224) We note here John Webster's criticism of Christian virtue ethicists who reduce sanctification into techniques for forming character and thus lead the church away from the essential response to being addressed by Scripture, namely repentance (Webster, J., *Word and Church: Essays in Christian Dogmatics*, T & T Clark, 2001, 93ff). For the only (somewhat brief) attempts I have found to integrate a subtle, cognitive account of emotion with Hauerwas, see Lauritzen, P., 'Emotions and Religious Ethics'; cf. Wynn, M., 'Emotions and Christian Ethics: A Reassessment', *Studies in Christian Ethics* 2004; 17, 35-55, esp. 39ff

what I owe to the neighbour in this moment since each opportunity for action, though set within a generically and teleologically ordered universe and therefore *like* other opportunities, is still in itself new. As such, it cannot be simply determined in advance that this or that virtue which the agent has is peculiarly relevant or necessary. What is necessary instead is a clearer view of the moral field in which the person is to act.

Third, the very nature of moral deliberation implies an open narrative in which virtue of character is not yet disclosed and so remains unavailable as a factor in deliberation. If acts disclose character, then character may not yet be fully known and so cannot be a reliable basis for decision-making. Fourth, depending on one's own virtue of character habituated by one's own society and a highly specified account of *eudaimonia* for moral understanding of the world is a sure way to impenitence since it tends to foreclose the possibility of experiencing correction in the midst of the new situation which presents itself. In explicitly theological terms, a virtue epistemology will tend to block that correction which comes through repentant attentiveness to the created, vindicated objective moral order and God himself. This last point is peculiarly important for a critique of the epistemological anthropocentricity of McDowell and the communitarians. Thus O'Donovan observes that

a strong self-consciousness about my own characteristic excellences, far from illuminating the meaning of the act which I have to deliberate, will have obscured it. It will have stood between me and the moral field to which I must respond.⁶¹

⁶¹ O'Donovan, O., *Resurrection and Moral Order*, 213, cf. 211ff; cf. Hauerwas, S., *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*, SCM Press, 2003, 116ff

To which we should add, in light of our earlier observations, that the response to the moral field is partly constituted by *affective attraction* into it. A focus on habituated emotion as constituting our virtuous character obstructs our view of what God achieves through affection, namely the possibility of being awakened to the cosmos as it draws out our understanding and then becoming stably ordered to that world.

Thus an approach which begins with character and a highly specified account of the good life in fact offers a shadow stability to a moral agent and her community in their reflection, deliberation and action, a stability which is, at least potentially, stagnantly narcissistic and blinded by the self in such a way as to be unable to act in penitent response to the moral order with respect to what is owed to the neighbour in this or that concrete situation. This is the stubbornness which is so unhealthy since it diminishes, quells or eradicates the proper beginnings of reflection and deliberation in penurious, participatory, attracted, affective recognitions of the moral order as it is. The epistemological turn towards reliance on the self's virtue and detailed account of *eudaimonia* is opposed to this discussion's emphasis on the epistemological priority of affection as a participation in the world both as it appears and as it is. A virtue epistemology, relying on virtue to establish the right course of action, both walls people off from the world as it is and refuses the revelation which affection can bring. Epistemological stability is not in the agent's virtue but in the order in which the agent participates and by which the agent is ordered towards stability. This insistence that stability is found in the God who sustains order over against the powers of disorder and sin coheres well with the evangelical disavowal of self-reliance and self-knowledge on account of the new word which has come in Christ.

An Aristotelian objector may still say that virtue *is* affection under the control of reason and that to exclude virtue from an active epistemological role is to exclude affection too. The force of this objection is that it is only in a well-habituated character that affections arise at the right time, in the right way, to the right extent etc. and thus that moral reflection and deliberation, in which affective recognition, on our thesis, plays such a crucial initiatory role, actually does depend on the agent's or community's own virtue of character. However, this objection fails not only because it presupposes an account of reason's mastery of emotion which we have already set aside, especially in the form it appears in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, but also because we hold that it is the *object* of affection which *attracts* our penurious, affective recognitions which then form the beginnings of moral reflection and deliberation, thereby overcoming stubborn and fallen understandings. It is not the goodness of the moral subject that gives rise to true recognition but the goodness of the moral order, however refracted through any particular order of value, however affected by the Fall and in whatever contingent circumstances, that draws out the affective recognition. Affections are thus not necessarily indications of or the same as virtue of character but rather are primarily coordinated to and drawn out by their objects mediated through the shared moral order within which objects find their value. Even the deeply selfish man may rejoice at first sight of his child in the womb or as a newborn baby and may wish to do all sorts of things to protect it. Even the intemperate woman full of vengeful bitterness over her relative's death may be awestruck by the mountains near which their loved one is buried or the forgiveness which others show in similar situations.

There remain the questions of what role, if any, virtue does play in our account of affective epistemology and, specifically, whether virtue has anything to do with enduring affections. Robert Merrihew Adams' work on virtue shows that 'there is little hope for any ethical outlook that cannot accommodate the fact that human behavior of apparent moral significance is often quite predictable.'⁶² A particular person may, with reasonable consistency, feel and act in similar ways in similar sorts of situations and any ethics should account for this. What then is virtue? Adams shows that right action belongs to a different department of ethics from virtue. Right action is to do with voluntarily chosen action while virtue, because substantially affected by one's social circumstances, articulated by the categories of gift and luck is not straightforwardly voluntary.⁶³ To make right action a function of virtue or to reduce duty into virtue is to confuse these departments of ethics and to impoverish both right action and virtue.⁶⁴ Adams' most telling argument for this approach is that

[a]ssessments of virtue have a logical pattern more typical of judgments of goodness than of judgments of rightness. The concepts of the good and the right differ in the shape of the characteristic frameworks of evaluation they offer us, that of the good being much more tolerant of ambivalence and diversity.⁶⁵

Doing the right thing is focussed on a particular action while being good may take a wide number of different forms. There is a pluriformity to the good while there is a decisive singularity to the right such that the latter cannot simply be reduced into the

⁶² Adams, R.M., *A Theory of Virtue: Excellence in Being for the Good*, OUP, 2006, 18

⁶³ *ibid.* 158ff. The use of the term 'luck' is really meant to capture what we might mean by contingency, namely that, for each particular agent, reality has turned out in a particular way so that his or her conditions of existence are of one kind and not another.

⁶⁴ *ibid.* 9

⁶⁵ *ibid.* 10

former. Thus, 'virtue is best understood as a kind of *goodness* rather than *rightness*'⁶⁶ and so cannot explain why a particular action is right or wrong nor enable decisions about what to do in contingent situations.⁶⁷

Virtue itself is 'persistent excellence in being for the good' and consists in cognitive operations which are characteristically fragile, fragmentary and liable to inconsistency. He undermines classic Aristotelian conceptions of virtue as robust, habituated reliability in action by asking whether it is 'really so implausible to suppose that almost everyone has a certain character defect? Is it a tautology that character must be worse than average to be defective? Has it not at least historically been a widely held belief that most or all of us have traits of character in some ways sinful?'⁶⁸ Over against those who focus on 'direct behavioural dispositions' and robust, reliably habituated action, thereby exclusively emphasising overt behaviour, Adams argues that 'motivation', partially constituted by emotional 'intelligence',⁶⁹ is also a large part of virtue. He does not believe that Emperor Virtue has no clothes but presents a more humbly attired virtue which, through accommodating its largely cultural and, from a theological perspective, providential source, denies the 'imperialistic'⁷⁰ reduction of duty into virtue, the unity of the virtues, the robustness of habituated action and the primacy of overt behaviour in the definition of virtue.

Adams' observations point towards a more positive account of virtue's role in affective epistemology. Although we have rejected reflective and deliberative stability through dependence on or consideration of one's own character, virtue itself

⁶⁶ *ibid.* 9

⁶⁷ *ibid.* 7

⁶⁸ *ibid.* 148

⁶⁹ *ibid.* 14 where Adams comments that 'Emotions can be ways of being for or against something, but only insofar as the emotion has an intentionality that involves some understanding of its object.'

⁷⁰ *ibid.* 6

may yet contribute to stability and so to the endurance of affections. We distinguish between *one's own virtues* as a source of moral revelation concerning the right and the good and *the virtues of others* disclosed in their actions, as objects of affective recognition, such as a friend's courageous action or consistent and predictable series of courageous actions. An agent reflecting on the pluriform good and deliberating about the right might call to mind and affectively participate in the virtuous consistency of action displayed by a man such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Such 'consistency' does not entail repetitive, robust uniformity since the narrative of Bonhoeffer's life, like all lives, consists in a multifaceted, fragile unity. The nature of any man's virtuous consistency is conditioned by his changing circumstances and moral awareness. Thus consistency may entail adaptation and, crucially, change, some of which may be appropriately called 'repentance'. An admirable consistency of life – something we might call 'virtue' – does not, then, entail a robust, uniform goodness but rather a humble amenability to continuous change.

As the agent reflects on Bonhoeffer's consistency, he might be affectively drawn to participate in it through shame, wonder, joy, sorrow or some other affection. His affection is drawn by the virtue of another person who then informs his understanding of the relation of himself to the proposed act within the pluriform, good moral order. Such an affective movement is not an attempt at imitation but rather a receptive welcome and admiration of goodness. This account seems to fit well within our account of affective recognition. For by affection we welcome some virtue of Bonhoeffer's character, as disclosed by his actions, and find an initial *entrée* into reflection on our own order of value and then the moral order as it is and so come to deliberate concerning what it is right to do in that order.

In being a third person observation of another's virtue as disclosed by action, this movement does not pretend to an implausible self-knowledge but rather is content with an affective grasp of the *gestalt* of that virtuous appearance which is visible in another. In other words, what is at stake is not the formation of one's own character to be like Bonhoeffer's – a rather implausible activity bearing in mind our own moral ineptitude – but rather the furnishing of one's moral awareness with a vision of virtue which, being indeterminate and non-exhaustive in its account of what is good, does not foreclose any further moral reflection and deliberation but nonetheless offers some grounding to both by focussing our affections on a good in the actual moral field. A good of this sort, especially concerning one whose life has often been intersubjectively recognised, in the context of a theologically defined moral order, as of significance for moral reflection, offers a route to a mediating point of stability for my own current reflection and deliberation. Bonhoeffer's life in the same moral order which I now inhabit summons me to be aware of myself and to attend to my present condition in the moral order. The stability is thus not in self; nor is the stability centred in the virtues of another; the stability is provided, via the drawing together of myself and Bonhoeffer, in the stability of the created moral order which provides the context within which Bonhoeffer's excellence is affectively recognised. O'Donovan comments that

the virtuous are not to be imitated, but simply to be loved for what they are, and to be taken as material for understanding what kinds of things God accomplishes in human action and lives.⁷¹

⁷¹ Cf. O'Donovan, O., *Morally awake? Admiration and resolution in the light of Christian faith*, New College Sydney Lecture Series 2007, Lecture 2, 'Admiring' (unpublished)

Thus there is a place for the affective recognition of goodness in moral virtue disclosed in virtuous action in the beginnings of moral reflection and deliberation. Human moral virtue, disclosed in the fragile consistency of another agent's acts, represents a special form of the normal case of affective recognition which is always an attracted recognition of value in particular objects and which is subject to intersubjective verification. Such virtue enables affections to endure as they are steadily drawn into its consistency vis-à-vis the moral order, and are able, on that basis, repeatedly to initiate moral reflection and deliberation.

Stability and memory

If a man's own virtue does not bring endurance to his affective understanding and if others' virtuosity, though possibly conducive to wholesome moral reflection, is fragile and unstable, then we must look elsewhere to discover the true source of affections' endurance. Augustine tells us that 'there exists another power' ('est alia vis') in human life.⁷² This power is memory and we will now explore to what extent it explains the interrelation of the stability of the created, vindicated moral order and humanity's enduring affections.

While affections, as we have seen, are constitutionally fitted to enable epistemological participation in the present, stable moral order as the future becomes our current experience, it is also the case that affections recognise value from the past, by the power of memory, and so have access to a level of enduring stability which virtue of character, in its fragility and epistemological incompetence, can

⁷² Augustine, *Confessiones*, 10.vii.11

never provide. We observe that memory and present stability are closely related first because the past has been decisively established and second because memory concerns acts and events in the generically and teleologically defined moral order which we still inhabit in the present, which has been vindicated in Christ and which will be fulfilled in the new heaven and the new earth.

By way of explanation, we consider first that although, with Augustine, we say that it is only God's present that has any current existence,⁷³ it is true to say that the remembered past has a present stable quality which the present itself, experienced by humans as continual and fleeting novelty albeit within the regular moral order, lacks. In an important sense neither the past nor the future exists nor even the present in that it passes away even as we become aware of it. And yet the past has happened, cannot be changed but can be made present to us again by the power of memory. This is the temporal aspect of the claim that the earth is firmly established and cannot be moved – the established creation cannot be conceived of as abstract from time but has a temporality which renders its past eternally stable. The performance of human memory is of course variable in relation to this fixed past – the imperfection, partiality and deceptiveness of memory is a commonplace. Nonetheless, memory is sufficiently equipped to stabilise affections as the beginnings of that understanding which initiates reflection and deliberation. For memory gives humans an individual and an intersubjective way of positioning themselves in relation to the present by relating the affective understanding of past events to reflection and deliberation in the current moment. Memory has this quality with respect to all the remembered past, including to a limited extent an agent's own consistency and inconsistency of

⁷³ *ibid.* 11.i.1, 11.xiii.16

action, since, without diminishing the responsibility of the agent for his own actions, the distancing effect of the passage of time may render those actions like the acts of other men with respect to affective evaluation. They are as objects in relation to the subject who, as a ship sails across the sea yet leaves a wake, continues on into the present yet leaves an observable past behind. In light of memory, we see again why Nussbaum's elision of eudaimonism and emotional self-understanding was unwise. For affection can understand the self in memory without being concerned with the self's current eudaimonistic plans.

Augustine picks up this theme when he describes how

in the vast hall of my memory...I meet myself and recall what I am, what I have done, and when and where I was affected [*affectus fuerim*] when I did it. There is everything I remember, whether I experienced it directly or believed on the words of others...on this basis I reason about future actions and events and hopes...⁷⁴

One's storehouse of memory holds a vast range of items all of which may be objects of affective recognition in the present in greater or lesser detail and in more or less deliberate and conscious ways. These may include a narrative of one's own life, the history of the community or communities in which one participates and many other things such as events, acts, series of acts, people and mental occurrences such as affections. Such items may exhibit consistency of the sort which Bonhoeffer's life exemplifies. By the power of memory, we are able affectively to participate in, be attracted by and value these past objects, rejoicing in, sorrowing over, fearing and hating them even though they are not present to us. Such affective recognitions do not enable a direct movement from the grasp of a value in the past to the pursuit of a right action in the present. They do not short-circuit the task of moral reflection and

⁷⁴ Augustine, *Confessions*, 10.viii.14

deliberation. Rather, affective participation in the value of remembered objects gives entry into and throws half-light on an intersubjectively shared order of values and on the moral order as it is, drawing us to self-consciousness in the present moment and empowering sustained reflection about the nature of the good and deliberation about right action. This affective participation is enduring precisely in that it participates in that which is relatively more stable than the present, namely the remembered past. As such, it exists as a background, initial understanding of the world which continually affects the beginnings of understanding. Enduring affections would thus be these steady beginnings of understanding which characterise the start of moral reflection and deliberation.

Second, more briefly, memory of the past is precisely memory of the past within the teleologically and generically organised moral order.⁷⁵ True moral learning through memory would thus be through affective participation in features of the past reckoned within the moral order. An event such as the birth of a child, the conclusion of a conflict, the establishment of a trade union or a dinner under the stars would be remembered affectively in relation to the generic teleologies of children, peace, work, food and natural order which all lie within the created moral order. Thus memory of the past, when affectively recognised as valuable in the context of the stable moral order, enables enduring affections which sustain reflection and deliberation towards action in the present. These enduring affections are a matter of general revelation. Specifically Christian affective memory would recognise past objects as within the moral order *vindicated in Christ*, the basis of stability argued for above. Instead of skating over the surface of the world, affections and memory would

⁷⁵ Augustine, *Confessiones*, 10.viii.13. This seems to be Augustine's thought when he says 'ibi sunt omnia distincte generatiumque servata, quae suo quaeque aditu ingesta sunt.'

thus enable an agent in the present not only to remember the past in the context of this Christ-centred stability but also to participate in it in a committed way, gaining understanding of the world as it is in Christ and so gaining stability for the present moment from Christ in whom all things hold together. Ultimately, epistemological stability's theological significance depends on the past remembered as taking place within the moral order vindicated in Christ. For then the past is not only remembered but rooted in relation to creation and salvation history.⁷⁶

This analysis of memory shows how affections are not only episodic and short-lived but also enduring since affective participation in memories of past objects may acquire a certain steadiness as when one continues to grieve over a lost loved one. It also represents an explanation for the apparent predictability of human behaviour of moral significance. For, though often dark and unexplored, the storehouse of memory is imbued with affective understanding which continues to shape our way of seeing the world in the present and acting in light of that outlook. Thus our affections may be rooted in and drawn out by the relatively stable past which is grasped and evaluated through our affective memory, and reasoned from into the future.

Our analysis also significantly develops the concept of 'stability'. For although it remains true that personal and communal virtue are neither a necessary

⁷⁶ Augustine's *Confessions* – at least the first nine books – exemplify such an exercise in memory, carried out before God, with respect to the salvation history which he has enacted within creation, but to be overheard by others, namely Augustine's neighbours, those towards whom he must act rightly. As Augustine says in book 10: 'when I am evil, making confession to you is simply to be displeased with myself. When I am good, making confession to you is simply to make no claim on my own behalf, for you, Lord, "confer blessing on the righteous" but only after you have first "justified the ungodly"'. (*Confessions*, 10.ii.2) Also, 'Good people are delighted to hear about the past sins of those who have now shed them. The pleasure is not in the evils as such, but that though they were so once, they are not like that now.' (ibid. 10.iii.4) In personal conversation with the late and revered Henry Chadwick at the Oxford Playhouse Café in the spring of 2003, it became clear that the first nine books of the *Confessions* only make coherent sense when read through book ten's account of memory.

nor sufficient epistemological explanation of or guide to what it is right to do here and now, and that epistemological stability is only found in the moral order vindicated in Christ, it is also true that affective memory of past virtue or vice – such as Bonhoeffer’s – may draw people to a threefold attentiveness to self, world and the present moment. Remembering affectively thus yields a way of framing ourselves in the world at a moment in time in order that we might address that moment reflectively and deliberately. Stability itself, the stable place from which to launch out in moral reflection and deliberation, thus lies partially in our memory of the past, as a more or less imperfect record of what took place within the created, vindicated but fallen moral order. Stability is not in the virtue of the man or his community but is found in a memory of value, remembered in relation to a community’s shared order of values and, by God’s grace, the moral order as it is in Christ.⁷⁷

So when we approach the moral field *de novo*, as we must, this does not mean that we approach it without memory of the past but rather without epistemological dependence on moral virtue and without our minds already made up about what the right thing to do will be. Thus a community may be drawn by memory and affections

⁷⁷ An objector might say that an accurate memory, whereby what is remembered is remembered truthfully, is itself an intellectual virtue. The objector might claim that, in refusing the stability of virtue of character, this discussion has simply shifted to another form of human self-reliance which can equally well obscure the moral field, namely a special form of virtue of intellect. To this form of the objection, one may respond in two ways, both of which are serviceable to my argument. On the one hand, one could simply deny that memory is a virtue and see it as an ability. We might observe that a memory which effectively retains facts is not a virtue because it does not engage the will. Thus, by the lights of this discussion, it would only be when affection, as an attracted, inclined understanding, evaluated items in the memory that memory took a place in moral considerations. On the other hand, one could admit memory is a virtue but deny that it is a moral achievement and that no great effort or habituation is necessary to have a good memory. In either case, memory – because of its characteristic activity – is not competent to decide beforehand what it is right to do but rather supplies a record of what has been done or thought or felt in the past. Such a record will itself be affectively toned in the memory while current affections may evaluate and discover value afresh. It should be added that some knowledge held in the memory is in general not affectively known but simply recalled. Plain facts such as the ten times table or the date of the Chalcedonian definition stand in contrast to the beauty of a friend’s courageous act. The former do not normally call forth affective understanding (except perhaps as an element in a certain aesthetic of mathematics); the latter may be thought to require it.

such as joy, fear or hatred into understanding aspects of its own past such as the successful protection of its borders against an historic foe, the systemic failure which allowed a culture of abuse in an institution or the demonised minority who continue to hold power in some areas of public life. Through the affective, attracted recognition of these memories of past values which reawaken the community to the shared order of value and, by a transcendent turn of mind, to the moral order as it is, they may again turn to the reflective and deliberative task. This then is the beginning of an account of communal self-understanding through affection and memory. Affections are intersubjectively shared on the basis of common memory, the meaning of which may itself be contested and a cause for differing affections. The key thing is that this self-understanding is not necessarily bound up with the eudaimonistic projects of the community. Rather, as the community sees itself marked by an order of value in relation to *the* moral order, the self-understanding enables the community to situate itself as a collection of creatures within an intersubjectively shared created order. As we will see in chapter three, it is the institutions of the community which are particularly important in enabling the intersubjectivity of memory and affection.

Thus affections endure as they participate in memories. They form background ways of understanding the world which are relatively epistemologically stable. They become especially active when those memories are called to mind by specific recognitions at particular moments. In this way, affections, as epistemological operations, have both an enduring and episodic quality, neither of which depend on habituation into robust, reliable action but rather on the power of memory which may recall values in relation to the moral order of the world and so

draw individual subjects and communities of subjects in affection into the stability of the world. Via memory, enduring affections are thus held in order by the moral order itself and are renewed, verified, corrected and quenched on a daily basis in our creaturely and, perhaps, worshipful interactions. Episodic affections have a revelatory function which both contributes to and corrects such enduring affections by recognising value on an occasional basis, thus offering a way out of stubborn understanding.

Although memory grasped in affection is thus of great significance for coming to attentiveness in the world, the past does not determine how a man should act in the world in the present. The affective memory of value does not determine the right in a moment open before us; even the past must not be allowed to obscure the moral field at this present moment. However, affective participation in the past may enable an enhanced, committed awareness of and reengagement with the moral order in the present. The truthfulness of memory then becomes key to wise reflection, deliberation and action. For affective memory may, of course, entrench misperception of the moral order and intersubjective verification of affective memory may mislead by affirming a false affective recognition as true. Nonetheless, the very possibility of such wrongness suggests that the opposite is also possible and, moreover, is of great worth for a person and his community. The key, as Lacoste said, is to discuss our affective recognitions.

One particular benefit of seeing the connection of memory and affection relates to conversion. RM Adams complains, very sensibly, that

[d]espite a flurry of talk about “narrative ethics,” there has still been relatively little attention in ethical theory to the evaluation of life histories or processes of change; and there deserves to be more.⁷⁸

It seems that a convincing account of conversion – what Adams seems to mean by ‘processes of change’ – depends on a memory of one’s own or others’ past. Adams is right to emphasise that persisting cognitive traits are of the essence of a good life, that a good life is only ever embodied in a fragile and fragmentary way and that emotions (or affections) are just such cognitive traits which understand the world. However, by continuing to focus an agent’s epistemological stability which directs agency in the *virtue of the agent* – however minimised – there remains the problem of stagnant, stubborn self-coincidence whereby, as O’Donovan argues, the moral field is obscured on account of epistemological dependence on the enduring goodness of one’s own virtue, thereby handicapping attentiveness to the world and conversion to Christ its Maker and Redeemer. On the other hand, starting with affections, as participatory ways of being drawn into and understanding the world as it appears and the world as it is, empowers an account of conversion. Memory, by focussing on past events, actions, thoughts and affective recognitions, avoids the perils of virtue epistemology by denying epistemological dependence on enduring qualities or traits of the agent and instead seeks epistemological stability through the past affectively remembered in relation to the moral order.

In this way, objects from the storehouse of memory, when affectively grasped, draw us to a world-attentiveness that forms the reasons for our affections in the present. These affections, based on memories, are enduring, committed ways of understanding the world, the persistence of which depends on remembering and

⁷⁸ Adams, R.M., *A Theory of Virtue*, 164

bringing to mind the past in all its multifaceted unity, including potentially the past of God's activity in the world. If this is what may be meant by Adams' cognitive traits, well and good. Persistence in excellence in being for the good is stably founded not in ourselves but in the moral order, remembered and brought to mind in the present.

However, Adams' account still seems to depend to a considerable extent on habituated stability rooted in the self as a project, the unhealthy stubbornness we discussed above. Instead, and according to this discussion, it is by remembering the past held in our memory that we are constantly enabled affectively to recognise our past selves in the context of the pluriform moral order of the world, to overcome inattentiveness to the world, to come to world-attentiveness and self-awareness in the open moment in which I am now called to reflect concerning the good and deliberate concerning what is owed to my neighbours. Thus we may know and act in the world rightly if we know it through affective, participative memory of past reality and in openness to the novel moments in which our present constantly consists. And thus too we may indeed act to repeat past activities, to adapt them or even repent of them in order that we might rightly and consistently give what is owed to the neighbour. This seems to be an outline description of conversion, the theme which Adams astutely highlighted. The predictability of action – which Adams carefully qualifies by recognition of human frailty and sinfulness – is explicable substantially in terms of our enduring affective recognitions, made possible by the power of memory, which repeatedly initiate moral reflection and deliberation.

Now we may move further into memory in order to see the deepest sources of enduring affective understanding. Augustine argues for a much more radical form of

remembering whereby affections are attracted to an ultimate stability which can ground reflection and deliberation for all in the present. As we saw above, he argues that the reason that all seek the happy life is that, since we were all in Adam, we all knew that happy life once.⁷⁹ On the one hand, there are person-specific provisions in the storehouse of memory such as Carthage or the eloquence of an acquaintance. On the other, there is a generic memory of the blessed life of Adam and Eve which all share to some extent. Such a memory lies deep within our generic humanity and gives rise to a longing for relationship with God and various more or less stable affective understandings. These longings and affections, when genuinely organised around the joyful worship of God, are the happy life which Augustine calls 'joy based on the truth.'⁸⁰ The ultimate enduring, affective understanding, attracted intentionally by the memory of such blessedness, is for this happy life and accounts for the restlessness of the human heart as it seeks for peace. Augustine claims that this primal joy has long been in the memory. Affective experiences, such as this or any subsequent reflection of it, initially experienced in the mind, may be held in the storehouse of memory to be recalled in our minds at a later time. When this happens, a powerful attraction of the understanding takes place, disclosing to the self the need of the self for an enduring experience of truthful joy found in God alone.

Augustine argues that, when recalled and grasped again in affection, these memories do not necessarily make us feel as we once did. Indeed, returning to the ultimate case of recognising the separation of self from the pre-Fall happy life of Adam and Eve, Augustine comments that 'I am sad as I remember joy of long ago'

⁷⁹ Augustine, *City of God*, 14.10; *Confessiones*, 10.xx.29ff

⁸⁰ *ibid.* 10.xxiii.33

(‘gaudium pristinum’).⁸¹ Thus, the mind may sorrowfully recall the Adamic affective experience of enduring joy in the world as it *was* through affective recognition in the present moment in the world as it *is*. This present affective recognition of past joy – whether it be sorrowful, joyful, fearful, hateful, envious or something else – draws an individual into participation in the reality of the present, fallen moral order via intersubjective verification of value in a shared order of values. The stability of Adamic life which was known in bright primal joy is yet accessible now by the affective recognition of first ethical facts, features of that perfect life, which, filtered through the fallen world, shed half-light on our present reflection, deliberation and action. This is a further and most profound form of enduring stability which memory-empowered affections enable people to access. For it comes from another country, the place once shared but now lost. It stands in tension with the often consuming claims of national or international identity which emerge in our present political situation and throws our gaze forward to the transcendent horizon towards which human affections are designed to be attracted.

The happy life remembered in Adam is itself inseparable from God, the enduring source of beatitude himself. Augustine sees that God the Trinity is in his memory now but believes there was a time when this was not the case. The learning, whereby God came to be in his memory, began both with the fact of God’s transcendence and with the reality of his inner presence.⁸² But God only came to be loved in memory and dwelt upon through God’s mercy, charity and grace. It is this divine initiative which finally trumps and excludes a dependence on personal virtue for the purpose of epistemological stability and underpins conversion and an

⁸¹ *ibid.* 10.xxi.30

⁸² *ibid.* 10.xxv.36-10.xxvii.38

affective reorientation away from stubbornness and into enduring, truthful, affective understanding, the subjective experience that coincides with the objective salvation of the ungodly. The stability of the moral order into which this affective recognition draws us is itself ultimately dependent on the deeper stability of the Trinitarian Orderer and Redeemer by whom that moral order was vindicated, in whom it is sustained and into whom we are drawn in affective recognition as He takes his place in our memories. Affective recognition of him as the One-in-Three and the goods he works in our personal, communal and global salvation histories is the ultimate in enduring affective epistemology.⁸³

To recognise value in God and his works is to be drawn into reflection and deliberation within a moral order which fulfils and transcends the past and present in the eschatological future of the new heaven and the new earth, the Christological vindication of the created order. To be drawn affectively by the Holy Spirit into participation in this new order is to begin the eternal life of worshipful reflection, deliberation and action. Thus, in this highly peculiar sense, in being called to remember God, creatures are called to remember their future as disclosed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

⁸³ Augustine's path to affective stability was only via his attempts at Neo-Platonic ascent which aimed at participation in the life of the One. Through these he sought to escape the apparent mutability of earthly things to find rest in the immaterial alone. However, though by his efforts he gained access to the half-light 'in ictu trepidantis aspectus', he did not possess the strength to give himself stability (ibid. 7.xvii.23). Though able to remember stability in love through his ascent, he could only have the ongoing experience of stability in dependence on Christ the Mediator between darkness and light (ibid. xviii.24; cf. *City of God*, 9.10ff).

Section III: Affections and the end

Our discussion of how affections, as the beginnings of understanding, come to endure through participation in pristine, fallen and new creation has laid the groundwork for showing the interconnection of eschatology and affections. By blending elements of the Augustinian account of memory with a latter day Augustinian's account of moral order vindicated in Christ, we have now enriched Lacoste's thesis by stabilising affective recognition in a creational *and* eschatological conception. To elucidate this conception, we now need to return to the matters left unresolved at the end of the first section and answer two sets of questions which relate to how affections concern the ends of our understandings as well as their beginnings.

(1) If affections are the beginnings of understanding, focussed on and attracted by particular values, then how do they relate both to the full range of values in which the moral order consists and to the eschatological end foreshadowed by God's vindication of Christ in the resurrection which in turn vindicates the whole moral order and points towards its fulfilment in the new creation? Such an end has the quality of supremely integrating all that is good. How might affections recognise this end? Might the answer to these questions enable a clearer description of the endurance of affections at the beginnings of reflection and deliberation? (2) On the basis of our answers to (1), how might we account for the intuition, lurking in the preceding discussion, that affections not only characterise the beginnings of practical reasoning but also permeate and conclude such reasoning? Without retreating from our insistence on the initiatory role of affection we must also enquire how affections

seem also to have a conclusive quality, supervening on the end of trains of reasoning or following from some previous knowledge. Such a movement certainly accords with the pattern which we hypothesised at the outset, namely that affection initiates reflection and deliberation leading to action which in turn leads to further affection initiating further moral reasoning.

Jonathan Edwards: excellency and affections

To address these matters, we now turn to Jonathan Edwards, a move which requires some justification and comment. Edwards' unique position as the most authoritative Protestant thinker concerning the affections makes him an important conversation partner in any theological discussion of the topic. His writings on affections arose from his historical concern with the revivalist movement known as the Great Awakening. In that context Edwards gave a particularly evangelical twist to the widespread eighteenth century interest in subjectivity. In so doing he made a leading Christian contribution to questions which have followed from that subjective turn and which still occupy us today, most notably the relationship between the interior life of an individual and the community of which she is a member. Nonetheless, an interest in Edwards will strike some as essentially irrelevant to our concerns in this thesis. For in *Religious Affections* and *The Nature of True Virtue*, the account of affections focuses almost entirely on those professing Christian faith. Affections are described as distinguishing signs of the Holy Spirit's work within the lives of particular believers. But our discussion of affections has largely not distinguished sharply between Christian believers and unbelievers although it has appealed to a

distinction between orders of value and the created moral order vindicated in Christ. In contrast to these wider concerns Edwards' interest seems purely pious and his account distant from the questions to which our enquiry tends, especially in their political form.

This objection will not stand chiefly because the affections of Christians are not, from a theological perspective, irrelevant to morality in general and to the life of political societies at large. Rather, to consider Spirit-inspired affective recognition of the moral order vindicated in Jesus Christ is to focus on the heart of the human experience rather than on a private clique. To claim this by no means suggests that Edwards' thoughts on the matter will be received uncritically. Indeed, in what follows, his affective epistemology will be seriously challenged while his doctrine of 'excellency' – consisting in an account of the 'association' and 'differentiation' within God and, distinctly though dependently, within his created pluriform reality – will be substantially modified to explain how affections are both at the beginning and the end of understanding.

We consider first the doctrine of 'excellency'. Edwards held that everything that exists, including God, is fundamentally relational and can only be understood fully if examined in terms of the differentiation and association of its constituent parts. Harmony consists in the 'consent' of these parts which are 'distinguished into a plurality some way or other.'⁸⁴ The agreement or consent of one aspect of differentiated reality with another is what Edwards called 'excellency'. God is relational and exists in the perfect agreement of excellency with himself in the Trinity. God has set this active relationality within creation itself so that all reality is

⁸⁴ Edwards, J., *The Mind*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 6: Scientific and Philosophical Writings*, Anderson (ed.), Yale University Press, 1980, 337

excellent in so far as its constituent parts are both differentiated from and harmoniously associated with each other. Human consciousness, when it engages properly in this God and this world, perceives an object's harmonious agreement within itself and with other entities, and envisages appropriate action towards that object. A key element of that consciousness is affective, arising from 'the sense of the heart'. Edwards holds that it coheres with this that the harmonious identity or agreement of all things is the fundamental principle and goal of *divine* consciousness and activity and so should also be the fundamental principle and goal of *human* consciousness and activity.⁸⁵

The ability of man to perceive harmonious differentiation and association is dependent on the nature of his mind. Edwards claims that there are two faculties in man, understanding and inclination (or will). The exact nature of their complex interrelation is not entirely apparent in Edwards' analysis but the following points are clear. The understanding is 'capable of perception and speculation' while the inclination (will) is the way the soul of a man 'is inclined with respect to the things it views or considers.'⁸⁶ Affections have a physiological aspect to them as changes in 'the motion of the blood and animal spirits'⁸⁷ and are the more vigorous exercises of the inclination either approving (accepting) or disapproving (rejecting) some object. Crucially, the inclination does not do this apart from the understanding. Indeed affections – vigorous inclinations – are expressed through the understanding. This union of understanding and inclination in affection is what Edwards means by the

⁸⁵ *ibid.* 332ff: 'This is the universal definition of excellency: The consent of being to being, or being's consent to entity. The more the consent is, the more extensive, the greater is the excellency.' (336) 'One alone, without any reference to any more, cannot be excellent; for in such a case there can be no manner of relation no way, and therefore, no such thing as consent.' (337) For commentary, see Daniel, S.H., 'Edwards as philosopher', Stein (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, CUP, 2007, 163ff

⁸⁶ Edwards, J., *Religious Affections*, in *The Works Vol. 2*, Smith (ed.), Yale University Press, 1959, 97

⁸⁷ *ibid.* 96

'heart'. Vigorous inclinations (affections) may eventually lead out to action and thus Edwards considers affections the springs of action.

Thus although two faculties are named by Edwards, his proposal is that the two are inseparable and that the affections are the demonstration of the manner in which they are united. Like LeDoux, Edwards is unwilling to carve up the mind into functional pieces. The affections disclose the inclined understandings which are the heart of a man by leading him to certain actions, the actions towards which the heart is inclined.⁸⁸ In addition, the Christian has the sense of the heart, a new foundation (not an extra faculty) laid in the soul by the Holy Spirit, which should approve and be attracted towards the harmonious relation of all things. The sense of the heart is truly expressed in a Christian's holy affections which, when worked out in holy practice, are the substance of true religion. Truly spiritual affections approve or disapprove of, incline or disincline towards objects, precisely in relation to whether those objects are interacting harmoniously by differentiation and association and are tending towards the excellency of agreement or consent. These affections arise as inclinations of the mind as it perceives and is drawn in affection towards God and creation in their respective differentiation and association.

This is of the essence of Edwards' epistemology for

Unless [the beauty of holiness] is seen, nothing is seen, that is worth the seeing: for there is no other true excellency or beauty. Unless this be understood, nothing is understood, that is worthy of the exercise of the noble faculty of understanding.⁸⁹

Daniel interprets Edwards as saying that

⁸⁸ *ibid.* 95ff

⁸⁹ *ibid.* 274

To the extent that a created mind perceives something without understanding how it fits within the divine economy, it does not really perceive that thing at all. To the extent that a mind fails to appreciate the order and harmony of things – and therefore the way in which things are differentiated and associated – it fails even to be a mind.⁹⁰

Thus the Christian mind is characterised by a sense of the heart which issues in holy affections which arise from right understanding and incline to objects in relation to the excellency for which they are intended by God. The affections approve or disapprove depending on whether they encounter agreement or disagreement, consent or lack of consent to excellency in the interrelation of the objects they consider. Affections and agency are also intertwined since, on account of the attractiveness of the excellency of harmony, this approval or disapproval has a motive quality whereby holy affections are springs of action which incline the whole man to holy practice, an active attraction to the good and the right and an aversion from evil and wrong, the sure evidences that the affections are truly holy.

Edwards believes that this sense of the heart, by which affections arise, has considerable competence in moral epistemology. It is a taste ‘which relishes the sweetness of true moral good, tastes the bitterness of moral evil’.⁹¹ By the power of the Spirit, it ‘enables the soul to see the glory of those things which the gospel reveals concerning the person of Christ’ and ‘discerns the beauty of every part of the gospel scheme.’⁹² Thus the Christian’s affections enable high quality understanding which bears considerably on her actions. For the Holy Spirit’s instruction ‘consists in a person’s being guided by a spiritual and distinguishing taste of that which has in it true moral beauty’ and ‘this holy relish is a thing that discerns and distinguishes between good and evil, between holy and unholy, without being at the trouble of a

⁹⁰ Daniel, S.H., ‘Edwards as philosopher’, 169

⁹¹ Edwards, J., *Religious Affections*, 301

⁹² *ibid.* 302

train of reasoning' so that when 'a holy and amiable action is suggested to the thoughts of a holy soul; that soul, if in the lively exercise of its spiritual taste, at once sees a beauty in it, and so inclines to it, and closes with it.'⁹³

On this account, immediacy of affective understanding is at one with an immediate affective inclination to action. For the possessor of such holy affections, there is no necessity for an exercise of moral reflection whereby the good is painstakingly penetrated and described or, indeed, for moral deliberation whereby right action is considered at any length prior to decision. Rather, Edwards compares the activity of the sense of the heart with grasping an object's beautiful proportions or the balanced arrangement in a piece of music. The moral decision which accords with excellency is judged 'spontaneously...without a particular deduction, by any other arguments than the beauty that is seen, and goodness that is tasted.'⁹⁴ Edwards thus envisages a kind of perceptual immediacy about the good and the right in all affairs as they are rooted in the gospel:

a soul may have a kind of intuitive knowledge of the divinity of the things exhibited in the gospel; not that he judges the doctrines of the gospel to be from God, without any argument or deduction at all; but it is without any long chain of arguments; the argument is but one, and the evidence direct; the mind ascends to the truth of the gospel but by one step, and that is its divine glory.⁹⁵

In this instance, Edwards does speak of argument but then defines that argument in terms of a single movement from evidence to conclusion. The soul thus comes easily and quickly to the divine excellencies of the gospel which is the central form of the excellencies of all things since it reveals the glory of God to man. It is from this glorious gospel that Edwards' account of goodness in general and rightness of moral

⁹³ *ibid.* 281

⁹⁴ *ibid.* 282

⁹⁵ *ibid.* 298-9

action proceeds. The ‘view of this divine glory’ entails a moral vision of the interrelation of the good much like ‘when the light of the sun is cast upon’ the earth rather than under a ‘dim star light, or twilight.’⁹⁶ Thus, beginning from the gospel itself, affections have a tremendous epistemological competence to perceive the excellency of all things, the good and the right included.

There seems to be but one qualification of this extraordinary spiritual and practical competence which Christians are said to possess. Having compared spiritual taste’s facility concerning the good and the right to the force of gravity by which a stone falls directly downwards to its goal, Edwards qualifies this by saying that taste, although it does not work by a constant checking with the express and particular rules of the Word of God, yet is *generally* subject to the rules of God’s Word and so ‘must be tried by that, and a right reasoning upon it.’⁹⁷ He goes on to say that ‘a spiritual taste of soul, mightily helps the soul, in its reasonings on the Word of God, and in judging of the true meaning of its rules’ and does so by removing prejudices and ‘naturally’ taking thoughts into the ‘right channel’.⁹⁸ Thus the moral thought of the Scriptures come easily and naturally to mind because there is a harmonious relation between the will of God and the souls of the Christians. In this way, Edwards gestures towards moral reflection and deliberation but does not seem to think that it will require any great length of time or exertion of effort. There is very little expectation in his mind that Christians led by the Spirit might have to go through a long chain of moral reasoning, reflection and deliberation concerning the right meaning and application of the ‘rules’ of God in relation to the goodness and excellency revealed in the gospel.

⁹⁶ *ibid.* 307-8

⁹⁷ *ibid.* 284

⁹⁸ *ibid.* 285

Commentary and assessment

Edwards' remarkable account brings a conceptual benefit, arising from his doctrine of excellency, association and differentiation, to our enquiry concerning the way that affections are at the end of moral understanding, though it also has a serious deficiency which concerns the immediateness of accurate, moral perception which he ascribes to the affections. Let us take the benefit first. Our thesis has so far argued that human affections are initial recognitions of value in the world as it appears which is in more or less close agreement with the world as it is in Christ and that these affections may endure by the power of memory. The two sets of questions we posed at the start of this section may now be addressed through Edwards' account of how human consciousness perceives universal, creational harmony by differentiation and association.

In answer to (1), we claim that affections are able to recognise values as first ethical facts precisely in their differentiation from and association with a multiplicity of other values interrelated in the totality of the moral order as it is and as it will be in Christ. These are the beginnings of ethical reasoning which reach out towards their end in the sense that they recognise the way that any particular valuable object stands in relation to objects of the same kind with their teleology, to objects of different kinds with their teleologies and, if the affection is Christian, to the goal of all kinds within creation, new creation and the Christ in whom all things hold together. The connection of the value to the wider moral order is the movement which lends to affection its conclusive quality. Interpreting the vindicated moral order in terms of

Edwards' doctrine of excellency is a significant step for our thesis, enabling us to describe enduring affective participation in that order with greater clarity. The pattern of differentiation and association lends to the moral order an objective, dynamic aesthetic and a subjective, attracted relation to that aesthetic. The different kinds with their different teleologies are designed to be differentiated and associated with each other in harmony. However, the thoroughgoing nature of the Fall has brought disharmony into the structure of the moral order and especially into human creatures. Such disruption, though severe, does not prevent the possibility of human recognition of the way that the moral order is designed for differentiation and association. Thus, when we ask how humans are intended to participate mentally in the moral order as a whole, we answer that we participate through differentiation and association.

On this thesis, affections are pre-reflective recognitions of an object, with its generic and teleological definition, in association with the moral order's overall shape (*gestalt*) and goal. For example, a mother might be drawn in sorrowful recognition to the poor condition of another mother's sickly child, construing the sickness in terms of her own similar child, the children's common good of health; if Christian, the affection might also construe sickness in terms of the Kingdom of God where sickness is no more. Sickness is not harmoniously associated with the excellent beauty of all things and is not the proper condition for a member of the human *genus*. And sickness is a proper focus for a negative affective understanding such as sorrow or even hate. Or again, hate might grasp the injustice of sex slavery and trafficking both in relation to the excellency of a properly ordered society and, if Christian, in relation to the eschatological freedom of the children of God. Or again,

a father might joyfully recognise the marriage of his son both in relation to his own marriage and, if Christian, in relation to the marriage feast of the Lamb. Finally, a group of citizens might recognise in wonder, joy and sorrow their elected leader both in terms of the might of his office, the excellencies of his plans to do justice and, if Christian, in terms of the pale reflection of his rule to the coming Kingdom.

These affective recognitions do not afford a comprehensive account of a complete system of differentiation and association. Rather, they are construals of one thing with respect to something else within the teleologically, generically and, when Christian, eschatologically defined moral order. In the case of sorrow or hate, they are initial and limited observation that things are not as good as they might be. Whether or not the objects of sorrow or hate are correctly recognised depends on the extent of correlation, in a person or social organism, between memory, an order of value and the moral order as it is in Christ. The negative affections of sorrow and hate place together some of the jigsaw pieces of reality in a way which will make reflection and deliberation about action possible. It attends both to the fact that the pieces should fit together and to the reality that, in their present arrangement, they do not. The positive emotions of joy and wonder see shadowy reflections of the fit between how things are, how things ought to be and how they will be in Christ. Joy might also accompany sorrow and hate, construing the object of affection in the hopeful terms of the perfected (eschatological) excellency to come thereby altering the way the negative affections are expressed. A sorrowful understanding of a convict's current condition might be accompanied by joy in the man's redeemed future made possible by God's grace. This creational-eschatological approach opens up the possibility of a sophisticated accounting for a plurality of affections towards

the same object, the conceptual lacuna in modern political thought which we noted in chapter one.⁹⁹ As we will see in chapter three, multiple affections may be structured together through forms of institutional life in political society in such a way as to stabilise and potentially regularise a range of affective understandings of similar objects over time.

The overarching point is that whatever affective recognition or recognitions occur, the object of the recognition will be in some way associated with and differentiated from *both* the pluriform range of goods which constitutes the goodness of creation *and* the good Creator who authors and sustains all good. Christian affections recognise the concordant and discordant relations which exist between things in the differentiated, associated, divinely created moral order and between that order and its Maker. The affections of the unbeliever may also by general revelation be drawn in these directions as he remembers the *beata vita* of long ago, meditates on the creation now and longs for a better life. But for the unbeliever, unable to perceive the significance of Christ, the resources for the activity of association and differentiation in the moral order are found in the shared order of values offered by his community as an interpretation of the world as it is, in the albeit inchoate memory of the blessed life which all desire and in the shadowy forms of the vindicated moral order which she may perceive around her. But the Christian believer is conscious that the moral order has an explicitly creational and eschatological form in that the resurrection of Christ is the firstfruits of the fulfilment of that order which has directed attention to its ultimate fulfilment in the new heaven and the new earth. Christian affective recognitions perceive present values in terms

⁹⁹ Markell, P., 'Making Affect Safe for Democracy?: On "Constitutional Patriotism"', 54

of this creational-eschatological shape of associated-differentiated life, the pluriform order of mutual relations held together in Christ.

With these observations in mind, we may now address again the question of enduring affections. Stable, enduring affections depend on memory as argued above. Our memory of life within the world is full of patterns of differentiation and association which we have received, consciously and unconsciously, through our affections. Our memories therefore contain an affective awareness, whether accurate or inaccurate, of how the objects we have experienced approximated to the excellency for which they are intended. Our enduring affections, rooted in these memories, are thus stabilised through attraction into the internal structure of the established moral order and attraction towards the moral order's goal. In this way, the beginnings of understanding, attracted into the associated-differentiated moral order, share in the stable steadiness of the moral order's current harmony and future peace. The enduring quality of affection as a beginning of understanding depends on the memory of the integrated shape of the moral order.

Two interrelated ways of answering (2) follow from our response to (1). On the one hand, affections have a conclusive quality to them precisely because, as discussed, they recognise the goodly shape of the end while yet at the beginning. However, although the sorrow of a mother for a sickly child may grasp in a moment the healthy future the child should have, there remains the task of reflection and deliberation, the often long and hard task of practical reason, sleepless nights and thoughtful action. Affection runs ahead without taking in the complexity of operations, nutritional decisions and ongoing therapy but seeking to grasp the end which is the good of health. In running ahead, affections by no means render

reflection and deliberation irrelevant but rather do not attempt to do that for which they are not fitted. This is a normal feature of creaturely life and does not require, for its justification, any particular appeal to special revelation.

On the other hand, there is the case when affection truly does supervene at the end of a train of reasoning and practical action. The child's complex health needs have been painstakingly explored, deliberated over and resolved. All that remains, it appears, is a joy which is not a beginning reaching forward to a conclusion but is itself a conclusion, which perceives aright the fitting harmony which now exists in the child's body. Although this is how joy within the world may appear, according to Christian eschatology such joy is not a conclusion, properly speaking. For this joy – though in some measure right and proper – is still provisional and unstable. It is an understanding of the goodness of the child's current health which will need to be reconsidered in light of subsequent developments and changes during the course of her life. Just like the applause of audience members who have mistaken a moment's rest between movements for the end of a musical performance, an eschatologically over-realised joy in recovered health fails to perceive itself as a provisional judgment on value. Such joy is, in truth, both an end and a beginning, as all provisional judgments must be. Though our intuitions about affection may suggest otherwise, affections are never complete conclusions in this life (except in fairy tales). They remain, to a significant extent, beginnings which offer a path to further reflective and deliberative activities. Thus, when Lacoste described the penury of affection, he spoke better than philosophy alone can know – though perhaps Lacoste also knew this. Christian eschatology frames the penury of affection in terms of its provisionality as a way of understanding the world in light of the gospel of the Christ

who became penurious to make many rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). Jesus entered into the provisionality of human understanding in order that humanity might come to share in the riches of complete understanding, the genuine joy based on the truth which will characterise those who together worship God in His kingdom.

The provisionality of joy with respect to a child's health is but one example of the overall provisionality of knowledge in the world, even explicitly theological knowledge. When unbelievers or Christians say that they rejoice *because* they *know* that their spouse or God loves them, these seem clear cases of affection following prior understanding or knowledge rather than initiating it. The *causal* connection between the *knowledge* and the affection seems to indicate a chronological sequence whereby affection only enters in at the end and not at the beginning. These appearances are only partially misleading. It is the case that affection follows from an awareness of some value-laden reality and that the awakening to that reality is in an important sense the *cause* of the affection since the reality awakens and attracts the affective understanding. However, there is also a deceptive dimension to these appearances. For the causal link is not akin to scientific cause and effect. Instead, the causal link explains the reason for the affection in the sense of the attractive feature of reality which the affection evaluates. Understanding only genuinely begins when the attracted, cognitive affection receives the reality with which it is presented. Other forms of knowing may precede affection – the gathering of information, for example – but not the understanding which begins to perceive the value of that in which it participates and which is followed by reflection and deliberation leading on to further affective understanding. Affection's quality as the beginning of understanding continually preserves our awareness that our knowledge is at present provisional and

always in need of deepening participation in the created order and in Christ in whom all things hold together now and forever.

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Despite the benefit which Edwards' writings bestow, there is a serious deficiency in his approach. Addressing the deficiency is important both because of Edwards' significant influence in the tradition of (especially Protestant) Christian reflection on the affective dimension of life and because it shows an unhelpful alternative to our own account of the relation between eschatology and affections.

The deficiency is his belief that the perceptual understanding which is characteristic of the Christian sense of the heart (spiritual taste) not only provides an excellent view of the good, the excellent interrelation of all things, but also minimises or eliminates the need for moral reflection about the good and for deliberation about right courses of action. Affection closes 'at once' with right action, we are confidently told.¹⁰⁰ No doubt there are some circumstances where clarity about right action rapidly follows affective understanding as when affective recognition of an aggressive enemy leads us quickly to flee, fight or turn the other cheek. However, it seems *experimentally* true, following Edwards' own method of observation of Christian practice,¹⁰¹ not only that Christians generally do not have Edwards' perceptual immediacy about the excellent mutual relations of all things but also that deliberation about what it is right to do is normally very necessary for Christians. Although, in the aftermath of the Fall and God's work of redemption, the

¹⁰⁰ Edwards, J. *Religious Affections*, 281

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* 452

presence of the Holy Spirit in the believer certainly raises the capacity for inclined understanding towards excellency, yet the Scriptures furnish us with clear demonstrations about the continuing obscurity which clouds the minds of believers.

Concerning the good end of man, Christians know from Paul that ‘now we see in a mirror dimly’ (1 Corinthians 13:12) and from John that ‘what we will be has not yet appeared’ (1 John 3:2). What Christians *will* see is God, the author of goodness who alone is Good, but this is not yet; when Christians do appear, they *will* be like Christ, their supreme good, but this is yet to come. Concerning the right, we see that the early church in Acts and as depicted in the epistles is replete with confusion over what followers of Christ ought to be doing, whether it be the controversy between Paul and Peter at Antioch (Galatians 2:11ff) or the continual disagreements between Paul and his churches over their way of life (e.g. 1 Corinthians). Christians are not represented as immediately grasping the good and the right as Edwards seems to think possible. As opposed to our penurious account, Edwards offers an over-realised eschatology of the affections.

It seems that the reason behind Edwards’ tendency in this direction lies in his description of the interrelation of understanding, inclination and affections. Although, as we have seen, Edwards often seems to equate affection with a certain spiritual taste or understanding, at other times, he holds that affections ‘arise from’, ‘flow from’ or ‘proceed’ from instruction, knowledge, understanding or conviction. For example, affections ‘arise from those influences and operations of the heart, which are *spiritual, supernatural and divine*’.¹⁰² Elsewhere he explains that holy affections ‘arise from some information of the understanding, some spiritual

¹⁰² *ibid.* 197

instruction which the mind receives, some light or actual knowledge’,¹⁰³ that they ‘arise from some instruction or light in the understanding’;¹⁰⁴ or again, that they ‘arise from a strong persuasion of the truth of the Christian religion’¹⁰⁵ and that ‘[t]ruly spiritual and gracious affections...arise from the enlightening of the understanding [which understands] the things that are taught of God and Christ’.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, unholy affections ‘arise from ignorance’.¹⁰⁷ Alternatively Edwards sometimes uses the language of flowing or proceeding: ‘[b]ut yet such convictions are sometimes mistaken, for saving convictions, and the affections flowing from ’em, for saving affections’;¹⁰⁸ affections may ‘flow from’ a false conviction;¹⁰⁹ or again, this ‘sort of understanding or knowledge is that knowledge of divine things from whence all truly gracious affections do proceed: by which therefore all affections are to be tried.’¹¹⁰

These descriptions indicate an ambivalence in Edwards’ account of affections which coheres with his self-confessed lack of linguistic and conceptual clarity about the relation of understanding and inclination.¹¹¹ Affections are, according to Edwards, matters of the inclination which involve heart, mind and will. The inclination is informed through the understanding and, inasmuch as the affections approve or disapprove of what the understanding discovers, the inclination is inseparable from the understanding. This seems to indicate that affections themselves should definitely be classed as “understandings”. However, Edwards does not seem

¹⁰³ *ibid.* 266

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.* 269

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.* 295

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.* 268

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.* 269

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.* 309

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.* 295

¹¹⁰ *ibid.* 275

¹¹¹ *ibid.* 97: ‘language is here somewhat imperfect, and the meaning of words in a considerable measure loose and unfix’d, and not precisely limited by custom’.

wholly committed to this as shown by the fact that he does not reflect at any length on what *kind* or *quality* of understandings they might be. As sensations of the mind they relish or disrelish, they approve or disapprove; this seems to indicate that they are some form of understanding. However, the language of ‘arising from’, ‘flowing from’ or ‘proceeding from’ seems to indicate that affection is a secondary feature of morality which *follows* from understanding and does not constitute it.

Edwards’ claim that the sense of the heart itself has a direct sensible perception of the beauty of the moral excellence of all things is intended to clarify the matter.¹¹² In describing the sense of the heart in this way, Edwards was rightly seeking to overcome the tiresome, confusing and unscriptural opposition between “head” and “heart”. In doing so he redefines spiritual understanding ‘as a *sensible* light involving direct sensible perception and the inclination of the heart.’¹¹³ What is surprising is that Edwards does not go on to argue that affections are themselves *a certain kind of understanding which inclines* the agent in some active direction. There remains a vagueness in the connection between affection and understanding. Edwards humbly recognises this vagueness in his closing comment that ‘we can see but a little way into the nature of the soul, and the depths of men’s hearts.’¹¹⁴ Indeed, one wants to agree heartily that much must remain a mystery in this area of study.

However, there seems to be a connection between the lack of emphasis on reflection and deliberation and Edwards’ failure definitively to class affections as forms of understanding and explore critically what kind of understanding they might be. The issue is strikingly illustrated in Edwards’ interpretation and use of Romans 12:2 which he renders as ‘ye may prove what is that good, and perfect, and

¹¹² *ibid.* 271; the sense of the heart is also known as the ‘spiritual understanding’ or ‘spiritual sense’.

¹¹³ *ibid.* Editor’s introduction 33

¹¹⁴ *ibid.* 460

acceptable will of God'.¹¹⁵ The translation 'prove', indicating certainty and definition, is significant in the context since the verse stands at the head of Edwards' systematic account of spiritual taste which precisely does not involve extensive moral reasoning but is accurate in proving natural and spiritual excellence. However, this translation and meaning is by no means uncontroversial. Bauer equivocates uncertainly between two possible meanings for *dokimazo* (δοκιμάζω) in Romans 12:2: either it means 'approve',¹¹⁶ in the sense of immediate acceptance (i.e. in accord with Edwards), or it means 'put to the test', 'examine', 'discover' or 'try to learn'.¹¹⁷ The latter meaning invites us to understand the renewing of the mind as essentially reflective and deliberative and is paralleled well at Ephesians 5:10, in the context of another section of Pauline paranses, where a good translation seems to be 'try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord'.¹¹⁸

The overall emphasis of this second translation option is on *discovery* rather than direct, non-reflective, non-deliberative approval.¹¹⁹ If the sense of 'reflective, deliberative discovery' is preferred, then this throws into question the account of taste which Edwards has been advancing. The context of Romans 12:2 suggests an emphasis on discovery since Romans 12:3, continuing the same line of thought from the first two verses, calls us to *phronein eis to sophronein* (φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν) or, to think *towards* right thinking. In O'Donovan's words:

This practical thinking is not immediate and intuitive; it is extended and leads to a conclusion, as is indicated by two parallel phrases constructed with the preposition

¹¹⁵ *ibid.* 282

¹¹⁶ Bauer, W., *A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature*, Arndt, W.F., and Gingrich, F.W., CUP, 1952, 201

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* 201

¹¹⁸ 'euaireston' (εὐαίρεστον) appears in both passages and this further suggests a commonality between the two Pauline thoughts.

¹¹⁹ Many modern translations include both meanings and have 'test and approve'; the English Standard Version does well with 'by testing you may discern'.

“to” or “towards”. The mind is renewed “towards” the discernment of God’s will; they are to “think towards thinking judiciously”.¹²⁰

Reflection and deliberation seem to be at the centre of Paul’s injunction here rather than an immediacy of total moral perception. But in Edwards’ account holy affections, as expressions of ‘divine taste’, go straight to the ‘true spiritual and holy beauty of actions’.¹²¹ This move, short-circuiting reflection and deliberation, renders superfluous any discussion of whether one’s own or others’ affections have *rightly* inclined towards an action.

Excursus

An objector might point to the twelfth sign of truly gracious affections to suggest that intersubjective discussion of affections is possible and important for Edwards. For in that discussion, one form of the Christian profession by which others may judge the honesty of the profession is said to be the professor’s report of his inner state which includes reference to his ‘misery’, ‘full conviction and sense of [Christ’s] sufficiency and perfect excellency as a savior’ and ‘general benevolence to mankind’, all of which seem to be affective.¹²² Moreover professors might report that ‘they do joyfully entertain the gospel of Christ’, ‘that they rejoice in [Jesus] as their only righteousness and portion’ and that they ‘have a willingness of heart to embrace religion with all its difficulties.’¹²³ This might seem to indicate that Edwards thought that discussing affections was worthwhile and practicable.

¹²⁰ Cf. O’Donovan, O., *Morally awake? Admiration and resolution in the light of Christian faith*, Lecture 3, ‘Resolving’; cf. Wannewetsch, B., *Political Worship*, trans. Kohl, M., OUP, 2004, 37ff where a similar argument about Romans 12:1ff and renewal of moral understanding is made.

¹²¹ Edwards, J., *Religious Affections*, 283

¹²² *ibid.* 416-7

¹²³ *ibid.* 415

However, this is not so since the uses to which these reports are put are highly limited and are stated in somewhat circumspect language. Edwards says that such communications ‘may give advantage in forming a judgment’ and function to rule out certain possibilities such as that the profession is made ‘from mere customary compliance’.¹²⁴ The reason why the communicability of affections as reports *to others* of one’s spiritual experiences is downplayed is that Edwards believes that, in deciding whether or not to accept someone in charity as a brother, we should consider not affections but the fruit of affections in good works.¹²⁵ The counterpoint to this is that one’s own affections may be a great comfort and assurance to oneself in one’s conscience but are not of great practical significance to others.¹²⁶ Thus the communicability of affections in Edwards has very minimal significance in the active, common life of the community. He has minimised the value of public communication of affection in favour of private experience.¹²⁷ My argument has been that, were Edwards to have conceived affections as a certain kind of cognition which does not necessarily have an immediate and clear perception both

¹²⁴ *ibid.* 417

¹²⁵ *ibid.* 408. Edwards’ goal in focussing on external works was to oppose the contemporary practice of insisting, for reception to church membership, on precise accounts of ‘the distinct method and steps, wherein the Spirit of God did sensibly proceed’. (*ibid.* 418) With respect to the particular question of the grounds on which someone should be received in charity as a member of the church, I am happy to agree with Edwards. The Scriptures again and again emphasise works as the public sign of effectual grace received by faith and Edwards is absolutely right to draw this out and equally right to deny that this implies justification by works, the Second Temple soteriological confusion and perpetual temptation of mankind which the apostle Paul so intelligently rejected. (Cf. Gathercole, S., *Where is Boasting? : Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul’s Response in Romans 1-5*, Eerdmans, 2002.) An interesting extension of this research would concern the interconnection of justification by faith and affective understanding especially in relation to boasting. The interconnectedness of grace, faith and affection will be developed in chapter five but deserves more thorough treatment in the future.

¹²⁶ Edwards, J., *Religious Affections*, 420-5

¹²⁷ This is not to say that affections might not be publicly expressed in word or other form though Edwards is at some times ambivalent towards such expressions as inconclusive and not of the essence of holy affections (*ibid.* 127ff), at others not particularly interested in them and at others mildly scornful of them: ‘Persons in a pang of affection may think they have a willingness of heart for great things, to do much and to suffer much, and so may profess it very earnestly and confidently; when really their hearts are far from it...Passing affections easily produce words; and words are cheap; and godliness is more easily feigned in words than in actions.’ (*ibid.* 411)

of the good in general and specific right courses of action, he might have thought differently about the significance of the communicability of affections.

The deepest problem with Edwards' epistemology seems to be a latent quasi-Aristotelian sub-structure which guides key passages. One such is his elaboration of spiritual taste, a thing 'given and maintained by the Spirit of God, in the hearts of the saints, whereby they are...led and guided in discerning and distinguishing the true spiritual and holy beauty of actions'.¹²⁸ In order to illustrate the nature of spiritual taste, Edwards describes a natural (i.e. not experiencing saving grace) but virtuous man in terms which would be instantly recognisable by many Aristotelians. The man's 'good nature' teaches him how to act on every occasion; there is a 'habit of mind' which directs him which is then exercised by a taste of what it is right to do and which distinguishes 'in a moment, more precisely, than the most accurate reasonings can find out in many hours.'¹²⁹

This natural virtuous man's understanding is compared to a stone dropping by the force of gravity directly downwards to its goal, without the need or even the possibility of delay or deviation.¹³⁰ The suggestion is that it is the good nature or virtue of this virtuous man which enables knowledge of the precise course of action which conforms with excellency. Reverting again to the specifically *Christian* virtuous man we learn from *The Nature of True Virtue* that '[t]rue virtue most essentially consists in benevolence to Being in general. Or perhaps to speak more accurately, it is that consent, propensity and union of heart to Being in general, that is

¹²⁸ *ibid.* 283

¹²⁹ *ibid.* 284

¹³⁰ *ibid.* 283-4

immediately exercised in a general good will.’¹³¹ Edwards thus defines benevolence as the union of the heart between the subject and this object with affections arising directly or ‘immediately’ from this general benevolence.

Moreover, unlike Aristotle, whose disjointed account of virtue and feeling was discussed above, Edwards thoroughly integrates virtue and affection and argues that all holy affections flow directly out of the prior virtuous benevolence. Affections are given no way to arise except through the *virtuous* mind of the agent, albeit made virtuous by the Spirit of God. Edwards’ latent Aristotelianism seems then to be the root cause of the combined difficulties of epistemological immediacy and vague conceptualisation concerning the affections. For holy, epistemologically accurate affection seems to be the natural overflow of the virtuous man. We have said enough already about the dangers of virtue epistemology to see the problems with this approach. An epistemology whereby reflection and deliberation are as unnecessary to a man as multiple options for downwards movement are to a stone falling to the earth without obstruction will quell the revelatory power of affection, make reflection and deliberation irrelevant and invite a stagnant self-coincidence.

Moreover, as Martha Nussbaum has pointed out, such Aristotelian-type thinking might even be taken in a more sinister direction. Nussbaum develops a forceful criticism of Aristotle’s ethics by showing how it promotes a continuous, merciless surveillance of agency whereby every motive and passion must be interrogated to see if it conduces to *eudaimonia*. Though Edwards is alert to the risks attendant on judging holiness by overt affections, his epistemology relies on a certain moral perfectionism that would fuel a self-reflexive surveillance culture. Nussbaum,

¹³¹ Edwards, J., *The Nature of True Virtue*, in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 8: Ethical Writings*, Ramsey (ed.), Yale University Press, 1989, 540

drawing on the importance of the experience of infancy when a *merciful* holding by primary care-givers is of the essence of development into mature emotional interdependence, argues that only an ethic which has explicit room for a ‘merciful willingness to cease interrogating oneself about the appropriateness of one’s motives and passions’ will enable healthy personal, social and political emotions. The criticism is focussed against an ethics of perfection which, like a relentlessly demanding father, tyrannically ignores human neediness, fragility and emotional ambivalence.¹³² Though we will have occasion to challenge some of Nussbaum’s own insights, her criticism of Aristotle certainly hits the mark.

While it is right to make these critical observations about Edwards’ well-intentioned and aesthetically pleasing affective epistemology, we should also observe the significant convergence of Edwards’ account with the more modest and merciful approach to affections developed here. It comes through Edwards’ appeal to Christian eschatology:

The love and joy of the saints on earth, is the beginning and dawning of the light, life, and blessedness of heaven, and is like their love and joy there; or rather, the same in nature, though not the same with it, or like to it, in degree and circumstances.¹³³

Lacoste’s description of affections as the half-light of ethics parallels Edwards’ distinction between the dawn in this present era and the full light of heaven to come. The difference in light between earthly and heavenly affections is one of degree. However, as has been shown, Edwards has ascribed such a high degree of epistemological competence to earthly affections as to make earthly reflection and deliberation considerably less necessary than is actually the case. In light of his

¹³² Nussbaum, M., *Upheavals of Thought*, 234-5

¹³³ Edwards, J., *Religious Affections*, 113

thoroughgoing doctrine of sin, this over-realisation concerning the affections is all the more surprising.

Our task to this point has been to describe a moral concept. An account of affections as the attracted beginnings of understanding which endure through memory and construe particular values in terms of the moral order recommends itself as both sufficiently subtle and intuitively appealing. Having given this account of the nature of affections and their role in human morality, we now need to enquire about their role in political relations, the task to which we now turn.

Chapter 3: Affections in political relations

We have now developed a theological account of the nature of affections and their role in human morality. In the next three chapters, our enquiry will focus on the place of affections in a particular aspect of human morality, namely the political relations which subsist in human societies. We begin this task here by enquiring specifically about how the affections play a role in the internal workings of certain institutions of political society, specifically the institutions of representation and law.

These are not new themes. Arguing against the cast of mind which led to the social upheavals of the French Revolution, Edmund Burke wrote that

[according to] this barbarous philosophy, which is the offspring of cold hearts and muddy understandings, and which is as void of solid wisdom as it is destitute of all taste and elegance, laws are to be supported only by their own terrors and by the concern which each individual may find in them from his own private speculations or can spare to them from his own private interests. In the groves of their academy, at the end of every vista, you see nothing but the gallows. Nothing is left which engages the affections on the part of the commonwealth. On the principles of this mechanic philosophy, our institutions can never be embodied, if I may use the expression, in persons, so as to create in us love, veneration, admiration, or attachment. But that sort of reason which banishes the affections is incapable of filling their place. These public affections, combined with manners, are required sometimes as supplements, sometimes as correctives, always as aids to law.¹

Burke here refers to the importance of ‘affections’ and especially ‘public affections’ in the personal, representative embodiment of institutions and in the workings of law. However, in the style of many conservative political thinkers then and now, he leaves undefined and imprecise the way that affections do play their part in political relations. This is unfortunate because the affective dimension of political life and the challenges to it which Burke highlights are too important to be left underdetermined.

¹ Burke, E., *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 77-78

The descendants of the philosophy he opposed operate at a high level of technical definition and thus appear to know more about the inner workings of political relations than those who gesture inchoately towards affections. While bearing in mind Aristotle's well-worn and wise dictum that we should not seek more precision than the subject matter allows, this discussion will yet seek more precision than Burke thought it wise to give.

Section I: Martha Nussbaum's political eschatology

We approach this question from a theological direction, an approach with which Burke had much sympathy though not so much in the way of systematic engagement. We saw in chapter two that if one adopts an eschatological outlook, it affects one's account of affections. Edwards' doctrine of excellency was adopted as an interpretation of the moral order as it is and as it has been vindicated in Christ. In this connection, we turn again to Martha Nussbaum. Her political thought also has a surprisingly eschatological character. We advance such a claim cautiously since she does not use the theological language of "eschatology" itself. However, her account of political emotions is closely organised around an ambitious way of dealing with ultimate questions of human existence with which Christian eschatology has been traditionally associated.

For example, Nussbaum defines the ultimate human state as 'mature interdependence'. In that condition, as we saw in chapter one, a human has left behind childish self-obsession and joined together with others in compassionate recognition of her own and others' frail neediness thereby creating a political

community which accords with that recognition. Her eschatology is thus essentially interior to the development of each human life towards maturity but may be increasingly realised in a maturing political culture. This strong emphasis on temporal progression from childishness to adulthood sets Nussbaum at odds with accounts such as existence behind the Rawlsian veil where the timely quality of human life is not recognised. It is just this emphasis on temporality which suggests the ascription of “eschatology” since it offers an account of a universal human future to which all are summoned. For Nussbaum, death, one of the traditional four last things of Christian eschatology, is the limit of this future. Death’s inevitability should prevent humanity from attempting to transcend the mature interdependence which represents their ultimate purpose. The fragility which characterises all life before death is the ultimate condition of humanity to which all should be reconciled. In this sense, the end has always already been here but is infinitely repeatable in successive generations as they live out their fragile lives to greater or lesser degrees of mature interdependence.

This peculiar eschatology becomes clearer in light of the political emotions which Nussbaum discusses. We have already considered compassion as the eschatologically appropriate, positive emotion which sustains a political society defined by interdependent fragility. By contrast, disgust and shame are the eschatologically inappropriate negative emotions. Nussbaum uses child psychology and sociology to explain why these latter two emotions are almost always unwise aspects of political society. In her view, they undermine political society’s common life because, through them, the established ‘normals’ subordinate and oppress a range of out-groups. On Nussbaum’s account, disgust is never conducive to determinations

of wrong or right since its genealogy stems from a (largely male) unwillingness to countenance the self's vulnerability and eventual death.² It is an evaluation of that which is sticky, oozy or otherwise threatening to people's sense of self-sufficiency and bodily permanence. Members of an out-group are disgusting because they embody such a threat or because their characteristic actions are disgusting. The obvious example for Nussbaum is the male, heterosexual American's attitude to homosexual males. Shame, because of its origin in the narcissistic failures of infants as they encounter their lack of omnipotence, is reckoned similarly dubious as a political emotion. Such childishness is a failure to understand the eschatologically limited human condition in a world of upheaval. To make an independent existence one's goal is to return to an ashamed, infantile immaturity. Although a more generalised shame may occasionally be appropriate – the shame of middle-class America to care for poor America³ – this other 'primitive shame'⁴ is never appropriate for political society.

Shame's relationship to the law illustrates Nussbaum's concern over both shame and disgust. One of her chief interlocutors, Dan Kahan, suggests that some offenders might perform 'some clearly humiliating ritual before the public gaze' as part of their punishment. Nussbaum denounces this as 'bringing back the brand on the face',⁵ a way of degrading other members of the community. She is particularly concerned about the possibility of the permanent shame and degradation which accompanies the irrevocable loss of the vote following conviction for felony under

² Cf. Nussbaum, M., *Hiding from Humanity*, 80 for Nussbaum's chief opponents, Lord Devlin and Leon Kass. The latter argues for the deep wisdom of disgust which lies beyond argument.

³ *ibid.* 212

⁴ *ibid.* 177ff

⁵ *ibid.* 175; cf. Kahan, D., 'What Do Alternative Sanctions Mean?', *University of Chicago Law Review* 63, 591-653

US law and which would accompany castration for sexual offences were that sanction permitted and utilised.⁶ Each of these exclude people on a permanent basis from appearing in society without being made to feel the shame from which they should, as maturing human beings, be increasingly emancipated. These illustrations from judicial punishment are institutional signs that shame is an unhealthy political emotion. Its dark genealogy, linked to shattered narcissistic dreams, oppresses those who feel shame and actually dehumanises those who use shame to humiliate others. It ‘involves the realization that one is weak and inadequate in some way in which one expects oneself to be adequate’.⁷ Such expectation is normally based on a deluded view of humanity which falsely prizes independence and fails to recognise the ongoing weakness, fragility and mortality which characterises the “eschatological” human condition. To institutionalise shame and force people into relationships defined by shame is to oppose the development of mature interdependence both in individuals and in a political culture. To make shame permanent through loss of the vote or castration is to exclude people from the eschatological future to which they are called.

We may elaborate Nussbaum, with respect to representative institutions, to say that, by her lights, shame and disgust normally encourage a political self-consciousness which is stagnantly self-coincident and narcissistic, “re-presenting” the self back to the self without the ability to learn or be summoned by those who are differentiated from some social norm upheld by the ‘normals’. These emotions reassert ‘normalcy’ thereby shutting down criticism of the very notion of normalcy

⁶ Nussbaum, M., *Hiding from Humanity*, 249

⁷ *ibid.* 183

and any particular representation of it.⁸ This social pattern fails to understand the ultimate, eschatological reality of mature interdependence amidst *diversely* fragile humans. Nussbaum especially criticises social contract theory which hides our true, interdependent humanity from us and presents to us only ‘the image of the citizen as a productive worker, able to pay for the benefits he receives by the contributions he makes.’⁹ The concept of representation offered in such theory is that of a community of ‘competent, independent adult[s]’ who re-present similar selves to similar selves,¹⁰ a myth which hides from view the diversity and dependence of society. It especially conceals the disabled or, to speak more truly, it normalises some disabilities and renders abnormal other disabilities. The political representation which accompanies such an account, whether conceptualised as Rousseau’s delegate or Hobbes’ Leviathan, will similarly fail to represent the wide, interdependent diversity of a community for it will treat that community as a group of similar, independent persons who have each contracted in such a way as to constitute the representative institution. Such a contract does not offer a plausible interpretation of the diverse many not deemed competent to “sign up”.

Nussbaum’s alternative to the contractarian concealment of our interdependent humanity explores the mode of our public appearance and especially ‘the minimum needed to appear in public without shame, as a citizen whose worth is equal to that of others.’¹¹ Political representation should be built around protecting and promoting ‘capabilities’¹² rather than contractarian rights which hide our fragile interdependency. Nussbaum’s political representation is thus an interpersonal

⁸ *ibid.* 217ff

⁹ *ibid.* 177

¹⁰ *ibid.* 312

¹¹ *ibid.* 284

¹² Cf. chapter one’s discussion

recognition of equality amidst permanent, diverse disability. Sustaining this ongoing recognition requires a facilitating environment characterised by

a political conception of the person that makes sense of the fact that we all have mortal decaying bodies and are all needy and disabled, in varying ways and to varying degrees.¹³

That environment is the political liberalism characteristic of the best, as Nussbaum sees it, of modern Western nation-states. In a powerful passage she argues that:

Liberalism is frightening...we know where we are if some of us are “normal”, independent, productive citizens, and others have their eyes downcast in shame. What liberalism requires of us, however, is something more chancy and fearful, some combination of adulthood and childhood, and aspiration without the fiction of perfection.¹⁴

Nussbaum’s “eschatology” is thus founded on the psychological claim that mature human existence in the twenty-first century is only practicable when people’s political representation is not built around the idea of perfection but is rather a constant re-presentation of weakness and need to weakness and need in all its diversity but without shame or disgust. Such emotions, unlike compassion, cannot recognise one’s own bodily vulnerability or others’ vulnerability and so do not involve thought about supporting human capabilities. The institutions of law and representation should, therefore, be adapted to promote communal compassion and to prevent the presence of shame and disgust.¹⁵

¹³ *ibid.* 341

¹⁴ *ibid.* 319

¹⁵ Cf. Nussbaum, M., *Upheavals of Thought*, 405: ‘The relationship between compassion and social institutions is and should be a two-way street: compassionate individuals construct institutions that embody what they imagine; and institutions, in turn, influence the development of compassion in individuals. As both Rousseau and Tocqueville show, empathy and judgment of similar possibilities are profoundly influenced by the ways in which institutions situate people in relation to one another: sharp separations impede these mechanisms, and similar situations promote them. Similarly institutions teach citizens definite conceptions of basic goods, responsibility, and appropriate concern, which will inform any compassion that they learn. Finally, institutions can either promote or

Nussbaum's political eschatology is seen climactically in her account of disgust and death. She accepts that there is a limited role for disgust at the prospect of death and decay, recognising that it

seems unlikely that we could ever be at ease with our own death and the decay that surrounds it; insofar as disgust grows out of our uneasy relationship with decay and mortality, it seems likely to surface sooner or later, and it may be necessary in order to live.¹⁶

However, she is uncertain as to whether we *should* be totally at ease with these inevitable features of human existence, arguing that political society should

embrace with neither fear nor loathing the decay and brevity of our lives. But to ask of humans that they not have any shrinking from decay or any loathing of death is to ask them to be other than, possibly even less than, human. Human life is a strange mystery, a combination of aspiration with limitation, of strength with terrible frailty.¹⁷

Nussbaum's strength is her willingness to explore the mystery and fragility of human existence. However, her commitment both to a liberalism which does not adjudicate between comprehensive accounts of the good and to an eschatology which, while highly focussed on decay and death, does not give conceptual space to the concept of a continuing life after death, leads to a political philosophy which removes vital wisdom from a political society's institutions. While rightly promoting a political sensibility to vulnerability and interdependence, she has also smuggled an eschatological, comprehensive account of human existence into the heart of politics which does not sit easily with various religious conceptions. Christianity, for example, describes death as an enemy and the resurrection of Christ as the way that fragility, death and decay can be defeated without the loss of but rather as the

discourage, and can shape in various ways, the emotions that impede appropriate compassion: shame, envy and disgust.'

¹⁶ Nussbaum, M., *Hiding from Humanity*, 95

¹⁷ *ibid.* 121

fulfilment of a particular version of mature interdependence, namely the body of Christ. This gives a very different account of temporal progression from Nussbaum's extrapolations based on child psychology.

Her smuggling would be serious enough if unrecognised. However, Nussbaum follows Rawls by commending the idea of a liberal 'module', in the form of an endorsement of political liberalism, inseparable from her account of death, decay, vulnerability and emotion, which can be attached to all particular religious or comprehensive conceptions in a political society. Thus she believes

that [her] psychological conceptions...are broadly acceptable to those who hold diverse religious doctrines, and that they can be accepted as part of a core of doctrines that forms a basic part of the underpinning of a political-liberal society.¹⁸

This belief seems unjustified. The absence of a systematic recognition of the transcendent in Nussbaum's eschatological, political psychology undermines the possibility of those energising analogies which characterise much of religiously inspired affection and action in political society today. The equality she proposes is an equality whose central insight is that we are all decaying and dying but must neither project our disgust about this onto others, thereby denying them the equal treatment they deserve, nor shame others into forgetting their own fragility, thereby concealing our own and undermining compassion.

For their own reasons, many religious conceptions value liberty, opportunity and equality and recognise the truth of fragility and interdependence. But equally, those same religious conceptions could not adopt Nussbaum's conviction that decay and death should define our political consciousness, a conviction which seems inextricable from the liberal module she proposes. Although she recognises that

¹⁸ *ibid.* 343

religions may hold that ‘in some ultimate metaphysical sense human life is not very dignified’,¹⁹ she does not allow for their eschatological accounts of human life to have political weight. In the end her eschatology is, like all thoroughgoing eschatologies, exclusive. For example, the Christian gospel, as we shall see, offers a very different account of death and the future which leads to a way of conceptualising political affections. This account can accommodate many of Nussbaum’s insights but also goes beyond them to penetrate more deeply into the nature of human existence.

Section II: Political affections in Deuteronomy and Luke-Acts

To respond to Nussbaum and address the place of affections in political institutions, we will need to elaborate our discussion in chapter two. The account of intersubjective affection developed there can now be given political application through attention to the role of institutions.

Oliver O’Donovan defines a political institution as

a series of common practices in which the exercise of political authority has a regular position. Institutionalized authority...provides a framework within which...moments [of authority] may easily occur and easily be recognised.²⁰

On this plausible view, a political institution provides organisational structure to a community so that it can carry out a series of practices concerning common goods which require the exercise of political authority. A political institution’s practices, such as discussion, consultation, ceremonial ritual, law-making, voting and law

¹⁹ *ibid.* 343

²⁰ O’Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 135

enforcement, require a certain stability so that the community at large can easily recognise moments of genuine authority which can give reasons for action concerning the goods they hold in common. The community's recognition thus attends both to the institutional authority itself and to the common goods with which the political practices are concerned.

The stability of an institution's practices is provided by the traditions which guide their conduct. The traditions of political institutions are communal storehouses of memory in a politically active form. Although tradition in itself is the handing on and developing of remembered practices and patterns, it is actually indistinguishable from memory since its content and activity is always defined by memory. Through such traditions, the laws which govern institutional practices are brought to bear in the present and thus a community stably engages in their common practices, developing them and passing them on as appropriate. It is this pattern which leads O'Donovan to comment that '[l]aw is the only safe form of cultural memory'.²¹ An obvious political illustration is a legal tradition based on precedent which evolves over time and in which contemporary judgments are constantly referred back to the past opinions of members of the tradition, though the tradition does not absolutely bind the present to the past for there remains the important idea that law is discovered by the members of the institution as they carry out their practices in accord with the tradition. The practice of judgment in legal institutions will be developed further later in this chapter.

Discussion of institutions, traditions and practices is intimately linked in the minds of many to virtue, habituation and training. It is often held that the purpose of

²¹ *ibid.* 144

traditions, practices and institutions is to form virtuous people who will then be able, precisely as virtuous people, to carry forward the traditions and practices of the institution effectively. In the wake of Alasdair MacIntyre's highly influential works in this area, it might seem that to speak of these things sensibly requires just such a commitment.²² But this assumption is not as securely founded as it seems. Moreover, the assumption is significant because of the contemporary tendency for virtue theory to permeate and even dominate theological discussions of institutions, practices and traditions. We have already seen this to some extent in our discussion of Christian neo-Aristotelians in chapter two and we will see it again with respect to Stanley Hauerwas in chapter five.

By way of a political elaboration, we claim that the traditions of political institutions sustain not only the laws which govern practices but also those affections which accompany and aid laws. These remembered affections are the beginnings of understanding which participate in the goods with which the practices of a community's institutions are concerned, recognise the authority of those who promote the proper ends of those goods and initiate the task of political reflection and deliberation which is shared by the community and its authorities. If this is so, then the endurance of the political affections which aid law depends not on the community's virtue but on the community's memory of its tradition of reflection on the good and deliberation concerning the right, stored up in the practices of its institutions.

The tradition of a particular community which shares in institutional practices is thus the primary lens through which a community's affections 'see' the

²² Cf. MacIntyre, A., *After Virtue: a Study in Moral Theory*, Duckworth, 1985; *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, Duckworth, 1988; *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy and Tradition*, University of Notre Dame Press, 1990

world. Often this 'seeing' happens on the unconscious level. This is a subtlety of memory not developed in Augustine's *Confessions* but hinted at in his storehouse metaphor and supported by neuroscientific researchers such as Joseph LeDoux, namely that the unconscious memory draws out affective recognitions which do not seem fully explicable to ourselves and others and yet seem somehow reasonable and fitting to the moment. Affections may be cognitively attracted from the storehouse into our present experience by some object which has gained its significance through some past experience which we cannot or will not remember. This phenomenon is familiar in psychoanalysis but less commonly discussed with respect to political affairs. Just as an individual may have had past experiences which recur in the unconscious memory and bring about affections which are not fully explicable, so too may a community or members of a community, through collective though unconscious memory, be to some extent unaccountably awakened in affective recognition by particular objects (symbols, events, words, songs etc). The community may not even know immediately which objects have attracted their affective understanding, let alone articulate their significance. Nonetheless they feel sure that something of significant value has appeared to them. In that half-light, and if they understand the intentional-evaluative content of affections, they may engage in intersubjective verification to discover what of significance has occurred. In this way our affections may be truer guides than we think to what is actually of value to a society since they may be attentive to and sustained by memory in a way that cool calculation of consequences is not. Thus political memory can explain both apparently inexplicable or objectless political affections, a set which any theory of

affections should be able to explain to some degree,²³ and the way that affections are intersubjectively attracted by people, symbols, objects or activities that are able to draw on a community's memory.

A political institution which has the authority to attract a community's affective attention thus gives that community the opportunity to experience political affections together and respond together, perhaps in agreement and perhaps diversely, to common objects in a regularised way. Political affections thus evoked are the beginnings of communal, cognitive discernment which should be followed by intersubjective verification, moral reflection and deliberation. They endure on the basis of the strength of tradition and memory which the institution supports. They render humble service by drawing a political community into internal reflection about the value of common objects and deliberation concerning the courses of political action which ought or ought not to be followed in relation to those objects. In contrast to a political society built around formation of virtuous character among its living members, a political institution with a healthy tradition will be characterised by an openness to discovery, newness and surprise which undermines the hazards of stagnant self-coincidence. For it will look to be awakened to the identity of the community through affective participation in the past, a process which should alert the community to the present's contingent quality and the possibility that change to realign with or even correct the tradition and its laws is often necessary. This seems to be a plausible elaboration of what Burke is gesturing towards when he says that affections may be correctives or aids to laws.

²³ Deigh, J., 'Cognitivism in the Theory of Emotions', 826ff

Political institutions will have a variety of ways of drawing together their history with their present moment and of construing the present in terms of the past to enable self-understanding and change. Political institutions may utilise symbols, songs or images (for example) which act as focal points for memory and affections. In the British tradition, one might consider footage of the poll tax riots, a Scottish Saltire or the often reproduced image of Myra Hindley. The recurrent presence of such common objects of affection ensures that memories of old political conflicts, wars of resistance and crimes are brought to mind in an affective way which initiates reflection and deliberation. Thus memory enables the enduring power of affective recognitions to contribute to political discourse. Inasmuch as the memory and affections are intersubjective, this process provides a way to gather and sustain common political thought and action.

Institutional memory may of course operate in such a way as to prevent discovery and change by bringing the past uncritically to mind, by failing to encourage intersubjective verification, by maintaining a triumphalist posture that the present situation is better than the past or through sustaining a belief that the excellent virtues of the people now are such as to make attention to the past or external standards unnecessary, the political form of what we called “stubbornness” in chapter two. The guard against this is precisely some sort of eschatological cast of mind which transcends the particular human community, relativises claims to virtuous excellence and calls for humble reflection and deliberation. An eschatology, whether Nussbaum’s or some religious conception, perhaps mediated through the form of an established religion, enables a community or particular members of the community to judge against or to praise their own tradition, present conduct and

future plans. Our thesis is that a particular religious eschatology, the Christian one, has uniquely sufficient resources to enable healthy political affections in the service of the common good. From that theological perspective, the extent to which an institution's tradition is actually correlated to the present condition and future state of the objective moral order in Christ will vary. For the tradition holds within it a remembered order of value which guides practices concerning common goods which are carried out by the community. Political affections which are guided by Christian eschatology may offer considerable service to the order of value of a particular community by understanding the objects valued by a community in relation to the actual moral order disclosed in the gospel. In this way, the combination of political memory and affections attuned to Christian eschatology may enable a political community to live its common life in a more truthful way.

Wisdom from Deuteronomy and Luke-Acts

Our task, therefore, is to explore the political affections which arise from Christian eschatology and to see what role they might have in political institutions. David Ford's account of wisdom's attentiveness to the 'cries' of the world will assist us. He describes how wisdom is 'immersed in the agonies, conflicts and joys of life, whose intensities are often articulated in cries'²⁴ and how '*[d]iscernment of cries and crying out with discernment are near to the heart of the meaning of a prophetic wisdom that is involved in history and oriented to God and God's future.*'²⁵ This language colourfully translates what we have described in terms of affective participation and

²⁴ Ford, D., *Christian Wisdom: Desiring God and Learning in Love*, CUP, 2007, 44

²⁵ *ibid.* 19 (his italics)

intersubjective verification of affection. Affections are basic not only to cries themselves but also the intersubjective initiations of wise moral discernment in response to cries. Affective wisdom names the way that a man's affections may be immersed or participate in others' affective cries in such a way as to understand them. Christian, affective wisdom entails such intersubjective understanding in light of the eschatological future which God is opening up.

Affective wisdom may have a political dimension. O'Donovan writes that

Wisdom is our appropriation of the good afforded to humankind, inexhaustible, limitlessly open to participation, defining the relations of the other goods that we encounter and the communities that they sustain.²⁶

Political wisdom grasps the differentiated and associated interrelation of goods within the common good which humans seek in various ways. Political, affective wisdom is the way this appropriative work is begun, participating in the cries of joy and pain which permeate the history, present and future of a political society. When Christian, this wisdom understands that society in relation to God and the eschatological future of the moral order which God has opened up in Christ.

We will first consider how the political, affective wisdom of Deuteronomy, emerging from the complexity of Israelite life, offers further conceptual clarity to our account of political affections. Deuteronomy, a text which combines legal code and national narrative, is rich in 'emotional reasoning'²⁷ and presents the institutional life of the people of Israel in a way which is deeply concerned with affectivity. The festive institutions of Israel, with which we shall be particularly concerned, are a series of practices that ensure that people live within 'earshot' of the cries of people

²⁶ O'Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 73

²⁷ Wright, C.J.H., *Deuteronomy*, Hendrickson, 1996, 193

that arise from the intensities of life – in joy, suffering, recognition, wonder, bewilderment, gratitude, expectation or acclamation; and cries of people for what they most desire – love, justice, truth, goodness, compassion, children, health, food and drink, education, security, and so on.²⁸

We will shortly be considering the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts inasmuch as they contribute to our eschatology of political affections. Luke-Acts, considered as a single continuous narrative, presents a highly subtle account of affections in relation to institutions of law and representation. Through engagement in these texts, we will see how affective, political wisdom arises through an involvement in history – instantiated in traditions, institutions and practices – which is attentively awakened to God’s eschatological purposes for the moral order vindicated in Christ. While it is true to say that the concerns of the modern theory of emotions and this discussion’s concept of affection are in some ways distant from the social, cultural and intellectual settings of Deuteronomy and Luke-Acts, fruitful connections between them will become apparent. This fructification will in due course be specifically channelled into an exploration of illuminating analogies between the institutions and affections of the people of God and the institutions and affections of political societies today.

We begin with Deuteronomy whose affective wisdom is multifaceted and contains legal, institutional and eschatological dimensions. The historical-critical concerns which have occupied many students of Deuteronomy have yielded insights important for our purpose, most notably an awareness of the social structure of Israel. However, the historical-critical questions themselves will not be a major emphasis here and we will instead attempt to discern how the final text presents the people’s

²⁸ Ford, D., *Christian Wisdom*, 5

affective life. A range of authors have recently taken this approach especially in relation to the moral theology of the Pentateuch. For example, Gordon Wenham observes that, although it is hard or even impossible to discern the moral stance of any putative sources of the Pentateuch since we cannot know what elements of the source have been omitted, it is nonetheless possible to perceive the commitments of the final author or authors of any one of these books, such as the book of Deuteronomy.²⁹

This discussion will adopt Wenham's rhetorical approach and seek out what the implied reader of Deuteronomy – the reader for whom the canonical (implied) authors were writing – might reasonably have been expected to understand, with respect to human affections, on the basis of the final form of the text. It should be emphasised that such an implied reader will be marked by a reverence for the text and the tradition which produced it. The implications of this approach for a search for affective wisdom are important. For if the final form of the text has been arranged with the intention of influencing reverent readers and unless there is very strong evidence to the contrary, it will be assumed that there is a more-or-less coherent vision of the place of affections in Israel's life within the book of Deuteronomy and that this vision was what the implied readers were supposed to receive. From the overall affective richness of Deuteronomy, it seems clear that imparting this vision

²⁹ Wenham's conviction is that the implied 'pious reader wants to know what the canonical author thought' about the events of the Old Testament rather than what his sources might have thought (Wenham, G., *Story as Torah: Reading the Old Testament Ethically*, T&T Clark, 2000, 7); cf. Olsen, D.T., *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses: A Theological Reading* Fortress Press, 1994 where Olsen comments that historical critical 'insights are welcomed when they contribute to understanding the final form of the text.' (2) See also Whybray, R.N., *The Good Life in the Old Testament*, T and T Clark, 2002 where he notes that, in the aftermath of two centuries of historical-critical work, scholars are now 'attempting to present the theology of those who produced the books as we have them.' (1) and that if this is 'a valid approach it ought to be applicable to any topic that occupies a substantial role in the Old Testament books.' (2) The human affections of Deuteronomy seem to me to be a theme which has a substantial role in a number of the Old Testament books but centrally – in the Pentateuch at least – in the book of Deuteronomy.

was one of the objectives of the implied author(s). Although Wenham's rhetorical approach is here accepted, we are more doubtful about his ethical agenda which is 'to identify patterns of behaviour in the narratives which the authors seem to be implicitly commending and so draw out what they consider to be virtues.'³⁰ He argues that Old Testament writers were commending these virtuous habits and practices so that they would become habitual in the lives of their readers.³¹ Joy, fear and anger (among others) are simply construed as vices or virtues.³² We will see in due course that this is neither a necessary nor promising interpretation.

The festivals of Israel offer insight into the wisdom of affections' institutional role in Deuteronomy. The design of the festivals as institutions, a series of common practices which operate in coordination with the social, cultic and political institutions of Israelite life such as family, temple, priesthood, law and town, not only assumes that affections are aspects of cognition but also provides sophisticated opportunities for affections to focus intentionally on objects which are of common concern to the whole community. Joy is the central affection whereby these common objects are cognised by the community during their common practice of the festivals. Festive joy only occurs explicitly in six pericopes, all of which are accounts of communal, celebratory, institutional practices (12:1-28, 14:22-29, 16:9-12, 16:13-15, 26:1-15, 27:1-8). Joy forms the climax in each of these pericopes which describe the great gatherings of the people. The first and last pericopes stand at the initiation and completion of the great work of legal explanation which dominates the centre of Deuteronomy (chapters 12-27) and precedes the covenant curses and blessings. These two pericopes climax in joy at the prospect of establishing places to worship

³⁰ Wenham, G., *Story as Torah*, 3

³¹ *ibid.* 102-103

³² *ibid.* 87-102

YHWH in the land which the Lord God is giving Israel. The central four are highly organised accounts of the gathering of the people, in various institutional settings, for joyful worship. The festivals taken as a whole are shaped so that YHWH may appear to be the true ruler of the people and so that the people may appear to themselves as under his authority. Thus the festivals are “political” in the peculiar sense that they recognise the supreme authority of YHWH over the land and over the people to whom the land was given. Through the festivals the people come, through joyful affection, to a communal, intersubjective understanding of self, nation, YHWH and the world they inhabit. They discover themselves as the chosen nation from humanity, the central *genus* in the created moral order, and understand their common life as the God-ordained order of value which appropriately reflects the values of the moral order as a whole.

Instead of surveying each of the festive pericopes in turn, the discussion will focus on one which most clearly illumines our theme, the feast of tithes at 14:22-29. In this pericope, we see a design for regular periods of highly affective focussing on common objects, specifically, the fruit of the land which will be given to Israel. Here Israel are commanded regularly to conduct intersubjective affective participation which verifies the goodness of the land and its fruit as aspects of the created order in a way that empowers moral reflection, moral deliberation and action towards those who may, if neglected, cry out for justice.

The location of this passage in a legal code makes clear that the affective recognitions of Israel can be drawn out in response to God’s commands – the law says ‘you shall rejoice’! Such a notion accords with our overall account of affections as cognitive, attracted participations and contradicts those theories of emotion which

designate them as essentially irrational. Matthew Elliott, among others, has argued that the New Testament Scriptures consistently hold that affections are ‘frequently commanded’.³³ The same is true of the writings of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Old Testament. Elliott makes this point more briefly when he observes that a ‘way to differentiate the righteous from the wicked in the Old Testament is by how they feel.’³⁴ The righteous are commanded to have certain emotions towards God, each other and their enemies. Although Elliott does explore the cognitive nature of emotion and recognises that the festivals are a ‘time of emotional renewal, both in rejoicing and solemn reflection and repentance’,³⁵ he does not develop the nature of the responsibility which the Israelites have for their affections nor the way that affections enable such reflection and repentance. His commentary, though valuable, thorough and much needed, only shows that emotions may be praised or blamed but does not uncover the depth of their contribution to Christian ethics.³⁶

³³ Elliott, M., *Faithful Feelings*, 261; cf. Piper, J., ‘Hope as the Motivation of Love: 1 Peter 3:9-12’, *New Testament Studies* 26, 212-231, 216 where Piper comments that the ‘New Testament knows nothing of the philosophical difficulty that affections or desires cannot be commanded. We find commands to rejoice, to be grateful, not to fear or be anxious, etc., all of which demand a change in our affections.’ In commenting on God’s injunction that the people ‘will be altogether joyful’ at the feast of booths (Deuteronomy 16:15), Christopher Wright writes that ‘Israelites were *commanded* to rejoice! Just as they were commanded to love, showing that such love was more than a spontaneous emotion, so this fact that joy was commanded indicates that it was more than emotional froth. Praise, thanksgiving, rejoicing – these things were at the core of Israel’s faith and religious life, and, as part of the covenant faith, were matters of choice and will and commitment.’ (*Deuteronomy*, 201)

³⁴ Elliott, M., *Faithful Feelings*, 81

³⁵ *ibid.* 89

³⁶ There have been very few book length treatments of emotions in the bible which makes Elliott’s all the more significant. Unfortunately, his thesis, although defiantly argued, seems to lose its way with respect to the precise ethical role of emotion. He argues that ‘God either requires and desires that our faith is filled with joy, the jubilant feeling, or he does not. You can not have it both ways’ (*ibid.* 258) and that emotions ‘are a faithful reflection of what we believe and value...If we are faithful in making our core heart values and beliefs those of the Bible, our emotions will be faithfully conformed to these truths. God requires that we have faithful feelings as he freely commands us to feel as we should, and demands that we change feelings that are contrary to biblical principles.’ (*ibid.* 264) These comments, though helpful in that they connect emotion with command and truth, do not sufficiently show the rationale for such a connection i.e. precisely what reasons for emotion commands afford, how this fits with the place of emotion in moral psychology and how emotions relate to the external, stable world beyond our own beliefs and values. Without such an account, there is the risk of slippage into the Aristotelian surveillance culture which Nussbaum critiqued. An *unexplained* demand for emotion is hardly reflective of the subtlety of the old or new testaments. Elliott’s final disclaimer that he has *not*

We find conceptual assistance to meet this challenge in one of the central curses against Israel at 28:47-48. Israel is cursed because they ‘did not serve the Lord [their] God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things’. The condemnation of joylessness seems puzzling unless one sees that the reason for the severity of the curse is that a chief reason for the ‘joyfulness and gladness of heart’ which recognises ‘the abundance of all things’ is to initiate the people’s moral reflection and deliberation in such a way as to ensure that they do not disobey the commandments and statutes of the Lord with respect to the goods they share in common. The absence of joy and gladness debilitates the agency of the people because they are unable to participate affectively in the land and so understand it as the place of abundance given by the Lord. Thus the reason for cursing is not simply the affective failure but rather all that the affective failure entailed for the loss of the capacity for genuine moral reasoning. The curse is not simply a forensic judgment on failure – though it is no less than that. Rather, it is an explanation of what will ensue if the people are no longer communally, affectively and wisely attracted to and participating in the goodness of YHWH himself and the goodness of the moral order. But with that participative beginning, the penetration and exploration of the moral order, in its generic and teleological design, may be undertaken rightly so that its differentiation and association is wisely known by Israel and justly acted upon.

The feasts are given as institutions which prevent a loss of such political, affective wisdom. At the feast of tithes we see there are different situations in which rejoicing is to take place and that these are adapted to awaken the people of Israel to

sought to show ‘how we can change our emotional life to what it should be’ (ibid. 267) sits uneasily with his earlier comments and suggests an uncertainty as to the nature of the book’s project with respect to wider ethical questions.

self-consciousness concerning their place in the moral order and YHWH's purposes for them. The practices of the festival involve not only diverse locations for joy but also diverse participants in joy. The joy is first focussed on the central place of worship (14:24) while the focus in 14:28-29 is on the towns. The Levite is present in both settings and the same reason for not neglecting the Levite is repeated, namely that he has no portion or inheritance with the people. This itself is a vital reminder to the people of the ultimate direction of joy since the Levite's portion is not the land of the Lord but the Lord of the land. As Gordon McConville says, to forget the Levite in the midst of celebration would be to forget the LORD.³⁷ However, when the location changes, some of the participants change. 14:28-29 describes a triennial variation on the regular, institutional practice of 14:22-27 which is explicitly inclusive of the diverse needy in the towns (cf. 16:9-12 and 16:13-15 esp. 16:11-12, 14; also 26:1-15, esp. 26:12). Joy in the land and its fruits is to be expressed by the full range of the Israelite community. Indeed, the very existence of the triennial variation suggests that the celebration of tithes cannot be characterised by properly joyful recognition unless the subjects of the intersubjective expression of joy include all these people.

There seems to be a twofold rationale for the affective design of this feast and the festivals at large. First, the organisation of the feast of tithes enables the people to focus affectively on the land God has given in such a way as to see its relationship to the needy and to God himself. Joy in the land's goodness initiates reflection and deliberation concerning the moral order. This joy has the semblance of a conclusion but actually retains that provisional quality which chapter two described. The reason

³⁷ McConville, G., *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy*, JSOT Press, 1984, 74

for this is threefold. To begin with, (a) the joy seems conclusive because of the sheer physical satisfaction which the goodness of the land brings. Joy in the land is embedded in the embodied practices of the festive institutions. The sheer physicality of the feast's fruits binds together 14:22-27 and 14:28-29 in one overarching affection of joyful participation. The provision for long-distance travellers (v24-26) emphasises afresh that this affection is bound up with the practices of shared eating and drinking. With this in mind, there might *appear* to be little content to joy beyond satisfying what one's heart desires, a conclusive joy if ever there was one.

But (b), the festive joy is actually arranged in such a way as to awaken the people to the neediness of the poor in light of the goodness of the land and the goodness of the One who gave it. Far from being a conclusion, festive joy initiates moral thought and action. Everyone ought to benefit from the land because, at the Exodus, everyone was equally saved from Egyptian slavery and the land was graciously given to all. Thus when the fearful fatherless, the (potentially) hated sojourner and the sorrowful widow share in the people's joy and so intersubjectively verify the land's goodness, the joy which permeates this moment of recognition enables the people to construe themselves afresh in unity without ignoring their differences. The range of possible social conditions is not elided at the triennial feast but rather gathered and recognised. The experience of communal joy precisely represents a quickened attentiveness to the variegated need for common goods among the poor and needy.

Joy is thus the people's participation in the blessing of the land which initiates moral reflection on the land and its diverse inhabitants and deliberative action on the basis of those reflections. The people travel, in Lacoste's terms, from

value to norm as they joyfully recognise the value of the land and then reflect on the norms which define deliberations concerning how they are to treat the good land, one another and especially the needy. The deep joy of the festival is thus essential to aid just obedience to laws such as the law of the Sabbatical year and is accordingly entered into on a yearly basis. Thus, in relation to the moral imperatives of the Sabbatical year (15:1ff), Christopher Wright describes 'Israel so rejoicing in God's blessing that they fully obey God's law.'³⁸ Regular feasting epitomises YHWH's design for Israel's life which takes seriously the ongoing presence of those who are in danger of being forgotten if joy does not constantly awaken the people at large to their responsibilities. The renewal of joy year on year is the renewal of Israel's capacity for moral reflection and deliberation in accord with the goodness of God and the created moral order. Joy is reenergised, in the context of the ongoing needs of the community, in order to open up the possibility of righteous action for the common good.

Finally, (c) the presence of the Levite, as already discussed, demonstrates that the joy in the land is always pointing beyond itself to a joy in the Lord of the land. The Levite has no portion of his own because his portion is the Lord himself. Joy in the land is not conclusive because this would be to mistake the gift for the Giver. Joy is thus provisionally mediated through the land and directed on to the Lord of the land. In the place the Lord shall choose, the elect people's joy initiates the deeper reflection on the goodness of YHWH.

In light of these observations, we may question Wenham's adoption of virtue theory to interpret Old Testament ethics. The necessity for yearly renewal of

³⁸ Wright, C., *Deuteronomy*, 189

affective understanding and the risk of forgetfulness of the needy does not suggest that there is any expectation of moral progress among the people of God. Indeed, the legal provisions of Deuteronomy generally expect the people *not* to make moral progress. Soon after the law concerning the feast of tithes, we find the command that ‘you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother’ (15:7) but rather that you ‘shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.’ (15:11) There is an expectation that the hardening of the heart will happen. Such hardening walls an Israelite off from the beginnings of understanding which might arise at the feasts, neither rejoicing in God’s open handed gift of the land nor recognising the cry of the needy for its fruits.

Thus while agreeing with Wenham that there are some traits of action held up as admirable and while bearing in mind Wenham’s recognition that obedience-to-law is a theme of the Old Testament,³⁹ it still seems strange that he should underplay the expectation that stubbornness and hardness of heart will be primary marks of the people of God. The stubborn sinfulness of the people is known from the start and is worked out through the narrative. To be sure, there are moments of great hope when Moses emphasises the possibility of the people actually doing the law (30:11-14). Yet, soon afterwards, Moses’ experience of leading this people for so many years begets a bleak assessment of their future obedience (31:27-29). This is not to say that the law does not leave open the invitation and, indeed, the command to live righteously; such obedience remains a possibility. It is rather to affirm that the legislators expect Israel stubbornly to disobey and that this expectation is vindicated

³⁹ Wenham, G., *Story as Torah*, 79ff

by the narrative. Thus it seems that, *contra* Wenham, the rhetoric surely does not invite people to become virtuous but rather to behold their own stubbornness.

For these reasons, it seems to me that Wenham's appeal to virtue and virtue theory in reading the Old Testament and especially Deuteronomy is conceptually unpromising. There is special danger in assuming that terms which relate to affections should be subsumed into a larger or more comprehensive account under the heading of virtues. Elliott also goes in this direction with his barely explained claim that '[e]motions are among the most important Christian virtues'.⁴⁰ As shown above, affections themselves are not virtues but are the awakened beginnings of reflection and deliberation concerning the particular obligations to act justly towards one's neighbours. Their endurance should be traced not to habituated virtue but to their dependence on memory. In seeking to subsume affections into habituated virtue, we risk obscuring God's design for Israel, namely the way that affections are intended to bring epistemological renewal to a community's political relations. Wenham's approach, far from overcoming stubbornness, actually encourages people to adopt a virtue ethics which will deepen that impenitent posture. Although he lays out the biblical material carefully and winsomely, virtue language is adopted with little justification when he makes a move to moral systematisation. Our account of affections should make such unfortunate slippage less tempting.

That account is clarified through the second, complementary aspect of the affective design of the feasts of Israel, namely Deuteronomy's reliance on the power of memory to stabilise the affections of the people through the institutions ordained by God. Two festivals are prescribed at 16:9-15: the Feast of Weeks, in which the

⁴⁰ Elliott, M., *Faithful Feelings*, 260

people recognise the goodness of the harvest and remember that they were slaves in Egypt; and the feast of Booths whereby the people, including the needy, rejoice in the gathered produce while living in the booths which remind them of the journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. During this latter feast in the Sabbatical year (15:1ff), the great reading of the Law takes place (31:9-13). At this time of intense, joyful recognition of the good present, fuelled by the memory of salvation from slavery, the people are reminded of the laws and statutes for their common life. In these structured, institutional practices, the affections of the people are guided from value to norm, from an initial recognition of the goodness of God and his gifts to reflection on that goodness and deliberative engagement in the laws which order their lives in relation to God and the goods they share in common. Thus affection precedes the people's engagement with and obedience to the laws which protect and promote the common goods which they celebrate in joy.

Memory of God's activity in leading them out of Egypt stabilises, sustains and refreshes the affective recognitions of the people. Joy in the goodness of the land endures through memories of the sovereignty, faithfulness and power of YHWH. This interrelation of memory and affection is the heartbeat of Deuteronomy and is beautifully expressed at 26:5-11, a lyrical narrative relating the deep reasons for joy, amidst the offering of the firstfruits and tithes, which climaxes in another call to comprehensive joyfulness. They remember that a 'wandering Aramean was our father [and that] he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous', that they went into slavery but that then they 'cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression.' (26:5, 7) Of the fifty-two

times when Egypt or Egyptians are mentioned in Deuteronomy, only one can be seen in any kind of positive light (23:7). The rest are either highly negative due to the experience of slavery (e.g. 5:6, 5:16, 6:12, 6:21, 7:8, 9:14, 13:5, 13:10) and other evils (11:10) or geographical references which are tinged with these negative connotations (e.g. 25:17).

In this light, consider 25:6: ‘the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labour.’ The implied reader will be deeply aware of how God’s people suffered and ‘cried to the Lord’ (25:7). The frequent calls to remember Israel’s slavery in Egypt, evocatively referred to as an ‘iron furnace’ (4:20), are not simply invitations to remember *that* Israel were slaves. It is no less than such a factual remembrance but it is also much more. For it is a call for the people actually to remember or – for later generations – to remember in imagination the deeply affective experience of being slaves, the cries of suffering and hope. In accord with the pattern of differentiation and association, the past distortions are construed in terms of the present salvation so that the excellency of God’s work is admired. The people remember their past sorrows and poverty in Egypt as they joyfully participate in present abundance in Israel and this joy then empowers moral reflection and deliberation concerning right action towards poor neighbours in the present.

In various ways, the practices of the festive institutions sustain this eschatological movement between the affective memory of Egyptian affliction to the experience of the promised land of plenty in the presence of the Lord. It is a movement of eschatological differentiation and association since the community experiences the Lord’s moral order by contrasting the slavery of Egypt with the peaceful corporate life in the land. The interrelation of past Israel, Egypt, the Lord

and present Israel provides the deep logic that structures the joy of the people and the institutions which give organised form to the community. This joy permeates the narrative, frequently repeated in Deuteronomy, that their very existence as a nation is dependent on and structured by the Exodus from Egypt, the house of slavery, through the merciful and mighty works of YHWH. Ultimately, rejoicing has this profound, all-permeating significance for Israel precisely because of the comprehensive One who ordains the institutions of community and who has supplied the reasons for rejoicing. Joy, focussed in highly physical forms of celebration such as feasting, brings to mind the One who is the source of their joy, YHWH himself. And as joy penetrates all the life of the people of God, so all the people are bound together in common understanding. Just as ultimate Augustinian joy based on the truth is rooted in a memory of God himself, so ultimate Israelite joy springs from the memory of YHWH and his works. Returning once more to the feast of tithes, we see that the basic reason for the inclusion of the needy in the triennial celebration of the feast of tithes is founded in the connection between memory, joy and right action. The various institutions in which the community participates provides the structured social context for this cognitive joy to draw people into participation in YHWH, his works, his laws and his created moral order that the people might engage in moral reflection, moral deliberation and right action within Israel and among the nations.

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Our enquiry into affections in political relations now turns from Deuteronomy to Luke and Acts. For a *Christian* eschatology of political affections could not stop with

the Hebrew Scriptures but must proceed to the Scriptures which specifically describe the significance of Jesus of Nazareth. Two brief, preliminary points should be made concerning these New Testament texts. First, it will be assumed that Luke and Acts should be considered as the two parts of a single corpus as suggested by their respective introductions (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-3). Moreover, although single authorship of this single corpus is not absolutely essential to our account, the overwhelming weight of the early church tradition is behind one named author, Luke. This discussion's terminology will follow that tradition.⁴¹ Second, single authorship does not imply a singularity of source for the material of Luke-Acts. Indeed, the introductions explicitly state that Luke is compiling multiple sources. However, Luke's commentary on the narrative, both directly and through his arrangement of sources, has created a coherent line of thought.⁴² This coherence makes investigation of one aspect of that thought – the place of affections – a plausible task.

So we turn to our account of Luke-Acts, the climax of which will be an analysis of Acts 13-15 whereby evangelical joy initiates the moral reflection and deliberation which leads to action of crucial importance to Christian eschatology. To understand this climax, we need to see that affections permeate Luke's account of the institutions which give organised form to the people of Israel. As the gospel opens, Zechariah is depicted performing his representative duty at the temple, Israel's central, religious institution. Surrounded by the gathered, attentive and prayerful people, leading their praise of the Lord God, Zechariah receives a message of joy

⁴¹ Cf. Bock, D.L., *Luke*, IVP, 1994, 17-18 where Bock cites Justin (*Dialogues* 103.19), the Muratorian Canon, Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 3.1.1; 3.14.1), the Anti-Marcionite Canon and Tertullian (*Against Marcion* 4.2.2; 4.5.3) as authorities for this view.

⁴² Conzelmann, H., *The Theology of St Luke*, trans. Buswell, G., Faber and Faber, 1961, 9: 'A variety of sources does not necessarily imply a similar variety in the thought and composition of the author.'

concerning the child to be born: joy for himself, joy for Elizabeth, his barren wife, and joy for the people. The angel announces that ‘you will have joy and gladness and many will rejoice at his birth’ and explains that the child John ‘will be great before the Lord.’ (Luke 1:14-15) A striking feature of these events and much of Luke 1-2 is that, in contrast to the rest of the gospel and much of Acts, the established leaders of the institutions of Israel – the chief priests, Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, elders and others – are absent. They have nothing to do with the message of joy. While the gospel of Matthew describes Herod and the chief priests violently opposing Jesus from birth, Luke focuses on the people of Israel, allowing their teachers to appear only briefly to demonstrate Jesus’ wisdom and allegiance to God his Father (2:41-51). The effect is to connect the people, through the mediation of a single priest, with the joy coming in Christ.

Luke continues this focus by depicting joy as a wise way for the community to begin a participative understanding of what is happening in Israel and Israel’s institutions. The ultimate object of joy is introduced at the foretelling of Jesus’ birth. Joy is experienced first by the yet unborn but jumping John (1:44) and then as Mary’s exultant joy in the Magnificat (1:47). John’s own conception is patterned after ancient conceptions out of barrenness, such as the gift of a son to Abraham and Sarah. What seemed impossible becomes possible and that which could not happen comes to pass by the power and goodness of YHWH: for ‘nothing will be impossible with God.’ (1:37) Though his parents’ joy is great, it is a prelude to that unique joy which attends the virginal conception and birth of Jesus. The difference from John’s birth is obvious immediately. In John’s case, there is a natural though certainly surprising conception. In Jesus’ case, the conception is depicted as the direct,

unmediated work of God. While Zechariah enquires, ‘How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.’ (1:18), Mary asks, ‘How will this be, since I am a virgin?’ (1:34)

Thus the joy concerning Jesus’ birth is “unprecedented” joy for the identity of the second in the Trinity *as man* is totally unprecedented, a new thing under the sun. Though unprecedented, it is not unrelated to the promises of God and expectation of Israel; rather the joy is a fulfilment of the joy of Deuteronomy in a way which surpassed the expectation of the people. The goodness of God’s gift of the land is now fulfilled in the goodness of the long expected Christ, anticipated even in Moses’ day (Deuteronomy 18:15). Unprecedented joy is a previously unknown affective recognition of this new gift of God in Christ. It is the eschatological joy by which everything, past, present and future, is now construed in terms of Jesus Christ.

Thus John and Mary rejoice in a ruler who will fulfil the promise concerning the institution of the Davidic throne and reign perpetually over the house of Jacob, the son of Isaac, Abraham and Sarah’s laughing offspring (Luke 1:32-33). Mary’s joy in this news initiates the Magnificat which reflects on her God’s mighty leadership of Israel (esp. 1:51-55). Mary rejoices in how God has helped his people by reordering the institutional structure which organises their life. Proud men’s hearts have been confused, leadership has been changed and the hungry have been provided for. Similarly, Zechariah’s now obedient and loosened tongue gives poetic and political form to the joy of the people (1:67-79). In his song of praise, Zechariah celebrates the Messianic horn of salvation raised up for the people, a symbol of strength which will be exercised against the enemies of Israel, whom Luke seemingly

construes as the Roman authorities (7:18-23),⁴³ the demonic forces (11:14-23) and the corrupted leaders of Israel (13:10-17). Jesus is thus presented as the representative leader who will satisfy Mary and Zechariah's expectation through eschatological fulfilment of institutional types and practices, thereby inaugurating a new institutional representation in accord with the law of God. The long-dormant practices of Israel which constitute the institution of Davidic kingship are not overturned but rather reinvigorated.

Mary and Zechariah's joy in Jesus models how the people are to engage in this renewed institutional life. Affective participation is seen as essential for obtaining Israelite identity. Without affection, there could be no awakening to the moral self-understanding, reflection and deliberation which constitute life in the Kingdom of God. Accordingly, Luke repeatedly explores the identity of the people (*laos*; λαός) through their affective attraction to Jesus as he fulfils their institutions, especially through a contrast with the affections of their official leaders. While the people discover their identity in joyfully welcoming their Messiah, their representative who carries forward their future, those representatives who currently fill the institutional structures of the people of Israel, the Pharisees, chief priests, Sadducees, scribes and Herod, angrily resist the new King. A parting of the ways is depicted, an affective division between the people who joyfully recognise their identity in Jesus and their rulers who furiously and fearfully reject it. Luke draws the contrast repeatedly to make the point. As the adversarial leaders are shamed, the people rejoice in Jesus' teaching and power (13:17); as the disciples rejoice at the

⁴³ Bock, D.L., *Luke*, 52

triumphal entry of their king into Jerusalem, the Pharisees are rebuked for their attempt to quench the people's joy (19:36-40).

Other affections are very important in the gospel. For example, while Jesus is vehemently accused by the chief priests and rulers and mocked by Herod and his soldiers (22:6-11), the people, especially the daughters of Jerusalem, mourn and lament over him on the road to the cross (22:26-31) and then return home beating their breasts (23:48). Nonetheless, joy seems to be Luke's overriding theme. He very deliberately provides joyous "bookends" to the ministry of Jesus. The good news is announced in the beginning as *charan megalen* (χαράν μεγάλην; 2:10) and this great joy is the disciples' experience at the end (24:62), thus validating Augustine's contention that 'grande gaudium' (great joy) is the heart of worship. The people throughout Luke's gospel experience this joy as the beginning of their understanding that Jesus' representative leadership is for their common good. The structure of their joy is disclosed as they witness Jesus performing a healing, his practice which fulfilled the purpose of the Sabbatical institution: the 'people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.' (13:17) The people's joy is attracted to Jesus' deeds which were placing sickness in its proper eschatological context, namely the Kingdom of God.

Thus Jesus fulfils the institutions of Israel, such as the Sabbath feast, thereby structuring the way in which affections are attracted and focussed. For he draws the people into the tradition of Deuteronomy reenergising them to remember the moral thought and life which Moses put forward, most notably the concern for those who, like the sick, were not sharing fully in the goodness of God's gifts. The people, by following Jesus and participating in this fulfilled structure, form intersubjective

bonds of affection as they recognise together the dawning of the great King of the kingdom who vindicates both the Deuteronomic concern for the poor and the generically and teleologically defined moral order within which Deuteronomy and Luke are situated. The people are attracted to this man, not from any outward appearance, but because he genuinely fulfils both their Israelite identity and their human creatureliness.

By contrast, the leadership's fearful, angry, furious failure to recognise the goodness of Jesus is typified in the indignant synagogue leader (*aganakton*; ἀγανακτῶν 13:14). Instead of an attraction to Christ, he walls his heart off from joyful participative understanding. Joy is the way into Christ but the faithless fury of the leaders is a bar to epistemological entry. The leaders' affections do bind them together in common action but only in order to kill and destroy Jesus. For they do not share in the eschatological, affective understanding which Christ brought to the institutions of Israel. Luke and Acts depicts the corrupt Jewish leaders' affections as so out of step with the past and future of their institutions that they are shut out from participative understanding of the kingdom of God. Their attempts to destroy Jesus and put an end to joy are overcome in the resurrection which vindicates Israel and the moral order thus reinvigorating and renewing the joyful understanding which then characterises not only the temple worship at the climax of the gospel but also, more deeply still, the narrative of Acts.

For by the Holy Spirit given in Acts 2, the people of God experience affection whereby they awaken to self-conscious identity in the Christ who has fulfilled all the institutions of the people of God. Their joy in the resurrection of Jesus draws them into reflection and deliberation concerning what life and conduct will accord with the

Kingdom. Acts' primary example of this concerns the status of the Gentiles in the plan of God. On this issue hangs the legitimacy of the claim that Christ's Lordship is universal in its scope, a matter at the heart of the institutional life of ethnic Israel and the church. Peter's vision (Acts 10) and report to the council are followed by the birth of the Gentile church in Antioch. The Jerusalem church sends Barnabas to investigate. Barnabas goes to Antioch and, 'seeing the grace of God, he rejoiced' (11:23). At this momentous event in the history of the plan of God, Luke, who has depicted the good news as *charan megalen* (χαρὰν μεγάλην; Luke 2:10) for all people, returns to his major theme again: Barnabas saw and rejoiced (*echare, ἐχάρη*)! On our reading, his joy is a wise, epistemological, attracted experience, a moment of awakening by the Holy Spirit, which is succeeded by continuing moral thought. Barnabas' joy perceives how the differentiation of the human *genus* into Jew and Gentile was now being eschatologically fulfilled in their association together in the harmonious excellency of the church.

This joy, though drawn towards the eschatological, teleological end of humanity, is yet the beginning of Barnabas' and the church's understanding. It is followed by Barnabas' year-long stay with Saul (Paul) in Antioch before their joint missionary journey. There they witness the Gentiles rejoicing as they too understand that the good news is for them as well as the Jews (13:46-48), thereby perceiving exactly the same pattern of differentiated, associated excellency. Thus the affective recognition of what was happening is intersubjectively shared and verified. What was the source of the new affective, intersubjective recognition which energised the tradition so that its institutions could be reconfigured in light of Christ? It seems plausible, in light of Luke's emphasis on the presence of the Holy Spirit in the

church, to say that it was the Holy Spirit who enabled this intersubjectivity. After this intersubjective recognition, they are appointed to go to Jerusalem to discuss developments with the church; and so they go, bringing the wisdom of *charan megalen* (χαρὰν μεγάλην; 15:3) to the church as they travel.

But this affective half-light did not lead *immediately* to the carefully worded and considered letter to the Gentile believers (Acts 15:22-29). Instead there were two further stages. For the intersubjective sharing had to give way to the reflective admiration of what God was doing among the Gentiles and the process of communal deliberation yielding a norm as a basis of action in the form of the letter to the Gentiles. Thus, after their arrival, the Jerusalem church council of Acts 15, a ‘model for the political process’,⁴⁴ hears two decisive pieces of evidence: Peter’s testimony concerning God’s gracious gift of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles (15:7-11) is followed by Paul and Barnabas’ account of the miracles God has done among the Gentiles (15:12). There ensue reflection on God and his promises and deliberation concerning the right course of action which conclude in the letter prescribing norms for the different churches’ common life. Thus the joy of Barnabas, in recognition of the work of God, was the eschatological, participatory half-light of recognition which preceded this process, not giving the final word but offering the first. Through Lacoste, we maintained that the inseparability of cognition and affection is basic to a rich account of prudence in a healthy political society. In Acts we read that Barnabas recognised God’s grace and rejoiced and that the churches benefitted greatly. By the power of the Holy Spirit, the churches’ affections achieved a recognition of God’s representative work, an awakening to what God was doing in the world. This

⁴⁴ Wannenwetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 298

awakening then opened up the possibility for the exercise of a healthy, united social prudence which was both wisely attentive to the troubled cries of the Gentiles, imperilled by the threat of an intolerable 'yoke' (Acts 15:10, 19), and focussed on the common good of all the people under Christ's authority in one harmonious group. The affections themselves, as cognitive though inexhaustive reports of God's work, were not that prudence but were essential for initiating and directing its proper exercise. This account of the place of affection in political relations importantly preserves affection as a cognitively rich resource for the moral life without overburdening it with responsibility for all moral thought.

We have now spoken of the Holy Spirit. The affections, reflection and deliberation of the church, the true society of the people of God, are distinct from the world in that they are specially led by the Spirit of God. Accordingly, the quality of the intersubjective sharing of affective recognition and the enduring nature of that sharing does not depend solely on the godliness or ungodliness of the people in question but depends fundamentally on the sovereign presence of the Holy Spirit in and between all believers as he resources their memory and stabilises their life in Christ. This is the fulfilment of the pattern which was indicated in the discussion of Augustine in chapter two whereby deep stability was found partially in the memory of Edenic joy based on the truth but mainly in the worship of the God revealed in Jesus Christ. In the gospel, joy is brought close in the person of Jesus Christ. Through him, the Holy Spirit enriches the affective penury bound up with our fallen condition.

In conclusion, we observe that biblical representation and law effectively support political society when a people are initially bound together in intersubjective

affective recognition. Just as joy in the land constituted the participative understanding whereby Israel might recognise YHWH, reflect on his goodness and deliberately obey his law concerning the poor and needy, so joy in the gospel and in Jesus constituted the participative understanding whereby the church might recognise their leader, Jesus Christ, and, by Spirit-led reflection and deliberation, establish and obey norms on the basis of which their common life might proceed. Understanding the role of affection in the institutions of the people of God enables closer conceptualisation of the nature of political societies in general. For the Scriptural presentation of affection interprets what Burke meant by ‘public affections’, showing how affections are essential if people are to live lawful lives under the authority of their representatives. Affections precisely constitute the engagement of the community in the matters for the sake of which representation and law are instituted. In this sense they are aids to law, correctives to our practice of it and the way that we recognise those authorities who give us reasons for obeying it. The eschatological account of affections in Scripture also claims to provide a critical standpoint whereby affections in all institutions may be described and assessed. The joyful fulfilment which Christ brought to the institutions of Israel through the church by the Spirit stands as an analogical consideration for affections in the institutions of every political society. The nature of Christ’s representation of the Israelite tradition should shape all our practices of institutional representation. Moreover, through Christ, given to unite the nations in harmonious wisdom, not least in their affections, the Holy Spirit quickens memories and guides affections that the stubborn and hard hearts of the nations might turn to their Creator God.

Section III. Theological affections in the institutions of representation and law

Now that we have specified a Christian eschatology of political affections as depicted in the Old and New Testaments, we may proceed to consider two interrelated aspects of institutional life in political society, namely representation and law. Within ‘earshot’⁴⁵ of the cries and wisdom of Deuteronomy and Luke-Acts, we will establish a dialogue between Oliver O’Donovan and Martha Nussbaum. Neither of these scholars has written about each other but both their political conceptions are attentive to the emotional or affective dimension of institutions albeit in intriguingly different ways. The argument will be that our concept of affection enables an interpretation of O’Donovan which yields a more convincing view of political affections than Nussbaum’s insightful account offers.

We have seen in chapter one and in this chapter how Nussbaum’s corrective development of Millian liberalism aims to demonstrate the significance of emotions, especially compassion, disgust and shame, for political institutions. There is much which O’Donovan and Nussbaum agree on, especially a scepticism of the potency of social contract theory to sustain healthy political societies and a conviction that affections (or emotions) have a cognitive aptitude which is relevant to political society. However, O’Donovan’s conception, interpreted through Christian eschatology, is seriously at odds with Nussbaum’s eschatology of mature interdependence which relies, as we saw, on child psychology and a certain view of human mortality. This axis of disagreement substantially constitutes the different roles which affection or emotion plays in their accounts. It should also be noted that

⁴⁵ Ford, D., *Christian Wisdom*, 5

Nussbaum's focus is on emotions and so she has a more detailed account than O'Donovan. O'Donovan's writing, on the other hand, though imbued with theological acumen, marks out the affective dimension of human morality and political society without thoroughly exploring it, thereby highlighting an important area for investigation by contemporary moral theologians.

Representation

We have seen O'Donovan's account of how political institutions provide the structure within which political authority can be recognised. He goes on to claim that:

God raises up those who will bear authority. The mysterious alchemy of the affections elicits recognition, a people see itself in the face of an individual thrown forward for the occasion, and representation occurs.⁴⁶

Recognition of a representative is a 'complex balance of the cognitive and affective',⁴⁷ 'like the recognition we accord to a face or form, the recognition of Gestalt, grasped at once in a moment of acknowledgement and welcome.'⁴⁸ Affective understanding is both immediate and yet, contra Edwards, inchoate, grasping objects in outline but to a degree of detailed specification which enables clear moral knowledge. It is O'Donovan's view that this 'affective dimension is entirely absent from official theories of representation in the modern West',⁴⁹ such as social contractarianism. This twenty-first century insight echoes Burke's criticism, noted

⁴⁶ O'Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 164

⁴⁷ *ibid.* 180

⁴⁸ *ibid.* 161

⁴⁹ *ibid.* 163

above, of ‘that sort of reason which banishes the affections [and] is incapable of filling their place’.⁵⁰ We also see parallels between Burke’s interest in the embodiment of institutions in persons and O’Donovan’s account of the affective welcome of God-appointed, personal political representatives.

In order to explore this affective dimension which Burke and O’Donovan point towards, we consider again the nature of institutions. As argued above, institutions are the organised form of community life which embody a tradition of practices. Affections within institutions participate intersubjectively in the memory held in the tradition in order to make connections between the past and the present life of the community. The role of a representative is to provide a personal place of focus in order that these bonds of affection between representative and represented might be renewed or, in Burke’s terms, that there might be the creation of ‘love, veneration, admiration, or attachment’.⁵¹ This is what we normally call ‘leadership’ whereby a representative person or group enables those represented to discover both their political identity and the forms of life which maintain and develop that identity.⁵² Leadership presupposes hierarchically differentiated vantage points on common objects of affective recognition. The common affections – common, cognitive participations in common objects – occur amidst diverse societal roles. Political representatives, through the attractive power of their position, strength, beauty, knowledge or skill may summon the affective recognitions of the people to a common intersubjective verification. The power of attraction of political affections depends, to an important extent, on the levels of authority which permeate human societies.

⁵⁰ Burke, E., *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 77

⁵¹ *ibid.* 77

⁵² O’Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 72

Intersubjectivity is thus not an essentially non-hierarchical notion. Indeed, for many practical political purposes within certain institutions, it is essentially hierarchical since in all societies there are both representatives and represented who share in affective recognition of common objects but who are differentiated as to their authority. Here we find further and illuminating agreement with Jonathan Edwards who extended his doctrine of excellency in a political direction. In *The Nature of True Virtue*, Edwards argues that ‘it pleases God to observe analogy in his works...and especially to establish inferior things in an analogy to superior.’⁵³ He envisages an analogy from Being in general – the excellency of divine things, disclosed to mankind definitively in the gospel – to some discrete (or private) aspect of Being considered on its own. The agreement of the latter within itself is beautiful inasmuch as it resembles the complete harmony of the former to some shadowy extent. Just as a man may give *cordial agreement* to Being in general so he also may give *natural agreement*, a secondary sort of virtue, to reflections of Being in general. Edwards sees such secondary beauty in political institutions as they approximate the harmony of Being in general: ‘[t]here is a beauty of order in society...As when the different members of society have all their appointed office, place and station’.⁵⁴ Therefore, in terms now familiar, we may say that the differentiation of the parts of a political society is the premise for their associative harmony. Not all can be

⁵³ Edwards, J., *The Nature of True Virtue*, 564

⁵⁴ *ibid.* 568. Elsewhere, he also speaks of the common illuminations of the Spirit by which ‘God may greatly assist natural men’s reason, in their reasoning about secular things’ and this includes their ‘natural abilities in political affairs’ (*Religious Affections*, 207).

representatives if any are to be represented. Hierarchy itself is non-problematic and even aesthetically pleasing.⁵⁵

For political representatives within a hierarchy to perform their task *effectively* – as distinct from performing it well – they must have the authority of the tradition. All political representatives have political authority, given to them by God in his providence. They personally fill certain community institutions in roles such as king, member of parliament, councillor or judge with respect to a tradition of practices held in cultural memory. If the representative adequately discovers and embodies the tradition then the represented will recognise the representative as someone who holds authority for them. The significance of this for the affections of the representative and the represented is that such a representative has the authority, mediated through the familiar institutions, to draw the affections of the people in specific ways towards understanding, reflection and deliberation concerning common objects. When a community follows its representative with intersubjectively affective recognitions among themselves, this is what we will call “loyalty”, a form of affective affinity from the led towards the leader and amongst those who are led. Loyalty is thus the common form of all affective intersubjective unity between representative and represented, whether the affection itself is joy, sorrow, hatred or some other affection. As such it does not essentially consist in blind allegiance to a person but is rather a committed, communal way of beginning to understand the world in relation to a leader who is directing that understanding. As before, whatever affective form loyalty takes – whether hatred of enemies or joy in just judgments – it should be understood as preliminary to moral reflection and moral deliberation. True

⁵⁵ Note that this account of representation certainly does not in itself overturn the equality of representative and represented under human and natural law. For these terms, see Aquinas, T., *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae 94-95.

loyalty is thus not blind but allows itself to be led into further moral investigation. Loyalty fails where it does not lead into consideration of whether the leader's account of the good and the right reflects the community's own order of value and, beyond that, the moral order created by God.

Thus for representatives to perform their tasks *well*, they must not only be effective in attracting loyalty but must also be drawing out *appropriate* affections concerning objects as a prelude to moral reflection and moral deliberation. For example, people might disagree about whether a representative should seek to attract sorrow, compassion or anger towards a particular group such as women who become pregnant substantially for the sake of state benefits. The disagreement shows that affection itself is both describable and reasonable but also important because of the policy discussions and decisions which might be opened up by such initial affection.

To this we add that a good political representative distinguishes matters which require affective political attention from those which are not political but are of 'public' or private concern where 'public' designates that region of political society which, in most Western nation-states, is beyond the familial but not essentially to do with coercive authority and legislation. We have in mind voluntary societies, social organisms such as credit unions and, especially, churches. The logic of our distinction depends on an insight particularly associated with Augustine that political authority was added after the Fall in order to preserve society's common life rather than to have control over every aspect of it. Martin Luther argued specifically that the institutions of family and church existed before the Fall.⁵⁶ Wise political

⁵⁶ Luther, M., *Lectures on Genesis*, in *Luther's Works*, Pelikan & Lehman (ed.), Concordia, vol.1, 1958. Luther comments on Genesis 2:16 that '[h]ere we have the establishment of the church before there was any government of the home and of the state; for Eve was not yet created. Moreover, the church is established without walls and without any pomp, in a very spacious and very delightful

representatives perceive the provisional nature of political authority in relation to such non-political institutions, discern where their responsibilities end and are governed by those limits. The representative's distinctively political task is to awaken a people affectively to some particular aspect of the moral order which requires their common judgment, a judgment which may, in some circumstances, be effected by coercion. This task may, of course, engage with the life of a family or a church when events occur which require political intervention, such as the abuse of children. But the guiding conceptual framework is not that the political authority gives rise to other institutions but rather that the other institutions came first and then required the assistance of political authority. A political representative is thus an 'authority...I depend on to show me the reasons for acting'⁵⁷ concerning these distinctly political affairs. He may draw my political affections in order to make these reasons clear to me.

The mediated loyalty concerning particular objects into which we are drawn affectively by the leader is accompanied by a more direct sort of loyalty which is between the representative in his representative office and the represented. We recognise such a representative with 'awe, a wonder that is both delight and terror'.⁵⁸ This wondrous awe is an affective awakening, evoked by the 'peremptory' appearing of representative authority among a people.⁵⁹ Those who find themselves represented begin to understand their representative in delight concerning the representative's limited, political vocation for the common good and in terror at what may befall the

place. After the church has been established, the household government is also set up, when Eve is added to Adam as his companion. Thus the temple is earlier than the home, and it is also better this way. Moreover, there was no government of the state before sin, for there was no need of it. Civil government is a remedy required by our corrupted nature.'

⁵⁷ O'Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 132

⁵⁸ *ibid.* 132

⁵⁹ *ibid.* 134

community individually and corporately – whether by way of coercive punishment or sheer social deterioration – if they fail to live rightly in pursuing that common good. Wondrous awe is thus the basic affective form of loyalty between representative and represented. It is the participative beginning of political wisdom in the world as it appears to a political community and, God willing, as it is in Christ. As with affective recognition in general, wondrous awe does not entail easy or immediate agreement on practical, political questions but rather initiates and sustains moral reflection, deliberation and action.

Since it is God who raises up authority, this initial awe which forms loyalty is ultimately rooted in divine providential activity. God's providence, in giving representation to people in their traditions, awakens people by summoning their affections to the works prepared for them within hierarchically differentiated intersubjectivity. Some providentially attracted affections have a revelatory quality and may result in a continuation, renunciation or embrace of a tradition or its representatives, in whole or in part. Providence operates through reminding the people of their tradition through the representative for the sake of action in the present. The people's affections, focussed through the institutional representative, recognise aspects of their past life by the power of memory, thereby initiating reflection and deliberation in the present. An affective admiration for the spirit of those who fought in the Battle of Britain, focussed through the representative laying of a wreath, resources reflection on the continuing excellence of the British Armed Forces and deliberation concerning how this significant common object ought to be maintained.⁶⁰ Effective representatives make use of such possibilities in a people's

⁶⁰ For more complex cases, consider the ceremony on the occasion of the withdrawal of British troops from Basra in April 2009 or the joint, Unionist-Republican acts of commemoration for the dead of the

life in order to develop the loyal intersubjectivity which sustains effective action. If they fail in their task of eliciting wondrous awe – perhaps through the incongruence of their laying the wreath with their military or political policies – then a measure of their authority to attract loyalty may ebb away. God’s providence, normally inscrutable but occasionally more transparent, oversees the ebb and flow of loyalties and the rise and fall of political authorities.

In order to see in more detail the inner workings of differentiated, political, eschatological, affective intersubjectivity, it will be helpful to consider two conceptual threats which have opposed it. The first is Kant’s ‘good will’, described by O’Donovan as ‘affective independence’,

an affective disposition wholly free of self-reference, beyond the reach of reflection and skeptical doubt, a simple and undialectical embrace of the good.⁶¹

O’Donovan proceeds to a political and eschatological examination of the development of the affectively independent subject whose

service to society was at the cost of undermining society’s institutions. Affective independence made all authorities irrelevant, as though the final redundancy of politics had come about already. [Such an] individual has also been cut off from the worldliness of moral order; and since the order of creation is the only point of reference to judge what is good for created beings to do, he is left with no recourse to practical reason.⁶²

Perpetually oriented to the elusive moment of immediacy, the modern subject stands aloof from his own kind, reflecting objectively upon it, subordinating it to the logic of affective detachment, holding back from participation.⁶³

Irish troubles. For a case of representation which is not *officially* political but has political weight, consider the representative sorrow of the people of Wootton Bassett who, on behalf of the nation, greet the dead of the British armed forces returning from Afghanistan and Iraq.

⁶¹ *ibid.* 299

⁶² *ibid.* 311

⁶³ *ibid.* 310

The modern subject's psychological abstraction from the created order, other orders of value, others of his *genus* and even the self, seeks to anticipate the day when all crowns are laid at the feet of the One to whom all power and authority has been given, Jesus Christ, and so has rendered recognition of one who bears the authority of a tradition nigh on impossible. Such abstraction is a withdrawal from what we have called 'participation'. It is a refusal of the 'worldliness of the moral order' which denies the generic, teleological nature of reality and has terminated in practical unreasonableness *ad infinitum*. Affective independence is an unwillingness to be awake to the world as it is and is thus not a "good will" but rather a stubborn and hard heart, unable to participate wisely in reality, a grotesque reflection of Jesus' judgment on his own people that 'seeing they may not see and hearing they may not understand' (Luke 8:10) mirrored in Paul's words to the Jewish elders in fulfilment of the Isaianic judgment (Acts 28:26-27).

The affections of this subject are thus walled off from their proper role which is to initiate the subject's committed engagement in the world. The loss of this engagement undermines recognition of common goods and so severely diminishes the possibility of a genuine 'we' of intersubjective verification, thereby eviscerating affective, epistemological power from political society's institutions. The representative is effective when he overcomes stubborn, affective independence by providing a meaningful continuation of the tradition which summons the affections of the people into intersubjective participation in the traditional order of value and the created moral order. Through the construal of the present in terms of the past and through projecting a vision for the future, the representative draws on deep reserves of affective wisdom stored in the memory to invite people to engage afresh in the old

and new challenges which a political society may face. Representation thus saves people from lingering on the edge of reality and calls them into the difficult business of participatory living. Just as kings of old stirred their troops before leading them onto the field of battle, so social and political representatives today may, in word, deed and symbol, call peoples into affectively engaged, right action to defend the wronged, punish the wrongdoer and promote the good.

The second threat is proceduralism. The particular focus here, in the context of political representation, concerns electoral procedure. O'Donovan observes that as

the electoral system expands, organs of consultation ossify and fall away. The more the political classes are set to the task of fighting elections, the less they will be free to attend to what they hear. The roar of the heavy machinery of legitimation drowns out the very possibility of listening to voices that reason, plead, celebrate or lament in public. The price of legitimist purity is a high one, paid in practical and moral impotence...So the state becomes cut off from the realm of public communications, and, by ignoring it, denies its own proper responsibility to it.⁶⁴

In Ford's terms, attentiveness to the public, reasonable 'cries' of the people is the beginning of successful representation while a primary political allegiance to electoral procedure produces a deadening effect on that affective epistemology which hears cries and stimulates the search for the common good. O'Donovan's observation is not only that the political elite cannot perceive people's reasonable, affectively toned cries but also that an inattentiveness to such affection disempowers common moral thought and agency and so leaves representatives and represented cut off from each other, bereft of loyal intersubjectivity. Elsewhere he comments that

[b]ehind the legalities of the electoral mechanism there must be the social event of representation, the cohering of a more complex network of relations – institutions, sectors, traditions, loyalties – to forge an identification between a people and its government. Election can only be the lynchpin that holds the wheel of tradition in place. So we must ask...of regulative electoral rules...whether they express the

⁶⁴ *ibid.* 179

identity and concerns of the people and their enduring loyalties; whether in other words, they successfully *represent*.⁶⁵

His point is not that electoral rules cannot be just and, indeed, an aid to representation but rather that their ultimate purpose is to serve that which is conceptually prior, namely the common good of the community. The community's 'enduring loyalties' are their shared, repeated, regular ways of participating affectively, through representative institutions and traditions, in the world as it appears to them and, God willing, the world as it is. The threat of proceduralism consists in that which is conceptually and eschatologically subservient to the common good undermining that good by becoming the all-consuming fascination of politicians, electorate and media alike.

The Scriptures provide exemplary instances of representation which suggest ways of overcoming the threats to the common good which affective independence and proceduralism represent. Moses is depicted as the representative who can attract and stabilise the nation's affections within their institutions. As the people stand on the edge of the promised land, Moses, the survivor from the Exodus, remembers the sorrow of slavery in Egypt, the joy, mixed with fear, of the liberation, the popular self-consciousness at Sinai and all the affections on the journey. As such he is qualified to summon the people both to obey the law by eating the bread of affliction at the Passover and by rejoicing at the Feast of Booths and to obey the Lord by going up to take participative possession of the good land which the Lord has given. Moses' memory of the nation's narrative and God's part in it is the storehouse wherein resources are found to lead the people to enduring affective recognition of God and the land.

⁶⁵ *ibid.* 175

Similarly in Luke-Acts, the people rejoice in the way that Jesus' representative activities on their behalf bring righteousness to their institutions and cause them to appear as a publicly defined group over against those Jewish and Roman rulers who were misdirecting the development of their tradition away from the common good. Their joyful recognitions lead them, in the suitably named book of Acts, to be able to do and say what they previously could not do and say by themselves,⁶⁶ namely to live as a joyful people characterised by their bold preaching, experiencing the authoritative wisdom of the reign of God. This becomes possible through the work of the Holy Spirit who enables the people joyfully and subjectively to recognise the resurrected Leadership of Jesus and defines the way that the objective, unprecedented joy in Jesus' birth is deepened into an unprecedented joy in his resurrection as the people of God are 'filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit' (Acts 13:52). This joy is that initial, enduring, participative way of understanding the world as it is in Christ which, rooted in the memory of YHWH and full of hope of the new heaven and the new earth, stabilises reflection, deliberation and actions according to norms such as the Jerusalem church's letter to the Gentile believers.

This analysis of representation gives shape to a Christian eschatology of the affections. The significance of the affections is hard to imagine without temporal extension. One cannot place significant conceptual weight on joy, hatred or even fear behind Rawls' timeless veil of ignorance. From the subjective side, affections are focussed on values which are perceived by agents in their diverse social roles and situations according to their traditions which are temporally extended and stored in memory. From the objective side, affections concern engaged participation in the

⁶⁶ *ibid.* 179

world as it is. Things of this world persist and change over time and so, if affections are to be engaged in something real then they must be timely. Furthermore, following the doctrine of excellency through differentiation and association, it seems that affections are forms of construal whereby one time is seen in terms of another time so that harmony results. Specifically, in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, the time of the Old Testament is construed in terms of the time of the New Testament. Spirit-led affections are ways of construing the life of Israel, including its institutions, and all creation in terms of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ. The angel says,

“Fear not, for behold I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.”
(Luke 2:10-11)

We are invited joyfully to construe Israel’s institutions, such as the Davidic kingship, in terms of a baby boy. To receive these glad tidings with joy is the way to initiate a life of moral reflection, deliberation and action within the terms set by the gospel itself. Affective independence constantly reserves itself from such initiation and so perverts Scriptural common agency; but wisdom hears the angel’s cry of announcement and so becomes attentive to the revelation of Christ and the moral order he vindicates.

Eschatologically attuned affections will construe political society now in terms of Christ. In this way, the eschatological-analogical relation between institutions of contemporary political society and the institutions of Israel fulfilled in Christ may be recognised. Just as Christ’s fulfilment of the traditional institutions of Israel opens up an affectively rich, infinite future, so an earthly representative’s fulfilment of his or her own traditional institutions, while respecting the infinite and transcendent future, may open up an affectively rich though limited future for the

community who find their organised forms in those institutions. Conversation between this Christian eschatology and Martha Nussbaum's account of mature interdependence reveals three fruitful lines of thought with respect to political affections.

First, the resurrection of Jesus shows that political representatives and their communities should not minimise the awfulness of fragility, decay and death by accepting it as the ultimate condition of human life nor eradicate fear and hope from the affective repertoire which surrounds human decline. Representatives who seek to promote 'mature interdependence' would be more or less committed to such a posture. In such a society, the environment for affective understanding would be such that affective recognition of the infinite significance and eschatological perfectibility of human life would be inadmissible in public reasoning. But the resurrection precisely trumpets the news that God did not let his Holy One see corruption (Acts 2:27) and thus calls political representation neither to settle for a truce with death nor attempt to overcome it by its own means. A political environment where such ultimate questions were self-consciously left open would allow for a subtler range of affective understanding concerning the sickness, death and decay which are an ever-present feature of the current human condition.

This is by no means a fringe concern since our affective attitude to death and sickness affects major political institutions especially, in the UK, the National Health Service. Nussbaum's critique of illusory aspirations towards bodily perfection and disgust concerning death is neither the only nor the best way of understanding our contemporary consciousness. Explicitly religious analysis, especially from the perspective of Christian eschatology, both explains the aspiration with respect to

creation and resurrection and attends to the reality of imperfection which Nussbaum has highlighted. Christ's resurrection vindicates our joy in the goodness of this world and our aspiration for joyful experiences in the world to come but also, by demonstrating that death and decay are not the goal of humanity, vindicates our sadness, compassion, hope and fear concerning sickness and death. But Nussbaum's approach does not allow for these redemptive notes to be sounded in political discourse, preferring the choruses of Greek tragedies to the songs of lament *and* joy which fill the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. If decay and death in a fragile world do have the last word in human affairs, then Nussbaum's approach is right. But, in light of the human aspiration for permanence, this does not seem a sound basis for building the mature interdependence she desires. Instead of discounting that aspiration, a political conception attentive to Christian eschatology will affirm it in a qualified way by explaining its source and goal in Jesus Christ.

With respect to the NHS in particular, the affective attitude we have towards death will frame our reflections and deliberations concerning the development of palliative care and the availability of assisted suicide in a state health service. The key issue is control. Palliative care seeks to manage the dying process in such a way as to limit pain and provide a dignified way of dying which stops short of intentional medical killing. Even high levels of palliative sedation which may hasten death are not intended to bring about death but rather to control pain. The patient's decline may be controlled but not the actual timing and manner of death. Medically assisted suicide is an alternative way of controlling the dying process whereby pain is overcome through a death intentionally and jointly brought about by medical

practitioner and patient upon the request of the patient. Thus the patient is given very considerable control over the manner and timing of her death.

The affective attitude we have towards death will shape the way we approach these questions. For Nussbaum, compassion will be appropriate in both cases but much less so, strangely, for the patient opting for assisted suicide since the timing and manner of death is a largely controlled factor. Indeed, on her account, the more control of any sort a patient has over her dying, even through palliative care, the less appropriate compassion will be. Nussbaum's compassion, her paradigm political emotion, is oriented to the *uncontrollable* quality of decay and death itself. Moreover, death is something to be embraced, without fear and loathing, because it is the permanent and final form of the human condition.

Nussbaum's compassion is thus very largely untouched by joy and hope. But Christian compassion will follow a different logic since it is oriented not only to decay and death but also to the transcendent dimension in which all humans participate. Palliative care, by refusing to collude intentionally with death, coheres better with Christian eschatology's account of compassion which, though focussed on human fragility, construes it in terms of the resurrection of Christ. Affections are oriented not only to the patient's control of her situation but also to the sovereign rule exercised by God as demonstrated in the resurrection. Compassion for those contemplating assisted suicide is thus not implausibly measured by the extent of the agent's control of her circumstances. Nor does a patient's choice of palliative care diminish our compassion. Above all, compassion for the dying is very reasonably accompanied by fear, joy and hope – perhaps separately or perhaps together – since the desire for transcendence and permanence beyond death runs deep in the human

consciousness, as Augustine's account of memory indicated. Fear of death is entirely understandable and worthy itself of compassion – seeking to minimise it is highly implausible and even unhealthy in itself since a political pact with death may obviate the development of life-extending, palliative care. Moreover, hopeful joy in what remains of earthly life and in a life beyond death have permeated the Christian palliative and hospice care movement which has preserved a recognition of God's sovereignty over the end of life thereby recognising the complexities of control and affections which surround death.

If a political compassion organised according to Nussbaum's eschatology were thoroughly to permeate the NHS, this institution would be providing an environment of understanding which shapes our reflection and deliberation in an unwarrantably anti-transcendent manner. As such it will fit people less well both for this life and for the eternal life for which they are intended. For if compassion is for things which are uncontrollably bad, if death is not bad and is thus not to be feared and if assisted suicide controls death, then not only is compassion much less appropriate for those contemplating assisted suicide but also assisted suicide as an embrace of death without fear and less worthy of compassion emerges as the more preferable option. Indeed, Nussbaum is on record as supporting a limited right to assisted suicide and holds that the 'danger of abuse is the only good reason...to refuse to make assisted suicide illegal.'⁶⁷ From a theological perspective, political representatives have a responsibility not to promote Nussbaum's account of death and decay lest we slip into an arguably sub-human (and certainly sub-Christian) way of viewing our neighbours, especially the most vulnerable who are sick, dying and in

⁶⁷ Nussbaum, M., 'Human Dignity and Political Entitlements', *Human Dignity and Bioethics: Essays Commissioned by the President's Council on Bioethics*, US Independent Agencies and Commissions, 2008, 351-380; available at http://www.bioethics.gov/reports/human_dignity/chapter14.html

despair. Instead, they should leave open the question of transcendence and so allow a wider range of affective experience to accompany the dying process. The extension of institutions of hospice and palliative care, preferably open to the transcendent dimension, promises far more for the health of society.

Second, the ascension of Jesus promises a kingdom of perfect and permanent peace which makes shame a reasonable political affection. For the political judgments of earthly authority involve a ‘confession of shame in the face of necessity, a sense of tragedy about the cutting-short of reasonable interaction. So for Augustine the just man wages even just wars in tears.’⁶⁸ Christian eschatology makes shame in the face of tragedy a sensible form of self-understanding for it rightly recognises our limitations, especially in our failures to govern ourselves with wisdom.

Nussbaum is unimpressed with Augustine and his line of reasoning. Though she applauds his attention to emotion in moral psychology and his concurrence with her that vulnerability and uncertainty are significant in human emotions, especially with respect to what she obliquely calls ‘the uncertainty of grace’,⁶⁹ she criticises him for undermining mature interdependence by being so heavenly minded that this-worldly, political concerns are merely provisional and so of no great importance.⁷⁰ In his ‘politics of Eden’, she believes, humans were

in a deep way nonerotic: they had no passionate attachment to pieces of the world; so long as they were good, they were not curious or striving. We might say that in our sense they were without emotion. It is thus a very basic fact about humanity – our need for objects, our keen hunger to know and to control the sources of good – that is original sin. And thus a basic aspect of our humanity becomes a fitting object of boundless shame; it is this very condition that renders us hopelessly alike so far as merit is concerned. The politics of Eden is this: be ashamed of your longing for

⁶⁸ O’Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 15

⁶⁹ Nussbaum, M., *Upheavals of Thought*, 541

⁷⁰ *ibid.* 552

objects, your curiosity to know them, and your very wish to originate independent actions. Be so ashamed that you see this as radical evil, and yield your will before the authority of the church. But also: be consoled, for this is merely a provisional world, and the actions you would like to undertake here do not matter greatly; all of your suffering will ultimately be made up by the transcendent beauty of coming into the presence of God.⁷¹

Nussbaum's critique displays nothing so much as a lack of insight into Christian eschatology and a lack of awareness of her own. To begin with, her belief that Augustine's account of salvation history makes our active, moral life in this world irrelevant is simply mistaken. Augustine's writing is hardly without moral recommendations for the life of the church and the world nor is he embarrassed about framing their significance in light of the judgment to come. For example, Nussbaum holds that it is Augustine's view that people are to be loved individually, 'not only the good parts but also the flaws and faults' and, as such imperfect people, they are to be loved 'in themselves'.⁷² But then she doubts whether Augustine really believes that we are to love individual people since 'what one loves above all in them is the presence of God and the hope of salvation.'⁷³ Consider too her claim that 'Augustinian love is committed to denying the importance of the worldly losses and injustices to which my neighbour may attach importance, in order to assert the primacy of the need for God and the potential for grace.'⁷⁴ The basic Augustinian tenet she overlooks is that, just as you love the sick person that he might be well *in this life*, so you love the flawed and faulty person that he might be righteous *in this*

⁷¹ *ibid.* 555

⁷² *ibid.* 549

⁷³ *ibid.* 549-50

⁷⁴ *ibid.* 552

life. Augustine's moral thought is hardly restricted to otherworldly concerns, whether he is addressing righteous action, political justice or personal health.⁷⁵

This misrepresentation of Augustine's ethics and eschatology stems from her rejection of the doctrine of the Fall which has 'too much abjectness...too much unwillingness to grant that a human being may in fact become, and be, good'.⁷⁶ She believes that all that is left to the Augustinian is to be ashamed of what we are and to 'cover ourselves, mourn, and wait.'⁷⁷ In light of this doctrinal rejection, she rather oddly criticises Augustine for not ascribing to Edenic humanity characteristics which are obviously, precisely on Augustine's view of the Fall, features of fallen humanity! Augustine's Adam and Eve indeed are 'without emotion' on *her* account of the nature of emotions – they are content rather than striving, dependent on God rather than seeking to be independent arbiters of good and evil and under the sovereignty of God rather than desiring to control the sources of good. Like LeDoux, a neuroscientist she favours, Nussbaum unfortunately ends up believing that a large part of the Christian tradition believes emotions to be essentially inextricable from sin.

By normalising the instability of the fallen world, Nussbaum dismisses the enduring stability of creation, new creation and creation's God. Nussbaum's eschatology has no room for heaven and hell, two of the traditional last four things, although the goal of mature interdependence is characterised by elements of both – social solidarity amidst permanent death. Moreover, God drops entirely out of Nussbaum's analysis of Augustine's moral thought to be replaced, somewhat

⁷⁵ Augustine, *On the First Epistle of John*, Homily 8.11; cf. O'Donovan, O., *The Problem of Self-Love in Saint Augustine*, Wipf and Stock, 2006, 123

⁷⁶Nussbaum, M., *Upheavals of Thought*, 550-1. Nussbaum goes on to show a preference for Thomistic account of virtuous self-improvement (ibid. 551).

⁷⁷ ibid. 556

strangely, by the church, a sociological oversight if ever there was one and entirely in line with her suggestion of the anti-transcendent liberal democratic module we discussed earlier.⁷⁸ Nussbaum's account of shame springs directly from her rejection of the Fall. She ascribes shame to disappointed, infantile, narcissistic desires for omnipotence which are endlessly destructive of self and others. When Christian and political, this shame apparently even energises violence against unbelievers and 'God's enemies'.⁷⁹ This is an understandable interpretation in light of Nussbaum's overall philosophy but quite unrepresentative of the mature Christian position. Therefore, in light of her misinterpretation of Christian eschatology, we must undertake the task of giving a brief, Christian account of the place of shame in politics on her behalf.

Political shame concerns both the embarrassing necessity of the resort to public force and the essentially limited nature of the judgment such force effects. If we reckon that the world is fallen, shame becomes a highly important public affection, whereby people may understand the limitations of earthly powers and act accordingly. As we have seen, Christ's leadership involved the shaming of those who

⁷⁸ For evidence that this theological short-sightedness is not an isolated feature of Nussbaum's thought, consider her eccentric appeal to an edict of Emperor Constantine, which specifically forbade marking the face of criminals with tattoos or brands. She quotes directly from the edict which explains that the face 'has been fashioned in the likeness of the divine beauty' (Nussbaum, M., *Hiding from Humanity*, 172). She then explains that Constantine was 'precisely' emphasising the face as 'the mark of our humanity and individuality' (ibid. 221) but she strangely makes no reference to God. Her willingness to put store by Constantine without offering any discussion concerning his theological rationale is puzzling. Constantine's point is surely that it is only as representatives of the divine image that we can discover in ourselves and each other the value which sustains and energises meaningful social life. We may appear to each other without shame when our faces are not disfigured by man's judgment but rather recognised by others as signs of God's creative love. As we appear to each other, we are able to form intersubjective bonds of affection as we recognise and value together the common goods of our community. Representation enables this process for the representative 'bears the people's image, makes the people visible and tangible, to itself and to others. Yet the representative does not bring the people into existence, but simply makes it appear.' (O'Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 157); on this point cf. Robert Spaemann who observes that the modern, unsituated subject 'has no face' (Spaemann, R., *Personen*, Klett-Cotta, 1996, 144).

⁷⁹ Nussbaum, M., *Upheavals of Thought*, 548

held authority inadequately (Luke 13:17). The inadequacy of our reflective and deliberative powers to the task of just judgment, whether in peacetime or in war tearfully waged, is a permanent feature of fallen humanity. Inasmuch as that desire is a desire to be God, then a Christian, political eschatology agrees with Nussbaum's scepticism about omnipotence since the tendency of political authority to overreach itself is a bid for a certain sort of omnipotence. But, unlike in Nussbaum's account, shame has a positive and helpful place in Christian eschatology for it precisely initiates our understanding of the true nature of humanity which is neither equal to God, nor always striving nor destined to decay but rather 'a little lower than the heavenly beings' (Psalm 8:5) and able to participate in the kingdom of the ascended Christ. Wise shame discloses to ourselves that we are not failed gods but rather failed human creatures graciously called to an eternal kingdom. From the perspective of punishment, shame is a basic affection which accompanies modern society's preferred form of sanction, namely incarceration. To inform someone that he is not fit to live in wider society, even for a short time, is to bring shame on that person. One wonders what emotions Nussbaum expects prisoners who have committed serious crimes to experience. She certainly offers no real alternative to incarceration *per se* but rather seeks so to humanise prisons that shame is no part of the prisoner's experience.⁸⁰ But the worthy desire to make prisons more liveable by, for example, improving sanitary conditions, cannot obscure both the declaration of guilt against a convict and the fact of the loss of freedom which he experiences, both of which are closely associated with a feeling of shame. Nussbaum's dislike of shame seems to be connected more to her lack of a doctrine of redemption from shame than from the

⁸⁰ Nussbaum, M., *Hiding from Humanity*, 247ff

structure of the affection itself which seems an accurate affective understanding of the condition of being excluded from mainstream society because of a definite offence. In sum, human inability to do right is worthy of shame not only with respect to those who judge guilt but also those who are judged guilty.

Third, most briefly, the differentiated life of the kingdom of God, inaugurated by Jesus the representative leader, shows that there is hierarchy which is affectively beneficial while neither trivial nor unjust. In a political institution, while all may be equal under the law of an institution, some have authority and others are under authority; some are representatives and others are represented. It is not quite clear whether Nussbaum believes all hierarchy in political society is ‘pernicious’⁸¹ or only certain forms of it. She is determined not to support political theories which systematically fail to take the disabled into account but seems to equate such theories with ‘unequal and hierarchical social relations.’⁸² Our thesis is that good social hierarchy is desirable if people are to experience the wonder, fear and awe of representative leadership and so be quickened, affirmed or challenged in their loyalties and enduring, intersubjective affections. Good representation will entail the compassionate inclusion of the out-groups for whom Nussbaum fights but will not settle for an account of the members of those out-groups which either undermines the representative leadership they need nor falls short of the promise of Christ’s representation for their own eschatological future.

⁸¹ *ibid.* 340

⁸² *ibid.* 348

Law

Burke claimed that ‘public affections...are required sometimes as supplements, sometimes as correctives, always as aids to law.’⁸³ We turn to consider how affections operate in those legislative and judicial institutions through which communities make pronouncements concerning the goods they share in common. Those institutions we shall group under the single name of ‘law’ and their central common practice, following O’Donovan, is ‘judgment’, an ‘*act of moral discrimination that pronounces upon a preceding act or existing state of affairs to establish a new public context.*’⁸⁴ Within the law, we distinguish between *generic* judgments given by legislatures as laws which have force for all relevant cases within a jurisdiction and *particular* judgments given by courts as discriminations concerning particular cases.

With respect to both types of judgment, the process will often start with cries of pleading which alert us to the possibility of a need for judgment. For example, the ‘English parliament began life as a “court of common pleas,” a means by which the governed spoke to government [read: represented spoke to their political representatives] about their frustrations.’⁸⁵ We may add that, in the modern era at least, the governed also speak to their government about causes for celebration and joy, perhaps petitioning representatives to celebrate, safeguard and promote some sporting or cultural endeavour. Whether in frustration or celebration, the initiation of reflection and deliberation for the common good thus arises from the affective cries of the people. Although the people’s judgment, partially expressed in affection, is not

⁸³ Burke, E., *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 77-78

⁸⁴ O’Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 7

⁸⁵ *ibid.* 194

a political judgment, it initiates a process towards political judgment. An “emotional reaction” (or, better, an “affective attraction”) and ‘the reactive principle’ of government⁸⁶ are thus closely related. Affective responses to societal ills and societal flourishing are often dismissed from rational discourse as knee-jerk reactions. But such reactions may be reasonable in the way that affections are reasonable, namely as initial, participative understandings of the world.

A community may react (be attracted) intersubjectively to the wrong and the bad with fear, anger or grief and to the right and the good with joy. They fear because of the threat that wrong poses to the common good; they are angry and grieve because it is a *wrong* which has or appears to have been done; they rejoice as they are drawn into some action or state of affairs which serves the common good. Through the court of common pleas, their representative attends to their affections and may or may not come to share in them. For example, a group of constituents may be indignant about the inadequate statutory provision for young men leaving prison. Their representative recognises and understands this affection thereby bringing ‘grievance out of the sphere of private action into the field of public judgment’. In so doing, she participates in their cries but makes possible public reflection and deliberation to verify whether their indignation is appropriate. For, ‘the decisive test is not the residual existence of a grievance, but its capacity to arouse general sympathy’. Such sympathy may well signal the presence of actual injustice, thereby drawing the representative’s attention to an injurious wrong. But equally it may

⁸⁶ *ibid.* 59-66; the ‘reactive principle’ of government elaborates the insight that political authority is an institution providentially added after the Fall with the task of reacting to defend society against ‘injurious wrongs’. The principle does not necessarily tend towards minimal government but to an economy of government which preserves and promotes the ‘*society* which gives authority its rationale.’ (O’Donovan, O. and O’Donovan, J., *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought*, Eerdmans, 1999, 109)

become a ‘great fomenter of public discord’ when justice is not done or does not appear to have been done.⁸⁷ A good representative will deal with this potential discord by taking the people’s affections seriously without granting them the last word. She will understand how they feel or, in colloquial terms, “feel their pain” but then allow that initial understanding to open up reflection and deliberation rather than foreclose them. Thus intersubjectively shared affections are a basic form of communication available to represented and representatives. But what ought the good representative to do in light of this communication? At this point it makes a difference whether we are talking about the generic judgments of legislators or the particular judgments of the judiciary.

On a generic level, affection, as a humble, penurious way of beginning the movement from values to norms, is well-suited to the representative’s task of discovering law since it is non-exhaustive in its moral deliverances, encouraging further enquiry while offering an initial judgment. When a people’s anger or grief is drawn to some particular wrong, parliamentary legislators (as contrasted with court judges) are initially focussed on that particular case. However, they are not mandated to judge directly on that matter because that task is reserved for the judiciary in criminal and civil suits and because of the general rule that legislators do not make generic laws based on one particular case. Rather they are to make normative judgments in the form of laws which, in part at least, rightly recognise the popular affective recognitions which have become apparent through particular cases. Thus there is a movement from popular recognition of value at the level of particularity or a repeated pattern of particulars, via political reflection and deliberation, to a

⁸⁷ O’Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 123

representative action of norm-giving which itself establishes ‘*a new public context*.’⁸⁸ If institutions successfully enable this process over time, the public context will be marked by an “affective wisdom”, that ability to understand affective recognitions as key aspects of political discourse and reasoning. Such a context will encourage processes of intersubjective verification of affective recognition thereby promoting reflective, deliberative law-making towards the common good. In this way, good laws take account of the affections of the people over time. As noted previously, this makes law ‘the only safe form of cultural memory’,⁸⁹ since it remembers what a tradition has learnt about the appropriateness of certain affective recognitions in certain situations.

Contrast this approach to the place of affections in law with that of Jonathan Edwards. A key feature of harmonious, political association, according to Edwards, is symmetry. Human consciousness of such symmetry is by the affections of the ‘natural conscience’,⁹⁰ guided by the common illuminations of the Spirit ‘as *operating on the self*’ as distinct from special and saving illuminations of the Spirit ‘as *dwelling in the self*’.⁹¹ Having considered geometrical symmetry, he develops a metaphysics which situates excellency largely in symmetrical relations between entities.⁹² Edwards especially applies symmetry to the justice enacted by the laws of society, the proper proportioning of duties and obligations amongst relatives, friends and neighbours. When justice is done it is an example of secondary beauty and

⁸⁸ *ibid.* 7

⁸⁹ *ibid.* 144

⁹⁰ Edwards, J., *The Nature of True Virtue*, 589-599

⁹¹ Edwards, J., *Religious Affections*, editor’s introduction, 24

⁹² Edwards, J., *The Mind*, 381, ‘There is a beauty in equality...How unbeautiful would be the body if the parts on one side were unequal to those on the other...how unbeautiful would a building be if no equality were observed in the correspondent parts.’ Edwards also considers the asymmetrical proportionality of parts in a whole, as with the strokes which go together to make up the well drawn flourishes of a master penman. However, asymmetry is less important to Edwards when he comes to political justice, as we shall see.

secondary virtue by analogy from the beauty and virtue of Being in general. The governing principle of this secondary form of moral virtue – which is very distant from true virtue – is ‘desert’, a principle which Edwards develops in the context of the discussion of self-love, which in turn is expressed in gratitude towards those who love us and anger for those who hate us. In short, ‘all the moral sense that is essential to those affections [of gratitude and anger] is a sense of *desert*’.⁹³ Desert is thus essentially what the political affections of gratitude and anger perceive. It is a strictly symmetrical principle, ‘that we should desire they themselves should suffer in like manner as we have suffered’,⁹⁴ a pattern he describes as ‘the beauty of vindictive justice’.⁹⁵

He also argues that ‘conscience *naturally* gives men an apprehension of right and wrong, and suggests a relation between right and wrong, and a retribution’.⁹⁶ Conscience, ‘that sense the mind has of...consent’,⁹⁷ has to do with ‘that excellency which most strongly affects’.⁹⁸ The combination of his epistemological confidence about anger and gratitude and his principle of natural justice are not promising resources for a political society which requires any kind of subtlety in its legal arrangements. For Edwards’ advocacy of the principle of symmetry in political affairs in the form of ‘desert’ is a recipe for unwise and even ugly judicial enactments. Justice in society does not mean that punishment is symmetrical to crime, that the offender should suffer what the offended has suffered, that the rapist should be raped. Rather, as Oliver O’Donovan has pointed out, society does not echo

⁹³ Edwards, J., *The Nature of True Virtue*, 581

⁹⁴ *ibid.* 582

⁹⁵ Edwards, J., *The Mind*, 365

⁹⁶ *ibid.* 207 (italics added)

⁹⁷ *ibid.* 365

⁹⁸ *ibid.* 356

crime with punishment but rather, in punishing crime, provides an answer to the offender's act.⁹⁹ A principle of symmetry guided by gratitude and anger, the affections explicitly connected with desert by Edwards, will make for judgments which are not fitted to crimes but which are made with an incommunicable, passionate, incontrovertible certainty. Conceptually, at least, this is a recipe for public judgments which cannot be discussed but which will be followed through with all the 'beauty' of a fine piece of geometry but none of the wisdom of a legal tradition.

Consider, instead of Edwards' account, a specific instance of a wise tradition of institutional law, namely the English-speaking common law tradition, a tradition to which Nussbaum has applied her account of shame and disgust. In a co-authored article, she and Dan Kahan show how the common law has, for good and ill, taken a cognitive-evaluative view of emotions in the prosecution of particular cases while much modern legal theory has taken a mechanistic view which reckons emotions as destructive of the legal responsibility of the accused. If we do hold that 'emotions involve evaluative thought we naturally begin to ask questions about the sort of evaluations reasonable people ought to make.'¹⁰⁰ These "emotions of the reasonable person" feature prominently in *Hiding from Humanity*. For example, Nussbaum holds that any

good account of why offenses against person and property are universally subject to legal regulation is likely to invoke the reasonable fear that citizens have of these offenses, the anger with which a reasonable person views them, and/or the sympathy with which they view such violations when they happen to others.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ O'Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 110, 'Judgment brings an old act back by a new act, an act that corresponds to the old and so expresses it truthfully.'

¹⁰⁰ Kahan, D. and Nussbaum, M., 'Two Conceptions of Emotion in Criminal Law', 287

¹⁰¹ Nussbaum, M., *Hiding from Humanity*, 7-8

We also see that in jury service reasonable people are called on to give a verdict on their peers which will, to some extent, take account of the affections of the accused. When a son becomes angry and kills those who assaulted his aged, housebound father, is his affection reasonable and so some sort of mitigating factor? In a classic set of cases, to which Nussbaum often returns, is the anger of the cuckold, which led him to kill both adulterous wife and illegitimate lover, reasonable? The jury are called on, in the terms of this discussion, to verify intersubjectively the affections of the accused and to enquire both whether these were reasonable ways of understanding the situation and whether, if reasonable, they are mitigating factors. In this way, the jurors share in the affections both of the victim (indignation against the accused) and of the defendant (indignation against an alleged wrongdoer), allowing both affections to bring understanding and thereby influence the jury's reflection and deliberation. As we have seen, *contra* Kahan, Nussbaum holds that shame and disgust are never helpful in judging particular cases or general laws. Instead, 'indignation' or 'outrage', 'expressing a reasoned judgment that can be publicly shared',¹⁰² is the appropriate public response to unjust action which threatens capabilities.¹⁰³

So what role, if any at all, does anger have in the law and in judgment, its central practice? Nussbaum distinguishes anger from disgust and shame on the grounds that 'the notion of harm or damage lies at the core of anger's cognitive content' and therefore the reasoning from which anger stems 'can be publicly articulated and publicly shaped.'¹⁰⁴ Anger must be proportionate to the finite wrong of particular offences. Where it is not, anger can lead to the desire to humiliate and to

¹⁰² *ibid.* 99ff, 170

¹⁰³ *ibid.* 344-5

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.* 99

shame, which, because it is directed at the person as a whole, is looser in its connection to a particular offence and so has greater capacity to mark someone and destroy them for an extended period or even permanently. Anger should take the person seriously as a responsible creature. Shame, in its pernicious form, can reckon or designate the person sub-creaturely and sub-human.

Though shame may play more of a role in our political affairs than Nussbaum allows, as discussed above, Christian moralists may agree with the analysis of anger (which might also be called ‘indignation’), adding only that private anger is subordinated to the public exercise of just wrath (Romans 13:1ff) and to the final promise of publicity that ‘Vengeance is mine and I will repay’ (12:19). As we learn from the incident of the enraged devotees of Artemis (and Mammon!) (Acts 19:21-40), wrong civil anger was well-known to the early church since it was often directed against them. But Paul calls the church at Ephesus to ‘be angry and sin not’ (Ephesians 4:26). The Ephesians were free to be angry at wrong, thereby recognising injustice, and yet they were not to sin. Instead, in the context of the church, they were to entrust ultimate judgment to the higher Judge, recognising the provisionality of their own indignation. Their Representative would take their private grievances against one another and make them a matter of public, eschatological, wrathful judgment, to be resolved at the throne of the crucified Lord.

By analogy from the eschatological relativisation of anger in the church, what is needed in political societies is precisely a way of enabling people to be angry at injustice and yet not to sin, especially through extrajudicial violence. The over-realised epistemological certainty in Edwards’ account does not allow for such a transition from private to political anger by resolving both into a single dictate of

natural conscience. What we require is an institution whereby the affective recognition of private anger may initiate reflection and deliberation and thereby contribute towards a public judgment which may be effectively acted upon for the common good. Representative, political authority is that institution which makes affection communally beneficial while limiting its capacity to lead people into wrongdoing. Through representation the affections of the people may be understood, provided with appropriate political expression and judged worthy or unworthy of general sympathy.

This then is the meeting point of representation and law, our two ways of examining affections in political institutions. The representative is called to know and understand humanity as mediated through the legal tradition of the polity. This will mean understanding the affective wisdom of the laws which are established and connecting them through the exercise of authority with the particular circumstances of the people. When this happens through the common practices of political institutions, the moment of authority may easily occur and be recognised.

Joy and awe

The curses of Deuteronomy warned Israel that joylessness, among other sins, would result in the loss of their common life in the land. The Hebrew Scriptures trace the people's narrative from the entry into the land after Moses' death all the way through to their stubborn domestic injustice, disastrous foreign policy, repeated defeats and final exile to Babylon. The joyful participation in the land is lost and the

Deuteronomic festivities are no longer undertaken. Instead, the people sit down by the rivers of Babylon and weep.

The narrative eventually proceeds to the advent of the Lord's anointed, Cyrus king of Persia, who enables the people to return to the land. In the time of his successors, that return reaches its climax in the ministry of Nehemiah, the representative of the people who leads them in the rebuilding of their common life. While yet in Babylon, he weeps and fasts as he shares in the troubles of the exiles who have already returned (1:3ff). On his arrival at Jerusalem, he organises the people in civic renewal and attends to the practice of judgment. For when some of the people allege ill-treatment at the hands of fellow Israelites who are exploiting the poor through usury in a time of famine, Nehemiah says 'I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. I took counsel with myself, and I brought charges against the nobles and officials.' (5:6-7) Here we see the renewal of the pattern of wisdom we discovered in Deuteronomy. Nehemiah hears cries concerning the good land which is meant to be shared by all the people, reflects on the cries, deliberates upon action and acts in judgment according to the law of God.

Following this renewal of judgment with respect to a particular case and the completion of the city wall, Nehemiah renews the institution of the law as a whole. When the people weep because of the words of the law (8:9) in the context of the feast of booths, Nehemiah redirects their affective understanding to the goodness of the land and their God, teaching them that the 'joy of the Lord is your strength' (8:10) and commanding them to feast and celebrate. Their reception of Nehemiah's wisdom is accompanied by the 'great joy' (8:12; cf. Luke 2:10) which constitutes their understanding of his words and leads to obedient action in the form of proper

celebration. After that joyful recognition of God's goodness they sorrowfully recognise their own and their forefathers' sin by which they enter deeply into reflection on the wrongdoing which has characterised the nation's life (chapter 9) and so proceed to a commitment to repentance sealed with a covenant (9:38).

Joy is the strength of the people. Their joy in the Lord is an enduring understanding which stabilises them in moral wisdom for the sake of political renewal. It endures through their renewed memory of God's faithful goodness, the source of stable understanding in their common life of reflection, deliberation and action. Following this festive occasion, the institutions of representative leadership (priestly and tribal) and legal judgment are renewed as the variegated life of urban and rural Israel is decisively displayed, climaxing in the dedication of the wall, the sign of their reinstatement as the city of God. On this festive occasion, the affective recognitions of the people are carefully orchestrated through the summoning of priests, Levites and leaders, the preparation of choirs and the walk of witness around the walls. The result is a powerful display of Yahwistic understanding:

...they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away. (12:43)

YHWH is the reason for their 'great joy', drawing out their attracted understanding to perceive the reality of his rule in the land He had promised. That understanding, given expression in loud celebration, is then announced to the nations who hear it from afar.

The people's cries of joy as they return to the laws of Deuteronomy recall how YHWH himself once cried out:

Oh that they had such a mind as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever. (Deuteronomy 5:29)

So we see that the ‘fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.’ (Proverbs 1:8) Specifically, the intersubjective fear of the Lord in loyal, wondrous awe is the beginning of eschatological, political, affective wisdom, framing all the affective understanding, reflection, deliberation and obedient action which follow from it. The joy of the Lord, intentionally attracted to the land of the Lord and the Lord of the land, is the basic affective form which that loyalty takes in Israel’s life. In this way, affective understanding is rooted both in locality and in the transcendent God of the whole earth who dwells among the people of his choice.

Joy and awe are thus the expansive affective understandings which are appropriate to the Kingdom of God. Within these affections, the more narrowly defined affections of indignation and shame which accompany the law become intelligible as they relate to wrongs we do and the judgments we make within the moral order which God has created and vindicated in Israel and in Christ. This interrelation of joy, fear, anger and shame seems to be the affective meaning of O’Donovan’s claim that the ‘ways of judgment are more specified than the ways of life’.¹⁰⁵ Fear of Almighty God, joy in his Son Jesus Christ, in whom the ways of judgment and the ways of life are held together, and joy in the created order, now vindicated and held together in Christ, are the proper beginnings of wisdom for those awaiting consummation in the new heaven and the new earth where unprecedented, unimaginable joy based on the truth will be the understanding of the people of the awesome God. And yet this consummation has not yet been achieved and so the

¹⁰⁵ O’Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 32

people of God live among the nations of the world. For this reason we now proceed to consider further implications of our findings for the life of nations (chapter four) and for the life of the church among the nations (chapter five).

Chapter 4: Affections and locality

We have considered affections' role in certain institutions of political society, namely representation and law. We turn now to enquire concerning how our political conceptions as a whole may foster or undermine institutional affective wisdom. Many areas of today's political societies provide routes into this question. One might begin by reflecting on the current strength of those mediating forms of life which we know as professional guilds such as medicine. The ability of these guilds to function as collective forces for the common good of political societies has been dependent to a great extent on intersubjectively shared affective understandings of the common tasks in hand. With respect to medicine in the UK, medical professionals' intersubjective affections of compassion for those in need, joy in restoration of health and indignation at the social conditions which keep so many of the poorest in British society in transgenerationally ill health, seem to be systematically quelled by the bureaucratisation of healthcare and the ever-increasing demands of a culture with few resources to deal with decay and death. In the place of compassion, joy and righteous indignation we now often find depression and apathy. The steady loss over the years of those affective understandings with which many medical professionals embark on a career not only lowers the quality of the care given to patients but also diminishes our attentiveness to the need to care for our doctors, nurses and other health professionals. Although these observations would lead on to an important analysis of the workings of medical institutions, such a study would not provide a sufficiently broad basis for answering the question we are posing in this chapter. Instead, it will be better to engage with a discussion which, though focussed in the

Western nation-states, is arguably relevant to all peoples in the twenty-first century since the influence of Western patterns of thought are present in many non-Western settings especially among the ruling elites who are often trained in institutions of higher education in the United States and in the nation-states which form the European Union.

Constitutional patriotism: an initial assessment

The social and political context which followed the second world war was the intellectual incubator for the now wide-ranging discussion of the place of affection or “affect” in the life of nation-states in today’s Europe. The aftermath of the Holocaust and the long-lasting impacts of diverse forms of nationalism have stimulated various thinkers to articulate theories which are intended to protect the peoples of Europe from any repeat of the massive disasters of the twentieth century and, in more recent versions, to purify a European democratic consciousness.¹ Extensive debate has surrounded the possible role of various sorts of “patriotism” in sustaining liberal democracies and international organisations such as the European Union. The debate itself has only gained momentum because of the massive uncertainty which exists in mainland Europe and, arguably, in the United Kingdom, about what does, will and should hold a nation-state together as a community of collective agency and, increasingly, what will and should unite a number of nation-states in continental or regional political unions.²

¹ Muller, J., *Constitutional Patriotism*, Princeton University Press, 2007, 30

² We will largely be addressing the European situation here but similar questions may be asked with respect to ASEAN, the African Union and other international organisations.

The term ‘collective agency’ obviously does not entail a naïve account of all the people in a territory actually carrying out the same activities all the time. Instead, collectivity is always refracted through some sort of representation. On the one hand, more associated with the term “liberal”, ‘collective agency’ may refer to a common practice of upholding the rights of others sharing in the same political society through the deliberations and decisions of elected representatives and through judicial process. On the other hand, more associated with the terms “conservative” or “communitarian”, ‘collective agency’ may refer to the shared, traditional practices of a culture, including practices of particularly political representation, by which people experience themselves as represented. Such descriptions never entirely capture the actual reality of any particular political society. Rather, they are differing explanations of how people see their identity represented in society’s actions without necessarily participating in those actions themselves. In this way, a diverse society is sustained in collective action.

However, it is not the case that people currently experience this identification and representation. The breakdown of older patterns of life and the lack of popular confidence in elected officials and even the electoral process itself combine to raise serious questions about the realisation of moral community in any particular polity or in larger political entities such as the European Union. It is in this context of uncertainty about what holds communities together that terms such as “constitutional patriotism” and “liberal nationalism” have entered academic discourse. The German context and specifically the work of Jürgen Habermas have provided a focus for these new approaches. Analysis of his ideas and the responses he has elicited will provide a fertile starting point for exploring the contribution of our theologically

informed concept of affection towards a political environment which fosters healthy representative and legal institutions. Indeed, Habermas' openness to religious thought invites such an attempt³ and, although he does not take up the language of 'affect' (or the German 'affekt') as a specific term of art, it is clear that the phenomena of affections (emotions) are key to his account of constitutional patriotism. More commonly we see the language (in English translations) of 'attitudes',⁴ or 'supportive spirit'⁵ or 'loyalty'.⁶ Nonetheless, as we shall see through the commentary of Patchen Markell, Cécile Laborde and Jan Muller, Habermas' eye is definitely on that which we have been investigating as the affective dimension of political relations.

Habermas' constitutional patriotism

In his important essay on the past and future of the nation-state, Habermas summarises the conceptual framework within which his doctrine of constitutional patriotism operates by describing how the

tension between the universalism of an egalitarian legal community and the particularism of a community united by historical destiny is built into the very concept of the national state.⁷

³ Wannenwetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 268-272, 312ff; cf. Adams, N., *Habermas and Theology*, CUP, 2006

⁴ Habermas, J., *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, trans. Rehg, W., MIT Press, 1996, 499

⁵ *ibid.* 499

⁶ Habermas, J., 'Struggles for recognition in the democratic constitutional state', 137

⁷ Habermas, J., 'The European Nation-State: On the Past and Future of Sovereignty and Citizenship', *The Inclusion of the Other*, Cronin & De Grieff (ed.), trans. Cronin, C., MIT Press, 1998, 105-127, 115

He argues that the universal principles which are expressed in the procedures of liberal democracy are currently both dependent for their enactment on the particular legal constitutions of particular nation-states and in tension with those constitutions. Habermas believes that this tension should be held in such a way that the cosmopolitan or universalist emphasis governs and, where appropriate, undermines the tendency of particular cultures towards an ‘ethnocentric’⁸ self-interpretation. This position entails a conceptual separation or uncoupling of ‘norms’ and ‘facts’. For the sheer facticity of traditional, localised identity, defined by territoriality, taking ideological form in nationalisms, is, in Habermas’ view, ‘intrinsically susceptible to misuse by political elites’,⁹ resulting in the neglect of universal norms.

Habermas’ analysis of political existence in terms of facts and norms makes particular assumptions. He is convinced that ‘norms for a reasonable conduct of life cannot be drawn from the natural constitution of the human species any more than they can from history’.¹⁰ On Habermas’ view, theories which gain anything from philosophical anthropologies such as that of Max Scheler¹¹ or from the ‘ambivalent bonding force of archaic institutions’ are indebted to ‘metasocial guarantees of the sacred’ which are now thoroughly discredited.¹² No longer is positive law to be related to natural law which Habermas claims is ‘administered by the Church’.¹³ Instead, a new account of facticity has emerged whereby

⁸ *ibid.* 115

⁹ *ibid.* 116

¹⁰ Habermas, J., *Between Facts and Norms*, 2

¹¹ *ibid.* 2

¹² *ibid.* 27

¹³ *ibid.* 26; the claim that the church *administers* natural law is somewhat strange to contemporary Christian understanding. The most plausible reading is that Habermas is referring to the medieval Papal practice of interpreting natural law in the Papal court. If so, then his disavowal of natural law has more purchase with respect to its place in the political affairs of the distant past than to its significance for the present and future of Europe.

In contrast to convention and custom, enacted law does not rely on the organic facticity of inherited forms of life, but on the *artificially produced facticity* found in the threat of sanctions that are legally defined and can be imposed through court action.¹⁴

Habermas holds that such facticity is a legal form which allows coercion only because of autonomous self-legislation and only for the sake of preserving autonomous freedom. Moreover, this legal form is by no means arbitrary since ‘the facticity of law expresses the legitimate will that stems from a presumptively rational self-legislation of politically autonomous citizens.’¹⁵ The facticity of the conventional, local community which lay behind older legal structures is now to be set aside in light of the only factual resources which matter, a modern legal structure which is built around the rights and freedoms of citizens. For such citizens, there is now only ‘validity and facticity – that is, the binding force of rationally motivated beliefs and the imposed force of external sanctions’.¹⁶ The two are necessarily uncoupled since universal norms are never to be absolutely identified with any particular factual legal form embedded in a particular, factual, territorially defined political society.

In framing matters in this way, Habermas makes room to argue that the old concept of a *Volksnation* is untenably unsafe for post-war, modern Europe in light of the undeniable, twin realities of radical, social pluralism in European nation-states and the influence of economic, military and political globalisation. These are leading, Habermas believes, towards the decline of the nation-state and the development of post-national forms of representative identification and consciousness.¹⁷ All

¹⁴ *ibid.* 30

¹⁵ *ibid.* 33

¹⁶ *ibid.* 26

¹⁷ *ibid.* 105-7

conceptions of ‘pre-political’¹⁸ moral unity will not motivate collective popular agency towards the common good and will instead distract people from appropriate routes towards affective attachment to universal principles and the growth of post-national consciousness. His positive proposal is that

constitutional rights and principles...form the fixed point of reference for any constitutional patriotism that situates the system of rights within the historical context of a legal community. These must be enduringly linked with the motivations and convictions of the citizens, for without such a motivational anchoring they could not become the driving force behind the dynamically conceived project of producing an association of individuals who are free and equal.¹⁹

Thus in constitutional patriotism, the ‘allegiance’ or ‘affect’²⁰ of citizens is primarily directed to universal, constitutional rights and norms rather than to a pre-political *Volksnation* and tradition. In Markell’s neat phrase, this is constitutional patriotism’s ‘strategy of redirection’.²¹

Such a move has, however, proved highly open to misinterpretation. For it has been thought that Habermas has been advocating a thin or ‘bloodless’²² concept of citizenship which effectively bypasses all historical and local particularity by redirecting affect *solely* and *directly* to universalist principles. For example, Thomas Mertens, commenting on Habermas’ position, argues that

[p]atriotism in such a democracy does not...entail loyalty to a specific substantial community, but has the sole meaning of being loyal to the democratic procedures of

¹⁸ *ibid.* 114

¹⁹ Habermas, J., ‘Struggles for recognition in the democratic constitutional state’, 134. The claim that the universal principles of human rights and democracy to which ‘constitutional patriotism [adheres] can neither take shape in social practices nor become the driving force for the dynamic project of creating an association of free and equal persons until they are situated in the historical context of a nation of citizens in a way that they link up with those citizens’ motives and attitudes’ (Habermas, J., *Between Facts and Norms*, 499); for commentary, see Lacroix, J., ‘For a European Constitutional Patriotism’, esp. 949ff

²⁰ Markell, P., ‘Making Affect Safe for Democracy?: On “Constitutional Patriotism”’, e.g. 43

²¹ *ibid.* 48

²² Muller, J., *Constitutional patriotism*, 5

the constitution. This loyalty is called constitutional patriotism (Verfassungspatriotismus).²³

However, such an interpretation is not adequate to the subtlety of Habermas' account. Laborde has helpfully isolated an interpretation of Habermas called "neutralist" constitutional patriotism. These interpreters, like Mertens, have misread Habermas and

neglected the deliberative, critical dimension of constitutional patriotism and...underestimated the role of political culture in underpinning political loyalty and social solidarity. This is because the neutralist version of constitutional patriotism takes Habermas's injunction to 'uncouple' politics and culture (too) literally.²⁴

Habermas' claim is that it is only in the context of a definite legal community in a particular locality that the deliberative process of communication about constitutional principles and rights can be carried on. Thus he holds that what 'unites a nation of citizens, as opposed to a *Volksnation*, is not some primordial substrate but rather an intersubjectively shared context of possible mutual understanding.'²⁵ This 'mutual understanding', 'loyalty' or 'solidarity' is Habermas' attempt to name the affective dimension which we have been exploring.

Setting Mertens' assessment aside, we see that constitutional patriotism is not a plan for the total purge of the particularities of tradition, religion, place and family from political consciousness – an obviously impractical option. Instead, according to one sympathetic interpreter of Habermas, 'citizens are asked to reflect critically upon particular traditions and group identities in the name of shared universal principles.' Tradition, with its 'attachments and loyalties' should not be absolutely excised but

²³ Mertens, T., 'Cosmopolitanism and Citizenship: Kant Against Habermas', *European Journal of Philosophy* 4:3 (1996), 328-347, 336

²⁴ Laborde, C., 'From Constitutional to Civic Patriotism', 596

²⁵ Habermas, J., 'Does Europe Need a Constitution? Response to Dieter Grimm', *The Inclusion of the Other*, 155-161, 159

should be constantly revised through a ‘critical, highly self-conscious back-and-forth between actually existing traditions and institutions, on the one hand, and the best universal norms and ideas that can be worked out, on the other.’ Thus, in order to realise Habermas’ vision of the ‘rationalization of collective identities’, what is needed is not a total abstraction from tradition itself but rather ‘a critical distancing from inherited beliefs’.²⁶

Indeed, Habermas’ thesis – at least in its later form – is not that constitutional rights and principles should necessarily float free of particular, territorially defined, legal jurisdictions such as nation-states, but rather that the *facts* of a particular legal structure of rights, in a defined community and with suitable, enforceable sanctions, are a logically necessary ‘supplement’ if the universal *norms* are to have any motivational grounding in people’s lives. Habermas’ ‘philosophical modesty’ which refuses the position of transcendent theorist²⁷ thus tends towards an uneasy interdependence of facts and norms in which modern ‘law can stabilize behavioural expectations’²⁸ since coercive ‘law overlays normative law with threats of sanctions in such a way that addressees may restrict themselves to the prudential calculation of consequences.’²⁹ The relationship is uneasy since calculation of consequences is, by Kantian standards, an amoral form of self-interest which is hardly aligned with the high-minded universalism of post-national rights-based norms. Nonetheless, Habermas clearly argues for the importance of such an historically, institutionally and territorially situated legal supplement which engages motivation ‘in a manner

²⁶ Muller, J., *Constitutional Patriotism*, 28-29

²⁷ Markell, P., ‘Making Affect Safe for Democracy?: On “Constitutional Patriotism”’, 45-46

²⁸ Habermas, J., *Between Facts and Norms*, 76

²⁹ *ibid.* 116

effective for action.’³⁰ In Laborde’s terms, this linkage between facts and norms is a ‘motivational anchorage’.³¹ ‘Affect’ is thus the way that citizens are themselves linked to universal norms via their particular, localised, factual situation.

Since then, according to Habermas, the relationship between a nation-state’s facticity and universal norms should be viewed as the necessary compromise which draws the people of that nation-state towards those norms, it comes as no surprise that he does not consider the nation-state itself as the final disclosure of the arena in which the democratic consciousness can and will develop. Indeed, he believes that there is a growing post-national consciousness which should be allowed to shape the constitutional patriotism which is peculiar to any particular nation-state and which, in time, will lead to the decline of the nation-state as larger, probably continental, forms of government are able to achieve legitimacy and attract sufficient allegiance to sustain their authority. Constitutional patriotism is thus the affective ‘attitude’ whereby the process of critical engagement of tradition leading to post-conventional and post-national consciousness can be sustained.

In the German context, for example, an episode of this process was carried out in the so-called *Historikerstreit* (“Historians’ debate”) of the 1980’s in which Habermas argued strongly for Germans not to dissociate themselves from the Nazi past but rather to engage seriously in critical remembrance of what occurred in the 1930’s and 1940’s. In Muller’s interpretation,

[m]emory would thus unfold a motivational power and supplement the universalist norms at the heart of constitutional patriotism. It would furnish the basis for a democratic consciousness.³²

³⁰ *ibid.* 114

³¹ Laborde, C., ‘From Constitutional to Civic Patriotism’, 594; cf. Habermas’ own reference to ‘motivational anchoring’, Habermas, J., ‘Struggles for recognition in the democratic constitutional state’, 134

³² Muller, J., *Constitutional Patriotism*, 34

Habermas is thus arguing precisely not for citizens to attempt to transcend and abstract from their own heritages but rather that they should enter into ‘a continuous civic self-interrogation and open argument about the past’.³³ To balance this, it should also be emphasised that Habermas is genuinely committed to an emancipation of consciousness from conventional identities which were given by tradition to individuals in order that they might enter into the freedom of post-national and post-conventional communicative action.³⁴ This does not contradict his recognition of the importance of particular legal jurisdictions to stabilise democratic consciousness but rather describes the tension which he sees at the heart of modern European life. Remembering the past does not mean that the future may not develop in a quite different direction, namely towards a post-national consciousness which is armed against ethnocentricity and sustained by a properly affective constitutional patriotism.

A view from Dover beach

Habermas’ constitutional patriotism, along with the debate which it has fuelled, is one highly nuanced attempt to address the thinness of many liberal descriptions of political identity and legitimation in the modern Europe. Such anaemic accounts have been heavily criticised by other authors with an interest in the significance of affections for political relations. Roger Scruton, for example, has denounced contractarian theories which are defined by an obsession with autonomy that makes

³³ *ibid.* 34

³⁴ Habermas, J., *Between Facts and Norms*, 1-41

‘rational choice, rather than irrational sentiment, into the primary social fact.’³⁵

Drawing on the Burkean tradition of barely disguised disdain for those who base their political doctrines in the implausible fiction of an historical contract with no real signatories and no thick web of tradition, he laments the loss of a deep emotional connection with the land of England and mocks the social contractarian ‘we’. He proceeds to look beyond even the ‘we’ of a nation in time of crisis by appealing to

ways of forming a first-person plural [that] are [not] so conscious. There are other, more instinctive and more immediate, forms of membership which serve the purpose just as well or better, and which have the desired result of making it possible for people to live together in a state of mutual support.³⁶

He has in mind here the corporate instincts which arise through kinship and religion. Those instincts, he recognises, have been dangerous in continental Europe, but took a gentler form in England, under the influence of ‘home’, that localised ‘focus of loyalty’³⁷ which guided these instinctive emotions more moderately.

Scruton’s moving and poetic account of the death of this England has much to recommend it. His account of corporate personality catches the outline of the connection between affection and personal representation which we encountered in chapter three³⁸ while his repeated appeal to social trust, loyalty and homely locality highlights themes to which we shall return. However, it is not clear from Scruton’s writing that he has quite escaped the Enlightenment paradigm which opposed emotion (as non-cognitive) to reason (as cognitive). We may observe some resonance between Scruton’s description of the ‘we’ of instinctive membership and the account given by Jean-Yves Lacoste of the intersubjective sharing of affective

³⁵ Scruton, R., *England: An Elegy*, 6

³⁶ *ibid.* 6

³⁷ *ibid.* 19

³⁸ *ibid.* 71ff

recognitions which was discussed in chapter two and developed in chapter three. Both accounts appeal to socially formed ways of coming together which are not acceptable to or even explicable by rationalist or contractarian paradigms. However, Lacoste's account gives more philosophical satisfaction and is more politically fruitful precisely because of the penurious cognitive aptitude which Lacoste recognises as the necessary content of affection. Scruton's lack of attention to the cognitive quality of affection is once again a matter of the self-consciously imprecise conservative style of writing, after the fashion of Burke, a style which is captured in Scruton's characteristically British observation that 'the deeper emotions could only be debased by their expression.'³⁹

Scruton's underdetermined approach has not been persuasive to those who fail to appreciate how 'in all relations of love and loyalty, the face of the other remains the focus of emotion – the sign and incarnation of the spiritual essence'⁴⁰ and who, sadly for Scruton, hold the whip-hand in the destruction of the old England upon whose face he loves to gaze in the deep caverns of his memory. Scruton's critique has quite obviously failed to impress the serried ranks of political philosophers who ignore, misunderstand and mock him. His instincts are in tune with the overall direction of this thesis and his attention to land and locality highly perceptive but his argumentation has not been persuasive to the mainstream. Thus a different tack is required and the expression of emotion as 'affection' in the descriptive analysis undertaken to this point, seems to be a central way of addressing the shortcomings of liberalism which Scruton rightly observes.

³⁹ *ibid.* 49-50

⁴⁰ *ibid.* 84; Scruton's comment reflects O'Donovan's description of recognising a political representative as 'like the recognition we accord to a face or form' (*The Ways of Judgment*, 161).

Despite these conceptual shortcomings, Scruton's lyrical critique of a certain form of liberalism which is inimical to this account's concept of intersubjective affective recognition is worth quoting at length since it unveils what is at stake in the ongoing debate between liberalism and conservatism. He believes that the defenders of liberalism secretly and without acknowledgment desire that which conservatives naturally inhabit, namely

an experience of membership that will open the heart, and also close the mind. At a certain point the strain of living without an 'us' and a 'them' becomes intolerable. On the lonely heights of abstract choice nothing comforts and nothing consoles. The Kantian imperatives seem to blow more freezingly, and the unfed soul eventually flees from them, down into the fertile valleys of attachment. But where shall he rest? To whom will his loyalty be owed? What flock or herd or army can he join, who looks on all of them with the merely vicarious loyalty of the envious anthropologist? The answer is this: to find an enemy, to create a new kind of membership in the spirit of battle. The enemy is the one who believes what the liberal so tragically fails to believe – the one who feels the loyalties to which the liberal ought in conscience to attach himself but which his own thinking has destroyed. To turn on the conservative is, in a peculiar way, to partake of his conviction, just as the Huron Indian absorbs the courage of his vanquished enemy by eating his still unvanquished heart.⁴¹

Habermas and Scruton

The contrast between this essentially English, conservative critique and Habermas' more obviously continental response to contemporary threats to the cohesion of moral communities opens up a fruitful line of thought. While Scruton laments, at great and lyrical length, the disenchanting and death of a land mysticism which now lies vanquished, slain by the cultural dragons of Tony Blair, 'a Labour party committed to "globalisation"' and the BBC,⁴² Habermas describes the patriotic affect which citizens of Europe should feel for the universal procedures of liberal

⁴¹ Scruton, R., 'In defence of the nation' in *The Philosopher on Dover Beach*, Carcanet, 1990, 299-328, 326; cf. 'This phantom – appearing now as the 'just society' of the contractarians, now as the 'full communism' of Marx – poisons our attachment to the realities through which we might, in our fallen condition, live and find fulfilment.' (ibid. 327)

⁴² Scruton, R., *England: An Elegy*, 198, 257, 232-233 respectively

democracy when suitably instantiated in their own legal traditions and historically conditioned constitutions. However, despite Habermas' European liberal credentials, he escapes Scruton's general condemnation since he sees the necessity of some sort of loyalty. In this sense, Habermas distances himself from the deep freeze of a certain kind of abstract Kantianism by arguing for a constant movement between the valleys and the heights, the local and the universal, a life *between* facts and norms. Indeed, surprisingly, both Habermas and Scruton share a number of basic concerns which are also concerns which this discussion has been at pains to emphasise, namely the importance of affection, memory, institutions, 'stability' and some kind of distinction between the strictly political dimension of political society and its cultural or factual dimension. Thus, although they are offering divergent responses, they seem to be observing the same cultural malaise and addressing similar moral and political themes.

However, lest we think them to be agreeing on a fundamental level, we should note their most substantial, philosophical difference which emerges in Scruton's insistence that every

political order depends, and ought to depend, upon a non-political idea of membership. And to the extent that it emancipates itself from that idea, I claim, to that extent does it lose its motivating force, just as individuals lose their moral identity and will, to the extent that their prejudices, pieties and moral instincts are cancelled by the abstract imperatives of the 'pure rational chooser'.⁴³

Habermas' attempt to purify citizenship from the myth of a pre-political *Volksnation* aims at rendering null and void the motivation which Scruton proclaims as essential to collective agency. Thus while Habermas looks hopefully for the possibility of a post-national consciousness whose affection is drawn to constitutional principles

⁴³ Scruton, R., 'In defence of the nation', 303

embodied in supra-national, continental institutions, Scruton is highly sceptical about the demise of the nation-state and argues instead that a consciousness of being at home in one's locality is essential to collective agency. In contrast to Habermas' account of constitutional principles becoming enduringly linked with the motivations of citizens, Scruton states that '[p]olitical institutions exist in order to mediate and adjudicate, not in order to mobilize and conscript'⁴⁴ and holds that the heart of agency should not be thought accessible to the machinery of government but rather flows from the depths of rootedness in land, religion and kinship group.

Thus his challenge to writers like Habermas who deny the pre-political its proper place is that 'the political sphere cannot stand so serenely above the loyalties which feed it.'⁴⁵ His point is that the pre-political is the basic way that shared affective connections which foster moral community are established and that the political which is called into service to act in judgment in society cannot be conceived as standing apart from a particular people as if it were the creator of the social organism it governs. For all his laudable attention to memory, institutions and affect, Habermas' account of the uneasy interdependence of facts and norms is, from Scruton's perspective at least, undone by the basic denial of the significance of pre-political unity. From an explicitly theological perspective, Scruton's observations reflect the Augustinian distinction between political authority and the society which gives political authority its rationale.⁴⁶ But this distinction has a crucial eschatological dimension which Scruton's land mysticism does not allow for. The pre-political unity of a people is not accessible now as if the political could be simply separated from the popular existence. The present life is, in this sense, always

⁴⁴ *ibid.* 310

⁴⁵ *ibid.* 310

⁴⁶ O'Donovan, O. and O'Donovan, J., *From Irenaeus to Grotius*, 109

political. Scruton knows this but, although sensitive to Christian political thought, he does not draw out the possibility of human emancipation from diverse political identity into the eschatological freedom of the kingdom of God. The deep structure of Augustinian thought which distinguishes the city of God from the city of this world keeps alive the distinction of society from political authority by witnessing to a post-political era which will dawn at the second advent of Christ. A community's political affections may thus not only reflect their pre-political self-conception but also their post-political destiny. Scruton's criticisms of the self-deceptive serenity of the political sphere are well-directed but do not go far enough.

The need for clarity

There is a common and striking omission in both Scruton and Habermas, namely a lack of attention to the very nature of 'affect', 'affection' or 'emotion'. We have seen this already in Scruton's Burkean vagueness but now we will see it in more detail in the discussions surrounding constitutional patriotism. In reflecting on his own contribution to the discussion, Markell summarises the problem:

I have treated "affect" very flatly as a whole and have not addressed differences among affects, much less the possibility of a plurality of affects towards a single object. This is, in large part, true of political theory more generally.⁴⁷

Markell attempts to remedy this conceptual omission in a single page of his article before turning to an illustrative example in Habermas' commentary on racist violence in Germany, which, though its interest in locality is promising, does not achieve detailed conceptualisation. Markell recognises that political theory has not

⁴⁷ Markell, P., 'Making Affect Safe for Democracy?: On "Constitutional Patriotism"', 54

considered negative affect in great depth but does not address the nature of affection itself.⁴⁸ Jan Muller does better by recognising the importance of moral psychology to constitutional patriotism. However, his two page account climaxes with a casual yet dogmatic statement that it is ‘a mistake not to recognize that cognition and emotion are intimately related – emotions (or at least the ones of concern in political life) are, after all, based on beliefs’.⁴⁹ Just *how* emotions are based on beliefs and why these should be particularly *political* emotions, Muller does not take time to explain nor does he show how such analysis would make a difference to the interpretation of Habermas.

Indeed, it seems that almost the entire debate over constitutional patriotism has proceeded with an insufficiently examined concept of ‘affect’. Such an oversight seems extraordinary when the whole point of the debate has been to overcome the difficulties which modern people experience when affective attachment to universal principles is called for. It would seem the obvious thing to begin by asking about the nature of affect or emotion, the path which this discussion has followed. The consequences of this oversight has been summarised neatly though perhaps unknowingly by Muller himself:

...almost always discussion of liberal nationalism, constitutional patriotism, and similar concepts appear to come down to decisions along the lines of “Well, I take a little more emotion,” while someone else might say, “Well, I’ll get by – just by reason.” Put less frivolously, it might appear that these debates are undecidable, unless we actually have some very complex *empirical* studies that would somehow yield the right moral-psychological “mixture” of reason and emotion in, for instance, motivating solidarity, or making citizens want to defend their liberal-democratic institutions.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ *ibid.* 54

⁴⁹ Muller, J., *Constitutional Patriotism*, 63

⁵⁰ *ibid.* 14

Muller naturally recognises that such implausible studies are unlikely to be forthcoming and so suggests instead that

one ought to be as clear as possible about which moral-psychological assumptions enter arguments about loyalty, attachment and belonging, how plausible they could be in general, and also to what extent we can do without them.⁵¹

Agreed. However, although he does not fall into the trap of ‘a little more’ or ‘a little less’, Muller frustratingly fails to deliver a lucid, conceptual explanation of his own moral-psychological assumptions.

My suggestion is that the failure of constitutional patriots of whatever kind to deliver such an account is a serious problem for their theories. Vague appeals to ‘motivational anchorage’,⁵² the intimate relation of cognition and emotion,⁵³ the ‘linking up’ of attitudes and principles⁵⁴ and ‘the production of attachment’⁵⁵ disguise the real lacuna which is an understanding of the nature of affections in the lives of ordinary people in their localised lives. Unfortunately for Scruton, his formulations of the nature of affection and its place in political society do not yield greater clarity. Although there is clear water between his account of organic pre-political nationality and Habermas’ interrelation of facts and norms, their attention to the common ground of affections shares in an unsatisfying opacity. What I hope to show is that our theological concept of affection will illumine these matters in a way which both shows the true nature of the affective dimension of political existence and explains the conceptual difficulties which Scruton and Habermas experience.

⁵¹ *ibid.* 14

⁵² Laborde, C., ‘From Constitutional to Civic Patriotism’, 594

⁵³ Muller, J., *Constitutional Patriotism*, 63

⁵⁴ Habermas, J., *Between Facts and Norms*, 499

⁵⁵ Markell, P., ‘Making Affect Safe for Democracy?: On “Constitutional Patriotism”’, 54

Luke-Acts: a study in political disengagement

In order to set out this systematic response, we will attend again to Scripture and, specifically, the theme only partially developed in chapter three's discussion of Luke-Acts, namely the affective attitudes of the Roman political authorities. Luke's gospel begins as the birth of the central object of joyful understanding, Jesus, is about to occur. But before the birth there is a political interruption: Caesar Augustus has issued a decree 'that all the world should be registered' (Luke 2:1) and now seeks 'to "enrol" the people of God' in his inventory of the world.⁵⁶ This dull list-making sounds a discordant note amidst Israel's joyful songs on the lips of Mary and Zechariah as they celebrate the good rule of YHWH. Moreover, it is ironic that Augustus is unwittingly enrolled in the service of YHWH as his bureaucracy brings about Joseph and Mary's journey to Bethlehem, Joseph's home town. While Caesar is far away in Rome attempting to exercise a universal empire, the God of Israel is at work by his Holy Spirit in the thick particularity of a maiden's womb and then in the promised locality, the town of David.

Thus Roman rule is depicted from the outset as distant yet seeking universal domination through coercive action in the particularities of Joseph, Mary and all Israel's lives. While the people of God experience the joy of Jesus throughout Luke and Acts, the Roman authorities maintain an almost entirely affectively detached attitude towards the acts of God occurring in their midst and towards the people of God before their courts of law. Their affective distance from the realities they rule renders them incapable of effectively understanding and representing the people.

⁵⁶ O'Donovan, O., *The Desire of the Nations*, CUP, 1996, 118

Their disengagement is not to be confused with an unwillingness to judge on disputed matters of religious doctrine, a reasonable position to which both Gallio and Festus adhere (Acts 18:14-15, 25:19). Rather Luke's narrative highlights their indifference to wrongdoing, whether in actual offences or in false accusations, and their systemic inability to effect right judgment. Their detachment is thus a refusal to be affectively committed to right judgment among the particular people over whom they hold political authority.

Pilate is emblematic of this disengagement in the gospel during the trial of Jesus. Like Gallio, he shows no affection or deep understanding of the events he presides over. He shows no indignation at the injustice which the Jews demand nor any joy in giving them what they want. In terms of the concept of affection developed to this point, he fails to participate affectively in value and so fails in reflection and deliberation. In the end, he goes against his own decision by simply acquiescing to the Jews' demands and, in so doing, makes a wrong judgment both against Jesus and in favour of Barabbas, a man whom Luke pointedly observes was imprisoned for insurrection and murder, offences which directly oppose the *pax Romana* which Pilate was charged with maintaining. Pilate's inability to act according to his own mind is the heart of the problem of his agency.⁵⁷ His failure between decision and action, in the context of Luke's other depictions of Roman rule, should be ascribed to his affective disengagement. Indignant condemnation of Jesus – or, better, condemnation of his accusers – would have been more coherent than his failure to participate in the drama.

⁵⁷ His decision to free Jesus at Luke 23:16 is specifically commented upon at Acts 3:13 where it is confirmed that Pilate 'had decided to release him'.

The believers' prayer (Acts 4:23-31) quotes Psalm 2 as an interpretation of the events surrounding Jesus' trial, especially the friendly complicity of Herod and Pilate in the death of Jesus:

Why did the Gentiles rage,
and the peoples plot in vain?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
and the rulers were gathered together,
against the Lord, and against his Anointed.

As we have seen, Pilate was characterised by anything but 'snorting rage' in the trial narrative. The main point of the reference to the Psalm must therefore be in the *cooperation* of Roman and Jewish authorities, including Herod, in the execution of Jesus. Indeed, this is where Acts 4:27-28 focuses. Pilate emerges not as enraged but as detached, a depiction made all the more obvious by the fury and rage of the religious authorities and occasionally non-Roman Gentiles in both Luke and Acts. As a detached observer, he cannot understand what is happening and so is debilitated in his agency, unable to be committed to the course of action on which he had decided.

Roman affective disengagement is further described in Paul's trial narrative which occupies a position in Acts parallel to Jesus' trial in the gospel. Paul's experience in Jerusalem is strikingly similar to Jesus' some years earlier. For the Jews begin the uproar against Paul, crying out against him and furiously calling for his death (Acts 21:27-36, 22:22-23), while the Roman authorities who subsequently deal with him both in Jerusalem and in Caesarea hold their prisoner, Paul, and his claims about the kingdom of God, at arm's length, just as they did with Jesus.

First, the Roman tribune who rescues Paul from the Jewish mob is presented as an efficient and diligent soldier who protects Paul but cannot fathom the situation. In response to the Jewish rage at the mention of Gentile mission (22:20ff), the

tribune desires to establish the facts of the case (22:24) and prepares an examination by flogging. Having become acquainted with Paul's citizenry, he is then 'afraid' of what will happen to him if his superiors discover this outrage (22:25-29). This fear of consequences is the tribune's characteristic political affection. It pertains to the proper execution of his duty and, after the enquiry into the facts (22:30) descends into dangerous confusion, leads to his just action to protect Paul the Roman citizen (23:10). The impression left of this tribune is of a soldier who is ultimately unable to penetrate the confusing disputes of the Jews concerning their law (23:29) and the resurrection (23:6-10).

A lack of affective engagement and participative understanding by a tribune might be passed off as an insignificant part of the story Luke is telling or dismissed as an argument from silence. But second, the conduct of Felix and then Festus, Agrippa and Bernice confirm that Luke is deliberately using these episodes to depict the nature of Roman political authority. When Paul is taken to Caesarea, Felix the governor is presented both as knowledgeable about the Way (24:22) and yet as unable to enter into either the joy of its participants or the rage of those who oppose it. Rather, when Paul speaks directly to Felix and his wife concerning the Way, the governor is 'alarmed' and ends the conversation abruptly (24:25). He then prolongs Paul's imprisonment not through any obvious uncertainty about the truth or significance of Paul's claims but rather in hope of financial reward and to gain favour with the Jews (24:26-27). What is remarkable about Felix is that though, unlike the tribune, he knows about the Way and realises its implications, he yet reserves himself from affective engagement in it. By leaving Paul in prison for two further years without conviction, Felix appears cut off from the affairs of the people

he is meant to govern and, though not cruel (24:23), he is clearly uncommitted to carrying out his particular responsibilities.

Upon Felix's departure as governor, the affective commitments of Festus, Agrippa and Bernice are examined by Luke (24:27-26:32). The trial before Festus is manifestly unjust in light of Festus' favouritism to the Jews. This injustice leads to a systemic problem which was unanticipated by Festus, namely Paul's appeal to Caesar. Justice could now not be done locally but would have to be done in Rome, rendering Festus, Agrippa and Bernice effectively powerless to carry out the practices of the law. The inadequacy of the justice of an empire with universal aspirations is thus highlighted by Paul's judgment against its local representatives. Luke chooses to draw attention to this by recounting how Festus, who is 'at a loss' (25:20) concerning the details of the case in which he is effectively a lame duck ruler, asks for Agrippa's help in establishing charges on the basis of which Paul is to be sent to Caesar, though his interest is primarily in the form rather than the substantive justice of the matter (25:24-27).

The climax of this trial narrative is unsurprisingly inconclusive. The universal law of appeal to Caesar prevents these local Roman rulers from taking the just course of action, namely the release of Paul (26:32). Although, like Pilate, they come to the right decision about his innocence, they are, like Pilate, unable to act justly, though for different reasons. They are disengaged, ineffective in action and powerless before the higher, universal authority of Caesar. The message of Luke is that, despite all appearances, Roman authority, bereft of the affective commitment and engagement which might enable understanding and local, just judgment, is deeply ineffective. There is other supporting evidence of a similar affective disengagement from the

particularity of people's lives on the part of Roman authorities. The proconsul Gallio's callous disregard for the fate of the synagogue ruler who is beaten in front of his own tribunal is just one and adds to the picture which Luke is establishing in Luke-Acts as a whole (18:12-17) – the remarkable fact that Seneca, the famous Stoic, was Gallio's cousin should not be forgotten.

This overall depiction of political authority can act as a resource for questions of political theory and practice in the twenty-first century. We do not have in mind a naïve and unqualified parallel between the Roman Empire and modern institutions of national and international political authority. The focus is on how the representatives of the Roman Empire were unable to participate wisely in the trials of Jesus and Paul precisely because of the universal legal structure and political culture which dominated their consciousness, prevented affective engagement and disabled effective, right judgment. Although Pilate found Jesus not guilty and although none of Festus, Felix, Agrippa and Bernice could find anything against Paul, yet right judgment was not effected: the one was executed and the other was unjustly imprisoned and then sent to Rome unnecessarily and without intelligible charges. The structure of Roman rule, which gained its authority from a source at a great physical and cultural distance from the particularities of Palestinian life, rendered its own local representatives unable to engage affectively in substantive issues or to commit, following reflection and deliberation, to particular judgments. The Roman structure of law and representative authority militated against those beginnings of understanding which are at the heart of successful political enterprise.

Local affections

What then would characterise representative and legal institutions which do provide a suitable environment for affective understanding to play its proper role in political life? Our study of constitutional patriotism and Luke-Acts suggests that the connection between such institutions and the locality they serve is vitally important. Luke-Acts has illumined the significance of the failure of distant authority to authorise the enactment of justice when local representatives do not or cannot engage in localised affective understanding. In the modern setting, such a difficulty is to some extent related to territorial boundaries whether within nation-states – as when we say that “the man in Whitehall” does not understand the affairs of Scotland – or between nation-states – as when we say that the European Court of Human Rights overturns established English customs and legal precedents (we recall, for example, the case of the metric martyrs).

An interchange between Richard Miller and Nigel Biggar shows how Christians have taken divergent approaches to the meaning of national, territorial boundaries. Miller argues that Christians should construe their lives primarily in terms of metaphysical boundaries so that their loves are cosmopolitan and indiscriminate rather than constricted by historically changing, political boundaries. He argues against Christian natural law accounts which ‘privilege local loyalties and loves’ and proposes instead a ‘critical principle, one that scrutinizes local customs from the perspective of transcendence.’⁵⁸ Such a position frees Christians to focus

⁵⁸ Miller, R.B., ‘Christian Attitudes Towards Boundaries: Metaphysical and Geographical’, Coleman (ed.), *Christian Political Ethics*, Princeton University Press, 2008, 67-91, 79-80

love on those who are genuinely poor in any area of the globe rather than only their local neighbours who share a territory with them.

According to Biggar, such an approach appeals to the apparent downgrading of natural loves in the gospels and to the Protestant message of indiscriminate grace to sinners. The substance of Biggar's response to Miller and this line of Christian thought is a clear restatement of the divinely authorised creatureliness of localised loves. He argues that the 'original dependence of any human individual on an historical community'⁵⁹ gives rise to a basic natural law duty of gratitude and love to that community which has cared for the individual as he or she has come into the world and lived in it. This gratitude is one aspect of a national loyalty which, in the modern setting, is necessarily defined by territorial borders. In the terms of chapter three, national loyalty is a wondrous awe which takes form in gratitude towards past and present political representatives and other public servants who, through dispositions on behalf of society, preserve the defence and peace of the realm. Within the territory, since doing all of the common good is not possible for any one person, each should seek to pursue that part of the common good which is practical for him and then trust that God is providentially drawing these contributions together. It follows that the most natural people to whom we should do good and to whom we owe gratitude are our benefactors from our own people in our own place. However, what

...one owes one's family or nation is not anything or everything, but specifically respect for and promotion of their good. Such loyalty, therefore, does not involve simply doing or giving whatever is demanded, whether by the state, the electoral majority, or even the people as a whole... True patriotism is not uncritical...⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Biggar, N., 'The Value of Limited Loyalty: Christianity, the Nation and Territorial Boundaries', Coleman (ed.), *Christian Political Ethics*, 92-109, 95

⁶⁰ *ibid.* 98

Biggar goes on to argue that the purpose of national loyalty or ‘patriotism’ can never only be for the good of one’s own nation but rather that local loves are the fertile soil in which more wide-ranging loves may grow. His point is

...not that we should grow *out of* national identity and loyalty and into a cosmopolitanism that, floating free of all particular attachments, lacks any real ones, but rather that, in and through an ever-deepening care for the good of our own nation, we are drawn into caring for the good of foreigners...Notwithstanding the tensions that may arise between national loyalty and loyalties that are more extensive, there is nevertheless an essential connection between them.⁶¹

Ultimately, Biggar bases his carefully qualified support of national loyalties in God’s approval of specific national identity in the Jewishness of Jesus and the events of Pentecost. On the one hand, Jesus did not seek to transcend particularly Jewish loves but rather embodied them perfectly in the incarnation. Jesus and the apostles’ teaching did not downgrade localised loves (of family etc.) but rather reoriented them according to Scripture and in relation to other more wide-ranging loves. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit at Pentecost spoke all the languages of the world to both Jews and Gentile proselytes and thereby affirmed the global, diverse particularity in which God may be glorified.⁶² Arguing in this way, Biggar hopes to show that Miller’s strictly cosmopolitan love is not only theologically unnecessary but also practically implausible.

Biggar’s account provides further conceptual resources for understanding the narrative of Luke-Acts and specifically the affective disengagement of rulers. For their loyalty was primarily to Caesar and Rome rather than to the local area they governed and so they were not affectively oriented to participate effectively as

⁶¹ *ibid.* 100

⁶² *ibid.* 93-97

judges in the land. Felix's indifference was a function of the combination of the Roman Empire's universal ambition to conquer territory and its lack of natural loyalty to the territory it governed. Festus' inability to release Paul, on account of his appeal to Caesar, was the result of God's judgment on Rome's failure to rule righteously in the land of Israel.

Constitutional patriotism reconsidered

It is now possible to reconsider the difficulties which emerged in our analysis of constitutional patriotism. Our focus will be on how a clarification of the concepts of affect or affection and their relation to locality enables a better formulation of the nature and role of patriotism.

Two initial comments

First, we observe that there are two major lines of congruence between Habermas, Biggar and the thesis which this discussion has been proposing. The first congruity lies in our joint repudiation of a certain form of ethnocentricity. The preceding chapters' contrast between particular orders of value and the true moral order of the world combined with their scepticism about the epistemological competency of personal or national virtue not only aims at similar targets to Habermas' concern that no particular nation or ethnic group should believe itself to be the supreme arbiter of morality, but also fits well with Biggar's highly qualified support for a national loyalty when critically framed within the concern for the common good of all

nations. All these approaches share a concern for ensuring that those who form a particular, national, moral community exercise critical judgment upon it.

The second congruity is that affection should be connected with reflection and deliberation. Although Biggar only alludes to this by saying that true patriotism is not ‘uncritical’, the larger thrust of his essay indicates that it is precisely by affection for our own people and place that we come to reflection on the common good of all and deliberation concerning what right action should be done towards the larger common good. In Habermas, the connection is more explicit since the post-national consciousness which constitutional patriotism supports only takes substantive form in the ongoing deliberative communication of the community. This deliberation is not a totally radical form of criticism as the ‘critical constitutional patriots’ might suggest. Rather, the more modest question Habermas tries to answer is, as Laborde says, ‘what will motivate people to engage in the self-critical, other-regarding practice of deliberation in a democratic community’.⁶³ In the end, this discussion will not side with one school of Habermasian thought or another. Whether or not the neutralist reading or the critical reading of Habermas is the correct one is not the central concern. Instead, it is enough to see that both Habermas and this discussion argue that affection or affect is a crucial feature of human moral psychology which organises common, political reflection and deliberation. Although we will shortly have cause to criticise exactly how the connection is made between affection, reflection and deliberation, there is at least some common ground. Furthermore, Habermas, through his appeal to memory and history, also believes that political affect in the form of constitutional patriotism is sustained through careful

⁶³ Laborde, C., ‘From Constitutional to Civic Patriotism’, 595-6

attention to the past rather than forgetfulness of it. Constitutional patriotism is only continued through critical reflection on – in his case – German and European history. This claim, in outline form at least, has some similarity to our account of affection and memory in chapters two and three.

Second, there is a lack of congruence between Habermasian accounts of constitutional patriotism and the cognitive-epistemological account of affection which has been developed here. Habermas himself is not committed to the sheer rationalist individualism of the freezing Kantian heights; rather, his theory of communicative action depends on the mutuality of interpersonal relations and a life *between* facts and norms. But neither he nor his interpreters explain what kind of thing they believe ‘patriotism’ to be as an affective phenomenon. We look in vain for serious definitions of ‘loyalty’, ‘emotion’ or ‘affect’. For Habermas, the question is not central because he has bigger political fish to fry, namely the archaic, sacralised, conventional patterns of life which are apparently holding us back from post-national consciousness. Nonetheless, this does not excuse him from the task of accounting for the affective dimension more fully.

The omission of a systematic account of political attachment is a serious problem. For this lacuna throws into question the relationship between, on the one hand, the affective attachment to universal principles through the particular legal facticity of nation-states and, on the other, the deliberative, potentially post-national, democratic consciousness which should accompany such attachment. The great difficulty arises with respect to how and whether political affect can achieve what Habermas and others expect it to achieve. It is not obvious that affect is competent to be attracted to or recognise universal norms even when instantiated in

supplementary, particular, traditional, public legal forms. Communitarians have criticised just such a connection between emotions and universal norms, arguing that

universal principles are incapable of establishing a fixed political identity...[and that] a political identity must come from, and be sustained by, a force already prevalent within men's hearts, by the internalisation of a national tradition and of a common substantial culture.⁶⁴

However, even this criticism has failed to show just why affect (or 'affection') is unable to fulfil the role which Habermas and others have suggested it can and should fulfil. For it falls short of showing just why affections will struggle to recognise universal principles.

Civic nationalists do a little better. They hold that the nation-state is the limit of human community and that the post-national move is a mistake, that liberal democracy within nation-states can be properly fuelled by a limited nationalism, that 'universal principles cannot by themselves sustain any particular polity' and that 'if we want democracy to survive, we need to flesh it out with the strong feelings and emotions involved in a national tradition'.⁶⁵ But this claim is not developed in such a way as to integrate emotion convincingly into political society nor to show how a nation's own principles can be properly connected to emotion. Instead, there remains a conceptual vagueness whereby Lacroix can say that according to 'civic nationalists, human beings are *made up* of passions as much as reason.'⁶⁶ This vagueness is unfortunate because it cedes the appearance of wisdom to hyper-rationalist, highly technical political theories which would disregard the affective dimension entirely and produce patterns for political society which fail to reflect how life is really lived.

⁶⁴ Lacroix, J., 'For a European Constitutional Patriotism', 945

⁶⁵ *ibid.* 947

⁶⁶ *ibid.* 947; my emphasis.

The difficulty here is the consistent lack of clarity about the relationship of reason and emotion ('affection'). The general tenor of debate is that, since reason alone cannot organise or explain political societies, we must settle for reason and emotion *somehow* going together to make up a national or post-national consciousness which will sustain common action within and between nations. The preceding chapters, drawing on the theory of emotions, should by now have shown that, although total clarity is not available concerning the nature and role of affections, more clarity is available than is often supposed. Diagnosis of the causes of this consistent lack of clarity is more complex but needs to be attempted in order to discover what may be learnt from this very important scholarly debate and how that learning might be serviceable in the practical affairs of political society.

Three critical remarks

To these ends, we return to our account of political affection and consider three responses to the difficulties faced by constitutional patriotism. First, while it is right to applaud constitutional patriotism's connection of affect, deliberation and norms in general terms, the idea of citizens experiencing allegiance to universal, constitutional norms and principles through which they are stabilised and energised as a deliberative community both moves dangerously quickly from affect to norm and places reflection and deliberation in the wrong position. For instead of reflection and deliberation following affection and then leading to the discernment, articulation and practical application of norms, it is expected that people will be attracted directly to universal norms through the affective dimension of constitutional patriotism, thus

opening up the possibility of a deliberative community who already share definite norms. In other words, norms which are transcendent and universal are thought to be accessible to affect in an immediate way without reflection and deliberation. Moreover, although its epistemological and cognitive aptitude is not explored, allegiance is assumed to be the necessary and fitting precursor and accompaniment to what is obviously a cognitive activity, namely democratic deliberation.

Habermas' account comes closest among rival versions of constitutional patriotism to avoiding this characterisation. For his highly subtle thesis allows for the tension of facts and norms to be held in order that the thick particularity of national legal constitutions might be a stepping stone, as it were, to an allegiance to universal principles. On Habermas' thesis, affect is not immediately connected with universals but rather is mediated by the facticity of an historical legal constitution and democratic culture which sufficiently instantiates those universal norms in a system of 'specific rights [that] stem from the decisions of a historical legislature.'⁶⁷ In other words, the redirection of affect takes the route of historical particularity on its way to universal norms. By seeking to take facticity seriously in this way, Habermas hopes to close the gap and hold the tension between facts and norms in such a way that a post-national consciousness can come to birth even within the worn-out and declining institution of the nation-state. However, although Habermas believes that constitutional patriotism may overcome the "democratic deficit" – the deficit in democratic participation and thus of governmental legitimacy – by enabling post-national principles to be recognised more explicitly in localised institutions, there is no indication as to how it might overcome what we might call the "affective-

⁶⁷ Habermas, J., *Between Facts and Norms*, 125

epistemological” deficit – the lack of affective understanding of universal principles which would draw a person towards reflection, deliberation and action with others according to these principles. The gap which exists here is not well disguised by phrases already critiqued above such as ‘motivational anchorage’,⁶⁸ ‘coupling’ and ‘uncoupling’ of culture and politics, the ‘supplement’ of law and the ‘linking up’ of motives and principles.⁶⁹

The mistake which these rather mechanical – even metallic – phrases betray is that diverse adherents to constitutional patriotism have taken affections for granted rather than explored their role in human morality and political relations. They have seen the gap in their thinking – between norms and motivations – and have chosen words which express the need to close this gap by the artificial means of links and couples and anchors. Thus my critique is not a case of Muller’s description of the discussion at large (“I’ll have more emotion please”) but rather explores a conceptual absence which interprets the various constitutional patriotisms as unstable and unreliable routes to the intersubjectively coordinated political consciousness they seek. The instability of constitutional patriotism lies in the fact that political affect is not able to connect people to the universal constitutional principles that are to provide fundamental stability for deliberation. Moreover, it is not absolutely clear whether stability is really found only in the universal constitution or also in particular legal facticity without which motivational *anchoring* would not be possible. Thus there are two potentially incommensurable poles to stability, the stretched tension which Habermas, with admirable modesty and honesty, was willing to name.

⁶⁸ Laborde, C., ‘From Constitutional to Civic Patriotism’, 594

⁶⁹ Habermas, J., *Between Facts and Norms*, 499

This instability arises because of an opposition to what Biggar described as creaturely natural affection. The result is an abandonment of common, political, practical reason, a loss dubbed the 'democratic deficit' but identified by George Weigel in a variety of more earthy ways including the unwillingness of Europeans to repopulate their territories themselves and their concomitant willingness to destroy large numbers of their unborn neighbours.⁷⁰ This would seem to be the true democratic deficit of the twenty-first century, the people's lack of commitment to the continuation of their own civilisation and their disempowered unwillingness to participate in and sustain their traditions. The opposition to natural affections may be analysed through Nigel Biggar's defence of national loyalties. The cosmopolitan rights grounded in universal constitutional principles which are the ultimate objects of constitutional patriotism are parallel to Miller's cosmopolitan loves. Biggar claims that these universal loves undermine localised natural loves, which, in our terms, are the natural participation of affections in the people, land and objects which are near at hand. There is no need to claim that there are no universal laws or norms; indeed, the natural law of gratitude which Biggar's thesis is built upon is just such a law. Nor do we claim that Richard Miller believes that all people have *rights* to his indiscriminate love; he knows that no one has a right to grace.

Rather, the suggestion is that an allegiance to universal principles or an indiscriminate love for all people destabilises the creaturely, limited moral agent whose practical reasoning should begin with affections leading to moral reflection and that such affections should not overreach themselves in attempting participative understanding of all people but rather should be focused first (though not

⁷⁰ Weigel, G., *The Cube and the Cathedral*, Basic Books, 2006, 21ff

exclusively) on those who are near at hand. This creaturely limitation consists in our inability to live beyond the generic, teleological, spatial and temporal moral order and local reflections of it in traditional orders of value. Such limitation does not stem from the curse of Genesis but rather is the given way in which humans are invited to live together before their Creator and Redeemer. The implausibility of Miller's proposal lies in the idea that we can love the whole world equally which, on our terms, would mean equal affective understanding of the whole world. Affection apart from knowledge is not a kind of way in which we are given to love. Its cosmopolitan disinterestedness results in not feeling much for anything in particular. In a similar way, constitutional patriotism's 'allegiance' is at odds with our account of 'loyalty' in that it fails to recognise the personal quality of representative institutions. Loyalty to a representative person is the creaturely form of political life. That person shows us the reasons or norms by which our common life is governed. The incursion of the demand for allegiance to universal, political principles, even via the facticity of historical traditions and institutions, short-circuits the task of being a creature within traditional, political orders of value and *the* moral order and thus opposes the necessary and natural, participative attraction of affections towards representatives, neighbours and the common goods of our locality and so undermines the stability which locality brings.⁷¹ Christ's resurrection vindicated the localised life of natural affections within the moral order, thereby reaffirming its mode of stability. It did not do so uncritically as we shall see but it did at least achieve this.

⁷¹ Cf. Augustine, *On the First Epistle of John, Homily 8.4* where Augustine comments that love must 'like fire, first seize upon what is nearest, and so extend to what is further off.' Though, as Oliver O'Donovan notes (*The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine*, 120-123), such a simile underplays the generic differentiation of affection in favour of a quantitative image, it nonetheless strikingly illumines the time-worn principle that charity begins at home.

Second, the account of Roman authority in Luke-Acts shows that, from very early on, the church understood that the gospel of joy through the representative ministry of Jesus Christ would be impenetrable to a far away political authority which claimed universal jurisdiction over lands and peoples it did not adequately represent and thus from whom it would not receive that affective recognition which draws people into reflective, deliberative action. The thick particularity of the incarnation, whereby God dwelt not in every nation but in one nation and tradition alone, set the pattern for the activity of representative authority which was developed in chapter three. Although there can be no unqualified parallel between the Roman Empire of the first century and Habermas' proposed continental political authorities, it is not inappropriate to sound some notes of caution not least because of the amorality of some of Habermas' own proposals which we considered above. Habermas' account of the interdependence of facts and norms seeks to address 'the incapacity of practical reasons *alone* to motivate moral action, a gap that only a system of legal sanctions can fill.'⁷² Neither customary practices, nor mere knowledge of what is right nor conscience can motivate moral action according to Habermas and so what is required is the supplement of legal sanctions which offer incentives and threaten punishments.⁷³ Markell reckons that this self-interested, consequentialist rationale for obedience to law amounts to 'wholly amoral motives' for moral action. Habermas must agree with Markell's assessment since his universal moral principles are intended to be the true motivation for action while legal facticity

⁷² Markell, P., 'Making Affect Safe for Democracy?: On "Constitutional Patriotism"', 47. We note in passing the notion of a 'gap' which needs to be bridged, an analysis which accords with the concern above about 'links', 'coupling' and 'anchorage' and also with the concept of stability.

⁷³ Cf. 'Coercive law overlays normative expectations with threats of sanctions in such a way that addressees may restrict themselves to the prudential calculation of consequences.' Habermas, J., *Between Facts and Norms*, 116

is a necessary but compromised addition which only ‘supplements post-conventional morality in a manner effective for action.’⁷⁴ Thus, until the post-national, post-conventional consciousness has become widespread, amoral self-interest is an essential part of Habermas’ recommendation for moral action.⁷⁵

The strained difficulties which characterise Habermas’ amoral way of holding the tension between facts and norms may be helpfully contrasted with the design of ancient Israel’s life wherein laws concerning, for example, the just treatment of the poor, were read to the people during the festival of the Booths in the sabbatical year (Deuteronomy 16:13-17, 31:9-13). Affections are first focused on the fruits of the land shared by the community of the people before being drawn to the Torah which sets the normative and narrative context for their reflection and deliberation about what should be done for the common good. The difference between these Israelite affections and the affect of constitutional patriotism is threefold: first, there is no attempt to abstract the norms of the law from the particular narrative of a people’s life; second, affection’s aptitude for enabling reflection and deliberation is focused in joyful recognition of the fruits of the land, in the context of the memory-laden Feast of booths, rather than on the norms of the law as such; third, the consequences for obedience and disobedience in the form of blessings and curses are essentially integrated into the law covenant as a whole rather than framed as a compromised

⁷⁴ *ibid.*114

⁷⁵ Such a position seems to open the door, however unintentionally, to the worst parts of Hobbes’ account of representation and citizenship wherein the validity of juridical sanctions is interpreted wholly through the self-interest of the citizen who is under judgment. Hobbes distinguishes between the responsibility to obey the laws of nature (and *a fortiori*, the dependent laws of human society) *in foro interno* and the trumping of that responsibility by the right of self-preservation *in foro externo* when confronted with the possibility of death. (Hobbes, T., *Leviathan*, ed. Gaskin, J., OUP, 1996, 15.36-37)

supplement which motivates obedience through calculating self-interest.⁷⁶ In this way, divine law (as a form of positive law for a particular community) is woven into the narrative, moral psychology and territory of a people. There is no tension between facts and norms – the valleys and the heights – since there is only the land, the law which is organically fitted to the land and its people and the Lord who is present with them. The tension lies instead between the Torah and the stubbornness of the people who refuse to accept its wisdom.

Such a contrast invites a challenge as to how the ritual practices of an ancient near-eastern people might have any bearing on the exercise of political authority in the twenty-first century world of globalised markets, radical pluralism and mass communication. Roger Scruton's account of the relation of English law to the English land provides resources towards answering these challenges and dovetails with Biggar's approval of localised affectivity. The account turns on the peculiar concept of trust in English law whereby property such as land is held in trust by a

⁷⁶ By analogy and in contrast to Habermas, fear of punishment is thus a proper aspect of a Christian account of obedience to political authority. Consider Romans 13:4a. For the Christian political thinker, obedience to positive law is not in principle motivated by self-interest but rather by reverence for God whom political authority serves as an agent of his wrath and for the sake of conscience (13:4b-5). Cf. Acts 25:10-11 for this doctrine worked out in Paul's practice. In this section of the narrative, Paul is summoning the rulers to judge justly and, once he concludes that they are incompetent to do so – precisely because of their instability and lack of affective participation – he appeals to a higher court. This should not be read as a comment on the responsibilities and very nature of political authority. The call to submit and to render unto Caesar's what is Caesar's is thus not simply to accept what Caesar says but rather to call Caesar to judge justly and to confront him at the heart of his Empire when judgment is not and cannot be effectively carried out in a local jurisdiction. On this, see O'Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 136: 'There is an element of discretion which can never be removed from the obedient subject: it is always the subject's business to be clear in his or her own mind that this or that command actually *requires* obedience.' He argues that there has been a misrepresentation of this in some theological commentary as if there were simply two choices: obey or be punished: 'But this is sheer confusion, for if Caesar has the right to punish he has the right to be obeyed; and if we have the right not to obey, we have the right not to be punished for not obeying. Obedient decision is not a choice between alternatives, it is an aspect of recognition. Responsibility for ascertaining that the demand is duly authorized belongs inalienably to those who must obey it.' (137) For O'Donovan, recognition is inescapably affective and the loss of affective recognition between representative and represented is the explanation for the modern alienation of government from governed and the loss of willing obedience that leads to the amoral solution which Habermas proposes.

trustee on behalf of the deceased's children. It is a form of ownership that 'consists entirely of duties, with no personal rights.'⁷⁷ The principle of equity protects the inheritors of the trust from injustice in a way that the law itself cannot. As a result of this law, the

idea of ownership as a duty seeped into the national consciousness, and provided a model for the relation between the English and their country. Throughout the nineteenth century we find writers and statesmen explaining patriotism in such terms.⁷⁸

According to Scruton, English patriotism was interpreted as holding land in trust on behalf of the dead and those who are yet to be born. It was in the particularity of family inheritance of land and property that an affectivity was fostered which provided the 'consciousness' for the participation of a nation as a whole in its inheritance in such a way that reflection and deliberation on right action was energised. Trust is thus *constituted* by patriotic affection in that shared affection for the land is the common understanding whereby those past, present and future share that land. This concept of affective trust will be of great significance for chapter five.

The central conceptual feature of Scrutonian patriotism which sets it apart from *constitutional* patriotism is that it begins with affective attachment to that which is near-at-hand in our homes, heritage and hopes rather than far away on the level of universal principles. Such patriotism involves an imaginative recognition of unity (if not harmony) between past, present and future participants in the land. It is a form of understanding which welcomes in grateful joy the inheritance which has been bequeathed and then proceeds to engage in moral reasoning after that initial affective recognition. Thus in Scrutonian patriotism, 'stability' is found in home, land, law and

⁷⁷ Scruton, R., *England: An Elegy*, 119

⁷⁸ *ibid.* 119 (my emphases)

tradition – the valleys we know and love – rather than in a constant, impractical movement between valleys and heights. Such an account shows the politically beneficial possibilities of the kind of ethnocentricity which constitutional patriotism critiques. It shows how the deepest energies of communal agency are drawn out not by that which is far away but by that which is near at hand, that which we can see, hear and hold. In such patriotism we see the element of truth in Scheler's elision of perception and affection – that we recognise value partly as it resides within the visible, audible and tangible forms that our locality takes.

If we turn again to the passage from ancient Israel to the twenty-first century, we see that Scruton's interpretation of trust in English law has strong parallels to Israelite practice and shows one form of response to the rise of globalisation. For the movement towards judgment in both Israelite and English law is energised and directed through affective participation in the land as explained by its past, present and future. England is not, on any reasonable view, a covenanted people in the same way as Israel was God's chosen, covenanted people – no prophets have foretold a Messiah to be born in Windsor nor yet one arising from Middlesbrough in Yorkshire, the way to the sea, along the Tees. "Can anything good come from there?", ask the people of Sunderland and Westminster alike. (No doubt good can come from Middlesbrough – but not an Anointed King!) The point instead is that natural affections, which Biggar argued for over against Miller, are present in both ancient Israelite and contemporary English settings. This should not surprise us for, whether God is acting in general or special grace, he always deals with people in the thick particularity of their lives and within the created, vindicated moral order. Thus the goodness of this aspect of English law is good precisely because it reflects God's

design for the life of peoples – embodied in Israel and fulfilled in Jesus – namely that their laws are not formulated apart from the particularity of their lives but rather are judgments concerning their lives within their localities, town and cities, judgments which emerge from within the logic of inheritance and tradition and through intersubjective affective epistemology.

However, matters cannot be left to rest there for, as Biggar says, true patriotism has a critical dimension which is conscious of the susceptibility of human creatures to idolise their own nation's tradition, customary morality and virtues. Scrutonian patriotism tends towards a peculiar eschatology, construing many as one, differentiating and associating a community's dead, living and the yet unborn almost entirely or entirely within the thick matrix of their particular tradition. In stark contrast to a Habermasian eschatology, which envisages the human future as post-national, Scruton's patriotism depends on an account of humans whereby their destiny is substantially or entirely explicable within the terms of their locality and tradition. Though, contra Nussbaum, the transcendent has a place, it is very closely aligned with the tradition it transcends. Commenting on the development of England, Scruton claims that 'the Church became identified with the national mind – a web of knowledge, culture and social aspiration, laid like a net over the countryside, trapping and uniting the forms of local life.'⁷⁹ 'Like patriotism, of which it was a part, the English religion had been placed beyond question.'⁸⁰ In the extreme case, to which Scruton sometimes tends, the particular order of value, self-vindicated by age, virtue or strength, and the created, vindicated moral order are brought so close together as to be largely indistinguishable: Christian religion is gently subsumed into

⁷⁹ *ibid.* 109-110

⁸⁰ *ibid.* 94

patriotic affection. Such self-vindication is mocked by the ravages of time and comprehensively denied not only by the radical challenge of the Kingdom of God before whom earthly rulers must cast their crowns but also by chapter two's critique of epistemological dependence on communal virtue.

True patriotism, an affective attentiveness to tradition and inheritance may construe past, present and future participants in the land as a differentiated unity but will always be critically alert both to the significance of human life which surpasses nationality and to the possibility that what is actually good may be quite different from what particular national virtues and tradition define as good. Moral reasoning is always moral learning and a critical patriotism will always be attuned to learn something new and surprising rather than settle for myths of national virtue which offer no helpful resources for practical reasoning about right action in the present. Ironically, constitutional patriotism, despite its attempt to combine facticity and normativity, has so diminished the value of locality while failing to show how its own procedures of liberal democracy could sustain the detailed criticism which is required to prevent the dark side of nationalism from emerging that it cannot effectively engage with the thick particularity of local justice, thereby failing to represent adequately popular anger and joy and so fuelling the worst forms of nationalism, the very reverse of what it intended to achieve.⁸¹

As a result of this examination of Habermas through Deuteronomy and Scruton, it is possible to say that positive law which is not primarily rooted in the locality which it governs will run the risk of opposing the affections of the people of that place. The English law of the English land has become effective partly through

⁸¹ Laborde, C., 'From Constitutional to Civic Patriotism', 600-1: 'If democratic politics fail to take a stand on matters of cultural identity, these might end up being monopolized by anti-democratic movements, as in the case of the French rightist National Front'.

the affective recognitions of a people over time. Such an approach removes the possibility of the kind of ‘gap’ between facts and norms which led Habermas to pin his hopes for obedience to positive law solely upon prudential calculation of consequences. For instead of facticity as a whole being a Habermasian supplement to universal law, affections within locality are Burkean ‘supplements’ which support and make intelligible the affectively rich common law of the land.⁸²

Our approach might be thought of as communitarian inasmuch as it seems to hold that ‘political identity’ arises through

a force already prevalent within men’s hearts [and] by the internalisation of a national tradition and of a common substantial culture.⁸³

However, that would be to underplay the important theological dimension to this account. For, ultimately it is not a *political* identity that is at stake here. The point of constitutional patriotism was to provide political principles that could criticise pre-political ethnocentricities in order to develop post-national political identity. However, the purpose of our thesis is to provide theo-political principles that can criticise political idolatries in order to discover, protect and enable a *provisional* political identity and an ultimate eschatological identity. Such a proposal would resource a truly critical patriotism which can hold a nation together internally in such a way as to bring benefit to other nations even those which are far away.

Third, our concept of affection can effectively address not only the thesis of constitutional patriotism but also the changed global situation which constitutional patriotism was designed to address. Habermas’ claim is that the emergence of ‘new forms of organization for continental “regimes”’ will mean the gradual

⁸² Burke, E., *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, 78

⁸³ Lacroix, J., ‘For a European Constitutional Patriotism’, 945

disappearance of the old nation-state model, along with its 'inefficient' mustering point, the United Nations, which cannot provide the requisite deliberative framework to face the challenges of the

globalization of commerce and communication, of economic production and finance, of the spread of technology and weapons, and above all of ecological and military risks.⁸⁴

In other words, the challenge which Habermas poses is whether nation-states *can* be moral communities in the global age or whether they must now be superseded. Since the new moment presents problems which transcend territorial borders in a way never before imagined, and since critical distance on conventional morality and ethnic consciousness through post-conventional morality and post-national consciousness is the route to the 'rationalization of collective identities', it seems to Habermas that the political supersession of nation-states by larger political units is now not only necessary but positively desirable. At this point, it is right to ask some practical questions concerning the plausibility of Habermas' proposal. They stem from a concern for the normal, everyday life of the peoples of the United Kingdom, Denmark, Poland, France and the other nation-states within the European Union.⁸⁵

The questions can be focussed through the account of creatureliness given by Nigel Biggar and through the account of moral community given by Oliver O'Donovan. These two Regius Professors of Moral and Pastoral Theology at the

⁸⁴ Habermas, J., 'The European Nation-State: On the Past and Future of Sovereignty and Citizenship', 105-107

⁸⁵ A focus on the European Union is not meant to suggest that practical difficulties will not arise elsewhere if the realisation of a post-national consciousness were seriously pursued – one has only to ponder its application in the so-called African Union or the radical conventional morality and consciousness which persists in the United States of America – but rather because it is in the crucible of recent European history that this conception has developed. But see also Nussbaum, M., *For Love of Country* for more American perspectives.

University of Oxford, one present and one past, diverge to some extent in the style and tenor of their scholarship, but seem to converge on substantial matters, not least on the significance of popular moral unity. O'Donovan argues that to 'see ourselves as a people is a work of moral imagination' which interprets the reality of the practical engagements of ordinary life. These practical engagements are defined as 'the reality of what we are *given* to be and do together.'⁸⁶ Note the passive voice here for it coheres well with Biggar's emphasis on the creaturely givenness of our obligations to our family and our community which call forth our gratitude. Such formulations reflect a rich doctrine of God's sovereign Providence and suggest that we are not thrown into the world but rather placed and sustained.

From here, the eschatological, Augustinian distinction between an Eden without human politics, the present where political authority serves society and the Kingdom of God enables the insight that the givenness of social life is not made by political authority but discovered by it.⁸⁷ But a contractarian vision precisely reverses this order by giving political authority the task of identity conferral and rendering all social communications as aspects of a single political vocation. The crucial oversight which this led to, according to O'Donovan, is

a false suspicion of the ordinary, a doubt of human nature as known in the simple communication of food, wisdom, and affection. It could not see that a common good could be composed of such humble engagements, and thought the only worthwhile mode of human cooperation lay in jurisdiction. It failed to hear the word of Jesus, "Judge not!"⁸⁸

Such an analysis, which accords with Biggar's affirmation of creaturely localised loyalties and scepticism of Miller's impractical and too-demanding call to

⁸⁶ O'Donovan, O., *The Ways of Judgment*, 151 (emphasis added)

⁸⁷ *ibid.* 154

⁸⁸ *ibid.* 157

indiscriminate loves, invites further exploration. Human epistemology rooted in the ‘communication of...affection’ is one way of framing the intersubjective concept of affection which has been explored in this thesis. The move which has not been fully made by O’Donovan to this point is to explore the inner workings of such communication in political relations. However, now that they have been explored here, it is possible to see how O’Donovan’s thesis bears on the account of post-national consciousness which Habermas has recommended. For O’Donovan’s proposal is that collective agency will only be practically conceivable and possible if it is imaginable by the people who are the agents. For to

see ourselves as a people is to grasp imaginatively a common good that unifies our overlapping and interlocking practical communications, and so to see ourselves as a single agency, the largest collective agency that we can practically conceive.⁸⁹

As we have already seen, an affective epistemology gives some definition to what might qualify as the ‘largest’ such agency. On the one hand, the ‘supplement’ of facticity was included by Habermas not in order to enable people to be enriched in their affective understanding of their own locality but rather that their consciousness, routed through such facticity, might evolve into a post-national democratic consciousness that could give allegiance to universal constitutional principles and legitimate post-national, continental, political institutions. However, on the other hand, if affections are cognitive, basic to human epistemology, modest in their epistemological aptitude and, by natural justice confirmed through special revelation, primarily attracted to that which is near at hand, localised and particular, then we should be cautious to assert that the energies which make collective agency both

⁸⁹ *ibid.* 150

conceivable and possible either ought to or could energise a collective agency which is post-national.

The impracticality of post-nationality would thus be partially attributable to its inability to sustain an affective epistemology which can initiate a people's unity in representative collective agency. In the absence of such an affective epistemology we would expect to find not only that which characterised the Roman rulers of Acts, namely a disengagement from doing justice in particular situations but also that which currently characterises many inhabitants of Western Europe today, a disaffection from European political authorities, the epistemological-affective deficit we mentioned earlier. As O'Donovan says, the

danger of dreaming up abstract schemes of political union on paper – a danger never far from the European Union – is that they do not accord with the way the member-peoples actually conceive their practical engagements.⁹⁰

Political representatives who operate at the level of the European Union struggle to draw affective attachment from those they represent. However well-intended their activities, they are inevitably distanced from their constituency. Lacking localised affections to supplement, correct and aid laws, the representatives are driven to make more laws in order to effect the changes they desire. If there is such a misalignment between political authority and social communications, what remains is that which Luke exposed in the books of Acts, namely a massive but ineffective juridical structure which is not adequate to hear and attend to the pleas for justice concerning the affairs over which it legislates. On this pattern of political judgment, local jurisdiction is subordinated to a centralised final court of appeal, whether in Rome or Brussels.

⁹⁰ *ibid.* 154

Again, it must be emphasised that this is not an attempt at an unqualified equation of the obscene brutality of the Roman Empire with the European Union's much more civilised attempts to bring effective and peaceful government to Europe, following two world wars and, specifically, the Holocaust. The analogy is on a conceptual level and pertains precisely to the inadequate or poorly conceived attention to the springs of human collective agency which are inescapably affective. For in the European Union today we do not see deep affective understanding between representatives and represented. Territorial affiliations and affinities which form people's sense of being at home in their lands are thought to be out-dated or, worse, dangerously ethnocentric, by influential political theorists such as Habermas. However, as the preceding discussion has indicated, it is the limitations on our loyalties which are given with our creatureliness and supported by national boundaries that make possible our freedom affectively to understand one another and to participate by those same affections in the reflective, deliberative, practical communications which we share and enact together for the common good. Representation, which makes possible the flourishing life of political societies, is the major casualty of undermining such affective understanding. The ill-health of representation today puts in jeopardy not only the collective agency of peoples but also their willingness to defend the communications in which their common life consists, and on which the European Union itself depends. A renewal of localised representation and law combined with a more respectful attitude towards that renewal from continental authorities would seem to be the more practically plausible response to the undoubtedly challenging times of global communications which lie

ahead rather than the development of psychologically incoherent, practically ineffective and legally over-freighted post-national institutions.

Conclusion

We have now considered threats to our political life which arise through poorly conceptualised views of human affection. It is hoped that, in light of such observations, institutions such as the medical guild discussed earlier may be better understood and protected by political authority. Our rather bleak assessment of the problems facing such institutions should be weighed against the more hopeful perspective that people's affective participations in their land, culture, tradition and institutions are more enduring than some have supposed and less amenable to redirection towards far-away authorities and abstract principles than some political theorists have imagined. Thankfully, it has not proved easy to persuade people to give up some known-and-loved ways of entering into their practical communications. Memory, though sometimes a false friend, yet has power to sustain affective understanding.

There remain some final questions. Habermas, with admirable honesty, raises the 'troubling' question of 'whether democratic opinion- and will-formation could ever achieve a binding force that extends beyond the level of the nation-state.'⁹¹ He fears lest the hold of ethnocentricity is too strong and will in the end defeat the European project. Such a confession forms the last sentence of his essay and leaves behind a pregnant ambiguity: whether failure in this regard would be due to the

⁹¹ Habermas, J., 'The European Nation-State: On the Past and Future of Sovereignty and Citizenship', 127

incorrigibility of a putative European public or the impracticability of the post-national project itself. We have suggested that both may be the case. People do idolise their nations but living peacefully and harmoniously without an ‘us’ differentiated from a ‘them’ seems morally unthinkable. We sympathise with Habermas’ reasonable affections and hear his troubled cries. Our common concern, despite our differing views, is for the peaceful life of nations. But the chief question of this thesis now is not how to achieve allegiance to universal norms but rather how to renew affective wisdom in diverse localities in order that the common good might be pursued. So we must now enquire as to what source for renewal of affective understanding might bring much-needed (half-)light to darkened minds and penitence to stubborn political practices.

Chapter 5: Christian political affections

According to Scruton, the ‘phantom’ political existence of the heights ‘poisons our attachment to the realities through which we might, in our fallen condition, live and find fulfilment.’¹ His elegy is no antidote but instead summons us to discover one. But where should humans look to find healing and renewal for their political affections and how might such change be effected in a genuinely intersubjective and localised way? We shall seek answers to these questions through consideration of the Holy Spirit’s work in and through the body of Christ as it is expressed in diverse local churches. In the course of so doing we shall seek to show how the concept of affection weaves together the thought of leading contributors to Christian theology in the churches local to the United Kingdom such as Bernd Wannewetsch, Brian Brock, Oliver O’Donovan, David Ford and the late Dan Hardy.

Transmission and transposition

Bernd Wannewetsch laments that in modern society, ‘everything has its place – except for political worship’. On his view, worship of God is political in the primary sense that it is the worship of God who ‘ruleth on high’ by a local congregation who are themselves a ‘public.’² Worship by such a public is the context in which Christian ethics, including the political ethics of churches, may be formed. Moreover,

¹ Scruton, R., ‘In defence of the nation’, 327

² Wannewetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 7

worship is not only formative for churches but rather the ‘complex and pluriform political life [of churches then] spills over, so to speak, into the secular *polis*.’³

Unfortunately modern society largely fails to accommodate political worship and so has allowed politics itself to become an idolatrous object of worship. This happens when ‘the two secular states [oikonomia and politia] detach themselves from their relationship to worship’ and ‘assume a cultic character’.⁴ A politics which is not conscious of and receptive to the significance of Christian worship has deeply idolatrous tendencies. As we have seen, the risk of idolatry permeates much modern political discourse, whether in an extreme form of national patriotism or in the post-nationalism of constitutional patriotism.

There is a need, therefore, for a political conception which is less likely to encourage such idolatry and yet might attract support beyond those who are favourable to ‘political worship’ because of personal religious conviction. A suggestion of where this might be found emerges, perhaps surprisingly, in Jürgen Habermas’ thought. Wannenwetsch explains how Habermas recognises

the role of religion’s character as a public of its own...neither seeing it as an undefined part of ‘the’ public as a whole, nor assigning it to the private sphere, but...conceding it a transmitter role...⁵

On Habermas’ view, religion, like literature and art, is a place where political problems are first experienced in the form of social trauma. That glimpsed experience may then be transmitted to the political public in a way which supports political discourse.⁶ In our terms, the affective beginnings of understanding which

³ *ibid.* 11

⁴ *ibid.* 63

⁵ *ibid.* 270

⁶ Habermas, J., *Between Facts and Norms*, 441ff

reside in intersubjective experiences of trauma (and celebration!) reside first and foremost in publics which are essentially unrelated to coercive politics. Although not distinguishing it essentially from artistic activities such as painting, Habermas recognises that the ‘transmitter’ contribution of a distinctively *religious* public, such as a church, to political society lies in its identity as a formed rather than manufactured public. The distinction between these two kinds of public lies in whether the public is given identity or has to create it for itself. The body of Christ’s self-conception is that it does not have to pursue its own identity but rather is given identity by ‘the founder Spirit’.⁷ As such it is a public but unlike the manufactured publics of political parties and interest groups. It stands apart from such publics as a ‘transmitter’ of the communications in which political society consists, able both ‘to stabilize and extend civil society and public, and to assure themselves of their own identity and ability to act.’⁸ In the terms of this discussion, churches’ renewal of their own common life is logically prior to the stabilising, enriching service they can perform in society. Churches’ communication of affective understanding within their own communities is the necessary precondition for the transmission or sharing of affective wisdom in order to assist wider political society’s communications in the goods they share in common.

Wannenwetsch rightly sees that the exclusion of the act of worship has materially damaged the vital processes of arriving at consensus in political society at large.⁹ Referring to the biblical image of the diversity of languages following the hubris of Babel, he observes that ‘the need for communicative endeavour and

⁷ Wannenwetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 272: ‘These identity politics are constituted in worship, where Church becomes Church’ (272)

⁸ Habermas, J., *Between Facts and Norms*, 454

⁹ Wannenwetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 215

consensual processes can be perceived in a positive sense as humanity's Babylonian inheritance.'¹⁰ These processes – however necessary in a world of plural moral languages and outlooks – are radically threatened by the ever-present hermeneutic of suspicion which has undermined 'basic trust' which is

the political basis for which there is no substitute, either through a constitutional guarantee of participatory rights, or through the procedural provision of ideal communicative conditions, such as is demanded in the discourse ethics of Jürgen Habermas...¹¹

Wannenwetsch is especially concerned about trust in words but sees that such trust 'must be based on experiences in everyday life', a phrase which we interpret as the ordinary, *affective* experiences which we investigated and celebrated in chapter four. With respect to Habermas at least, our findings from the discussion of constitutional patriotism cohere with Wannenwetsch's assessment.

Wannenwetsch alludes to the passionate quality of social trust inasmuch as trust exposes itself to an experience of suffering. In its openness, it is 'neither knowledge nor ignorance, neither certainty nor naivety.'¹² Our earlier discussion of trust in English land law suggests an appropriate next step: namely to claim that affections are themselves *constitutive of* social trust in the form of enduring, shared, participative understandings which open up discussion rather than closing it down. Social trust arises precisely in the shared affective understandings which characterise any institution where people (for example) sorrow, rejoice or fear together concerning the common objects which concern their common good. Memory held in the tradition of the institution maintains these affections in bonds of trust, providing

¹⁰ *ibid.* 224

¹¹ *ibid.* 312

¹² *ibid.* 314; cf. 312ff

an agreed stable place from which a community may proceed into common reflection and deliberation. Without bonds of trust, there is neither an intersubjective nor a stable starting point for political life but only the hermeneutics of suspicion. The shared enduring affections which constitute trust provide a preliminary consensus concerning how to begin to understand the world.

With this affective interpretation of trust in mind, we consider the claim that

the irreplaceable political service which the Church can offer to the 'body politic' (in the literal sense) is to show how in a political organism joint ways of arriving at convictions can be pursued and carried through to an end.¹³

Wannenwetsch defines joint convictions in terms of the 'homology' or 'consensus' which may occur in and through political worship. The church has the 'task of arriving at consensus as a gift.'¹⁴ The way to such an ordered and graciously given institutional life is 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus' (Rom. 8:2) which governs the practices of the institution. He describes how

the Spirit that lends assurance gives the openness which is required for a really free discourse. Its ecstatic mode of efficacy breaks down hard and fast positions, and permits new unwonted experiences. Of course this openness has its necessary frontiers too; but their position cannot be discovered in advance.¹⁵

This openness makes consensus possible and its basis is the assurance that the Spirit brings. Objectively, that assurance rests on the justifying actions and words of God.¹⁶ Assurance is experienced subjectively in memory and received by faith as the Spirit brings back in the present what God has said and done in the past thereby offering an

¹³ *ibid.* 299

¹⁴ *ibid.* 26

¹⁵ *ibid.* 301-2

¹⁶ Cf. Brock, B., *Singing the Ethos of God*, 138: 'the foundation for any true human knowledge is God's decision to look away from our sins in forgiveness and instead to see us as we were created to be.' Cf. 186ff.

opportunity for a fresh renewal of faith. This source of stability is precisely what is necessary for openness to the future as opposed to knowing ‘in advance’ the nature of the good life. The Spirit brings that openness, breaking down inapposite ideas of what is good and right.

Wannenwetsch’s account of political worship is by no means an abstraction. Rather the ‘*whole* Church is represented in its Catholic completeness’ in every act of worship by any two or three gathered together.¹⁷ The *localisation* of political worship is thus essential to churches’ task of transmission. Our account of affection enables further clarification of Wannenwetsch’s position. For we have said (a) that affections are constitutionally open to discovery of the newness that can yield intersubjective consensus (b) that intersubjective affectivity which the Spirit achieves in the church is often initially accomplished precisely through moments of breakthrough such as Barnabas’ joy at the faith of the Gentiles (c) that trust is built during the process whereby differing affections are discussed and verified and that (d) affections are most basically attracted and stabilised within localities. Here then is the way that churches offer ‘a basic clue to political life’¹⁸ concerning joint agreements and action. Trust is formed, quite specifically, through intersubjective affectivity as affections are experienced, shared, discussed and verified in a local context.¹⁹ Christian affections, learnt from the Spirit in churches, contribute to social trust as salt preserving trust from suspicion and as light illuminating the epistemological path which trust may take.

¹⁷ Wannenwetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 73

¹⁸ *ibid.* 300

¹⁹ *ibid.* 226; ‘the values will not, indeed, be simply the same, but they will be capable of concurrence (open to a process in which consensus can be arrived at).’

Performing this service is not straightforward because it is hardly the case that people come to consensus quickly and easily either in the church or in the world at large. Nonetheless the church has resources to meet the ‘trust deficit’ which are unavailable to the world but which enable a provisional and partial reestablishment of trust within the world. For inasmuch as a church has established both common objects concerning which affective understanding is attracted and patterns of worship wherein those affections may become intersubjective, it may build and share trust within itself and throughout its neighbourhood. In Wannenwetsch’s terms, the church consists of ‘real people, who live and act in both contexts as those who are equipped with experiences of consensus.’²⁰

Local churches’ service of trust-*transmission*, now redefined in terms of intersubjective affection-transmission, may be understood through the deeply Lutheran concept which Wannenwetsch describes as ‘transposition’. This move turns the tables on Habermas by denying the equivalence of religion to art or literature and by repositioning religion, especially the Christian religion, as the source of wisdom about political life rather than an ‘early-warning’ system for political problems. Transposition centres human life in the work of the Holy Spirit through the body of Christ. In transposition, a Christian ‘lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbour through love.’²¹ All the good which Christ has is transposed to the Christian by the Holy Spirit. Since an abundance has now been given to the Christian in her salvation through marriage to Christ, the Christian’s life is a surplus which can be given to serve her neighbour. In contrast to political philosophies which have an inner logic of scarcity and deficiency, transposition works from God’s abundance to the

²⁰ *ibid.* 301

²¹ Luther, M., *The Freedom of a Christian, Luther’s Works*, Pelikan & Lehman (ed.), Concordia, vol.31, 1957, 371

neighbour's necessity. In this way, the transposition to the neighbour neither overwhelms the genuine otherness of the neighbour nor is detached from him because governed solely by procedural rules, the dangers common to discourse ethics and Rawlsian contractarianism. For the focus is precisely on the neighbour's need when construed in the context of God's abundance.²²

Wannenwetsch does not fully develop the affective form of the transposition though hints at it by referring to the Samaritan's 'passion for the neighbour' and Jesus' 'chief emotion', compassion.²³ His main emphasis is that action towards the neighbour will involve emotions consonant with the abundance or 'fullness of God'.²⁴ He writes that

Because this transposition into the other is not a matter of a special skill, but is a phenomenon springing from abundance, Paul can also speak quite unreservedly about an *emotional* indwelling in the other: 'If one member suffers, all suffer together with him; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with him' (1 Corinthians 12:26).²⁵

This participation in the other by emotion is not an easy thing since 'in the emotional dimension as well, we all too soon come up against the limits of our concern and our capacity for sympathy.'²⁶

We may adapt Wannenwetsch's account by first observing that transposition does not necessarily involve a neighbour's *need*. As 1 Corinthians 12:26 says, there is a transposition which involves honouring and rejoicing, affections not attracted by need. Thus we may say that an affective transposition into the neighbour's condition, whether one of need or plenty, is the beginning of understanding concerning what would constitute right action towards the neighbour. Transposition is thus an

²² Wannenwetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 328-9

²³ *ibid.* 334

²⁴ *ibid.* 334

²⁵ *ibid.* 337

²⁶ *ibid.* 342

attracted recognition of the condition of a feature of the moral order, construed through a particular church's order of value. Second, we observe that, although politics is often about addressing need or righting wrong and so 'need' is what affective transposition will often recognise, need is not the basic category of the world. Instead, there is a deep 'logic of overflow' within the world, a claim consonant with Wannenwetsch's account of abundance. Ford and Hardy claim that the 'resurrection of the crucified Jesus Christ is this logic at the heart of Christianity.'²⁷ Following the intense concentration of death upon Jesus at the cross, the abundance of life has been made available through his resurrection. This is now the 'basic reality' of all existence.²⁸ Thus a Christian account of need does not revert to Nussbaum's overly negative account in which emotion was always directed towards the out-of-control which is eudaimonistically needed by the self. The initial understanding which constitutes Christian compassion or sorrow is not eudaimonistic but rather framed within the larger canvas of the abundant moral order vindicated by Christ.

This 'logic of overflow' is the key to seeing how Christian political affections can serve the public good and assist the establishment of public trust.²⁹ For Christian affection construes the neighbour's condition in terms of the abundance of creation vindicated by Christ. This is a further expression of the eschatological pattern of association and differentiation which we explored in Edwards. Affection recognises that pattern by engaging in the neighbour's need or plenty to understand it in terms of the abundant life given in Christ. Affections which understand the world in terms of

²⁷ Hardy, D. and Ford, D., *Jubilate*, 73

²⁸ *ibid.* 73

²⁹ *ibid.* 19. The political application is picked up at Wannenwetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 339fn26, which, interestingly, is just the direction which Hardy and Ford note but do not pursue at *Jubilate*, 138ff.

abundance can offer strong epistemological support towards the maintenance and correction of social trust. For while Rawls made mistrust basic to life through his veil of ignorance and while Habermas' account led to detachment from the localised sources of trust, affective understanding of the world in terms of the abundance of Christ's resurrection undercuts the reason for mistrust. Instead, these affective attachments form the trust which benefits churches and their neighbourhoods.

Faith in God as the wellspring of joyful praise

What then is the source and form of Christian political affections such that they both bring renewal within local churches and generate social trust which can serve the institutions of society? To answer this, we enquire again into the nature of ultimate stability for creaturely affections. Addressing God, Augustine recalled how 'you remain immutable above all things, and yet deigned to dwell in my memory since the time I learnt about you.'³⁰ While he was yet 'unlovely',³¹ God loved him and made his home in Augustine's 'storehouses'. God's gracious initiative provided an ultimate but strange stability for his memory, experienced as shattered deafness, panting, hungering and thirsting. The sweetness of God's love both brought him a provisional rest and peace and set him on fire for eternal rest and eternal peace.³²

The subjective, creaturely grasp, whereby God's gracious, stabilising, initiative is welcomed, is what Christian orthodoxy has called faith. Such faith is an

³⁰ Augustine, *Confessiones*, 10.xxv.36; 'tu...incommutabilis manes super omnia et dignatus es habitare in memoria mea, ex quo te didici.'

³¹ *ibid.* 10.xxvii.38

³² *ibid.* 10.xxvii.38

awakened clinging to the God who has already taken the initiative to know us and dwell with us. Ford and Hardy comment helpfully that the

first cognitive content of faith is the knowledge that we are known and that this knowledge of us by God is not abstract...but passionately concerned to the point of identification with us.³³

God's passionate knowledge of us is primarily located in the 'crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ...the wisdom of God in its greatest concentration.'³⁴ God has wisely and mercifully taken the initiative by participating in our creaturely life in order to save us. The inner, gracious logic of this initiative indicates that it can only be known by God's gift of faith. To know that we are already intimately known-and-loved by God suggests that our knowledge of his knowing-and-loving comes from God in the form of an awakening to himself. By faith we awaken to recognise the passionate, participatory knowledge which God already has of us through his Son.

Such an awakening to God in faith involves at least some articulable knowledge of who God is and what He has done. For example, we come to know by faith that He is One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and that He is our Maker and Redeemer. Such knowing we call here "dogmatic" knowledge. By "dogmatic", we mean no less than the sense of the normal, theological usage. Faith is dogmatic in that it involves knowing to some extent the nature of the object of faith: that He is, for example, sovereign, good, just and merciful. But we do mean more than that obvious usage. For "dogmatic" faith entails a certain *valuation* of the object of faith. In Oliver O'Donovan's words, dogma is '*doxa*, an act of praise, in which the being

³³ *ibid.* 108

³⁴ *ibid.* 108

and work of God is the first and last thing on our lips.’³⁵ To which insight we add that the *act* of praise, whereby, for example, we sing or declare the wonders of the death and resurrection of the Son of God, is partially constituted by an affective recognition by which we mean an attracted, evaluative, affective understanding. Political worship, in Wannewetsch’s sense, is centrally (though not solely) constituted by the practice of praise³⁶ and thus we can say that affective understanding is central to political worship within the institution of the church in its diverse local expressions.

Dogmatic faith thus involves the worshipful practice of praise which expresses affective understanding. The central affective understanding to which praise gives expression is joy. For joy recognises the good we praise as good. In praise, we celebrate the abundant goodness of God and his works and thus the affective understanding most appropriate to praise is joy. Moreover through joy, we are drawn in an *interested* admiration into participation in God and his world. Joyful attraction is energised by the graciousness of God’s initiative towards sinners in need of grace. Joy is thus praise’s *primary* affective understanding for it recognises in attracted admiration the abundant goodness³⁶ of God and his works. This goodness is attractive both as good-in-itself and *good-for-us* because of our need for the goodness of God, his world and his redeeming grace.

Thus the revelation of God’s grace ‘enables our knowing to be always praising’³⁷ since a faith-based knowing of goodness will always involve praising that goodness, a praising which is inextricable from a joyful understanding of the object

³⁵ O’Donovan, O., ‘What Can Ethics Know about God?’, *The Doctrine of God and Theological Ethics*, Torrance & Michael (ed.), T & T Clark, 2006, 33-46, 34

³⁶ Wannewetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 6-7

³⁷ Hardy, D. and Ford, D., *Jubilate*, 108

of praise. Faith clings to the God who has already grasped us and knit himself into the world in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus for the sake of our salvation. That affections spring from such a faith accounts for the strange stability hinted at in Augustine's experience. For the affections of such faith would be attracted to Jesus Christ precisely and centrally with respect to his salvific, incarnate sufferings and resurrection. Thus, inasmuch as they are attached to Christ, such affections would be conditioned by his experience of both the fallenness of creation in his body on the tree and the firstfruits of the vindication of creation at his resurrection. The hungering, panting and thirsting of Augustine reflects precisely such participatory faith.

Joyful praise as the beginning of political ethics

This analysis of faith, praise and joy has implications for our political concerns. Wannewetsch observes that Hannah Arendt's account of political *initium* may be fruitfully reinterpreted with respect to political worship in terms of God's gracious initiative that creates a people which He then governs.³⁸ We receive the initiative by faith and recognise it in a joy expressed through praise. This move interprets Oliver O'Donovan's claim that the practice of praise is 'a kind of proving or demonstration of the fact of God's kingly rule'.³⁹ A congregation's intersubjective, joyful, praise recognises that God's government is good for the congregation. Joyful praise welcomes as good the merciful, kingly rule of YHWH over his people in the

³⁸ Wannewetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 10; cf. Arendt, H., *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, 1998, 175ff

³⁹ O'Donovan, O., *The Desire of the Nations*, 48; cf. his claim that God's kingly rule 'takes effect in the praises of his people.' (ibid. 48)

crucified and risen Christ. This correlation between God in his kingly rule and the joy of his people is the deepest possible form of representation. For praise of God is the height of welcome and is appropriate only to the One who is worthy of praise both in himself and, as Lord and Saviour, as the One who holds out the secure promise of a future for his people. The one who achieves representation for us is Jesus Christ. Recognition of him in joy, through the illumination of the Holy Spirit, proves the identity of the people of God, as we saw in Luke and Acts.

This representative correlation is achieved by the same Holy Spirit ‘by whom we cry “Abba Father”’ and who ‘himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God’ (Romans 8:15-16). Joyful praise proves the identity of the people as the people of God but their identity is not construed in a worldly political fashion since they praise not as craven slaves but as free and joyful sons and daughters, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17). The joyful praise of free children transmits to the world the kind of life which is possible for humans under political authority (i.e. the authority of God). A church is thus conceived ‘not as a safe haven from the world but as the focal point of a praising people caught up in Christ’s service to the world.’⁴⁰ Her praises are joyful utterances which enable the children of God to be the city on a hill, as they awaken in faith to praise that which is abundantly good, thereby overflowing with the epistemological light of joy both to one another and to the peoples of the world who walk in darkness.

The transmission of this intersubjective joy is the service which churches may render to meet the deficit in trust which characterises political society. For, as we saw, trust consists in shared affective understandings. The contribution to political

⁴⁰ Brock, B., *Singing the Ethos of God*, 163

society of joy expressed in praise is its recognition of what is good, a recognition which, if appropriately adopted by wider society, will build or rebuild trust. Society at large is substantially constituted by its ability to enjoy the goods it shares in common. This common joy in common goods is the essential constituent of a political community for it establishes the bond of trust which enables people to proceed into reflection and deliberation confident that there is a provisional consensus concerning the nature of the good. Although wider society may not rejoice as churches do in the saving work of Jesus Christ, yet it may join in the churches' joy as it is transposed into common goods of society's life, such as harvest, marriage, children, voluntary social care, state welfare provision and peaceful neighbourhoods. The churches' joy in these objects depends ultimately on the Spirit who can preserve joy when it is threatened with suspicion and fear. As a fruit of the Spirit, this Christian joy also has distinctive wisdom about the significance of the objects in which it rejoices. The transposition of the churches' affections into such goods may, therefore, suggest to wider society distinctively Christian reasons for rejoicing, thus opening up an apologetic opportunity. On a simple level, one thinks of the bolstering of the Women's Institute by a Christian joy in children as God's gifts thereby warding off the onset of a culture of fear directed towards children as impositions on autonomous lives. Such joy preserves consensus about common goods, thereby building social trust.

As well as acting as a preservative, Christian affections may also disturb, renew or correct patterns of social trust. By way of example, consider the transformation of the tone and leadership of the UK Conservative Party since 2005 with regard to poverty. The phenomenon dubbed 'hug-a-hoodie' by the media was

really an outgrowth of the “Compassionate Conservatism” which is receiving a sophisticated, evidence-based make-over through Iain Duncan Smith’s *Centre for Social Justice*.⁴¹ It is precisely a turn in understanding from fear to compassion through the Roman Catholic Duncan Smith which has revealed the deep ambivalence within the modern Conservative Party concerning the growing underclass in UK society. His Antiochene experience happened in Easterhouse, Glasgow, where he was awakened to the enormous need which exists in many parts of Britain today. It was Antiochene for it recognised, as Barnabas did, the deep significance of being one nation. He wisely construed the condition of Easterhouse in terms of the rest of the nation. But it is taking time for this affective light to illumine and change the understanding of many conservative party members for whom fear of difference is often the beginning of their hermeneutics of suspicion. The new trust which may arise from this turn in affective understanding will be key to the ability of Conservatives to build a social trust which lasts more than one election cycle.

This analysis highlights the importance of distinguishing between social trust and Christian faith. Wannewetsch comments that ‘in the experience of the communion of worship a political identity for Christian citizens can be developed which is socially hard to domesticate’.⁴² The reason for the untamed quality of Christian political identity, under Christ’s rule in the midst of earthly cities, is that faith is not domestic in origin but is a divine bestowal by the Holy Spirit. Faith in the word of God which characterises the worship of believers is effective in preserving or creating social trust and overcoming suspicion.⁴³ The potential of Christian faith lies in its ability to resist deception because it has learnt to hold fast to the entirely

⁴¹ www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk

⁴² Wannewetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 208

⁴³ *ibid.* 279-297

truthful word of God disclosed definitely in Jesus Christ.⁴⁴ What *follows from* faith is the affective understanding which achieves the work of renewing social trust. Thus social trust is constituted by affections rather than being preliminary to them. Christian faith's special contribution to public service is to hold fast to the centre of all publics, namely Jesus Christ in whom all things hold together. From such faith springs a joy which resources social trust with the understanding it needs for its preservation and flourishing.

It is in this way that joyful praise is the beginning of political ethics. The Holy Spirit, in leading our joy to Christ in whom all creation holds together, enables as true and as wide a recognition of the pluriform good as is possible for epistemologically fallen human beings. Joy's expansive quality is predicated on its objects, God in Christ and God's creation, the frame of reference within which moral investigation should proceed.⁴⁵ This joy is perfectly suited to initiate the widest possible range of moral reflection and deliberation, including that which pertains to political ethics.

Following such reflection and deliberation, that which is good is known more deeply and so the reasonable response for Christians is a return to joyful praise.

O'Donovan comments that ethics

belongs in between this first and last word of praise; its significance derives from its mediating position. Its task is to inform, out of praise and for the sake of praise, the deliberative reasoning which determines practical human undertakings.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ *ibid.* 306

⁴⁵ Cf. Brock, B., *Singing the Ethos of God*, 171 where Brock claims that only 'in praise are we given an identity and thus a framework for moral judgments'.

⁴⁶ O'Donovan, O., 'What Can Ethics Know about God?', 34

Lacoste observed that affective understanding has the first word in ethics but was reticent to speak about the last word. His eschatological modesty was appropriate to his philosophical task. But an exercise in Christian moral theology can speak with more confidence about joyful praise at the beginning and the end. Joyful praise is indeed penurious in its initiation of our understanding concerning the goodness of the Lord and his works. But what follows joy is reflection and deliberation whereby the good and the right are specified in more detail. Ethics thus offers a dogma-dependent way of returning to dogmatics with better reasons for praise. This is the form of moral learning which can only arise in the midst of Christian joy expressed in the praise that springs from faith in Christ.

Praise *can*, of course, express joy in many things apart from God and his works especially in the context of political ethics. Augustine recounts the range of apparently praiseworthy deities which filled the Roman imagination. He shows how these many ‘gods’ attended the various functions and aspects of human and earthly life: one god for the emission of seed, one god for its implantation, another to bring sensibility to the foetus and so on. Augustine’s relentless examination of these gods and their roles demonstrates the incoherence of their mutual interrelation and indeed the incoherence of the idea that one god in particular, Jupiter, is able to be all the gods in himself. The moral judgment is that because the objects of their praise were incoherent, their ethical life was fragmentary at best.⁴⁷

What may we say to specify in more detail the contrasting nature of the Christian joy expressed in praise which is transmitted and transposed into political society’s common life? Its object, as we have seen, is the most comprehensive

⁴⁷ Augustine, *City of God*, e.g. 4.9-11, 7.2

available, namely the One God of the universe and his works in creation and salvation. On account of this expansive quality, it has both a pervasive effect on other affections and a wider field of attraction than other affections. The joy by which Christians begin to understand the common goods of political society values those objects in a way that makes compassion, grief, hatred, fear and shame concerning those objects intelligible. Evaluations of goods are necessary if evaluations of ills are to have any cognitive content. It follows that the ills which grief, hatred, fear and shame recognise may also be construed by joy in terms of abundance. Joy thus frames the way that other affections make their beginnings. Joy, by initiating our understanding of the objectively good God and his works, recognises the widest pluriform range of the good within which other affections may intelligibly participate. For this reason, we hold that compassion is not the paradigm political emotion in the way that Martha Nussbaum maintained. Rather, joy is the overarching affection which frames the way that compassion recognises need. Compassionate transposition into that need is thus not enough but must be accompanied by joyful transposition which construes need in terms of abundance, looking hopefully towards the end while at the beginning. Joy makes no pact with scarcity, death and need but rather celebrates the truth of the logic of overflow. When Markell complained that modern political theory had struggled to understand the multiplicity of affections towards a single object, he was unwittingly describing the failure of such theory to make joy the overarching political affection. Christian joy's ability to understand goods and ills in terms of abundance makes it the suitable accompaniment to all other affective understanding, thereby explaining the

multiplicity of affections towards a single object. The loss of joy in political theory may be traced to such theory's exclusion and diminution of political worship.

If this is what joy is and what joy does, then how is it sustained? Wannenwetsch focuses our minds on the practice of praise in communities which are clearly 'temporal, not a-temporal'.⁴⁸ He resists a super-theory which would make it possible to know the essence of worship since this

would actually make the constitutive character of the Church's worship superfluous, this constitutive character being the fact that men and women have to *attend and participate in it again and again...*⁴⁹

This leads on to the important claim that 'Christian ethics always has to take its start, over and over again, from the event where human beings are grasped by the self-communication of God',⁵⁰ that is, from grace. We may echo this by saying that beginning in joyful praise requires renewal 'again and again' because of the very nature both of the expansive object of joy (God and his works) and the stubborn subjects of joy (those who have faith in God). The Spirit of God leads this renewal of participation, knitting those who praise once again into God and his works. He does this by overcoming our suspicious stubbornness with the assurance that God is good and that we are the free and forgiven children of the King. Our joy is not only penurious in understanding but weak in its intensity and short-lived in duration. Joyful praise as the beginning of political ethics needs constant renewal by the Spirit lest the light fade and darkness return.

Addressing the experience of worship which nourishes the proving and testing of God's will, Wannenwetsch comments that this 'capacity for judgement

⁴⁸ Wannenwetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 18

⁴⁹ *ibid.* 3

⁵⁰ *ibid.* 18

pales as this very experience recedes.⁵¹ He has in mind especially the service of baptism as the root of renewal. Unfortunately, we cannot enterprise here an extended discussion of the sacraments. Suffice to say that the capacity for judgment can be renewed in the ongoing joyful praises of those who remember in faith the dying and rising of Christ into which they have been knit by water and the Spirit. In this way, the life of moral judgment which has begun through joyful praise of God is continually renewed in joyful praise. Joy is the beginning of affective renewal whereby the understanding is opened up afresh to the goodness of the moral order, the God who created it and the works of that same God. As creatures – even as new creatures – there is a tendency for understanding to become dull over time. The refreshment which joy brings is absolutely necessary to those who are feeble in their affections and unable to sustain that proper affective understanding which can in turn preserve, illumine or establish social trust. By the Holy Spirit, joy expressed in praise opens people afresh for wise participation in the death and life which baptism symbolises.

In summary, just as dogmatics should precede and govern ethics, so should joy precede and govern other affections which are themselves the beginnings of ethics. If we saw in chapter two the epistemological priority of affection for ethics in the world in general, we see here the epistemological priority of joy for the ethics of the church in particular. Joy at the beginning of ethics is an attraction into what is already going on in creation and redemption.⁵² In just this sense it is pre-reflective

⁵¹ *ibid.* 38

⁵² Cf. Brock, B., *Singing the Ethos of God*, 217: 'It is not the task of human praise to look around creation to find good things to praise, which would put us in the role of having to make value judgments and bestow validity on creation in the way a parent praises a child to encourage good behavior, for example. Praise is the human way of *participating* in the great doxology that creation already is. The implication is that human praise is not something we produce but is something we

while being at the same time cognitive, a first taste of the goodness of God and his creation as we begin on the road towards right action. Joy is also the post-reflective, post-deliberative end of understanding since God, our ultimate object of joy, is both beginning and end.

Sharing in joyful praise of the crucified and risen Christ

Having established the pattern whereby Christian affections have political influence through their contribution to the establishment of trust, we turn to explore more deeply the heart of Christian political affectivity by seeking to describe the subjective experience which correlates to God's passionate identification with us in the cross and resurrection, the work of salvation which makes faith possible. Such a description will further clarify the way that Christian political affections contribute to the maintenance and development of trust in political society.

The apostle Paul informs the Philippians that he wishes to know Christ 'and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings' (Phil 3:10).⁵³ We understand from this that the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus disclose to us God's intention for human existence until the eschaton. The knowledge Paul seeks must be discovered through the thick particularity of sufferings and Spirit-inspired, powerful living. Knowing the sufferings and resurrection of Jesus defines

must learn: doxology begins not in the decision to pull up our bootstraps but in abandoning our refusal to join the chorus already underway.'

⁵³ 'καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ'. The repeated καὶ seems to be exegetical, exploring the meaning of knowing Christ through the grammatically parallel accusatives (δύναμιν, κοινωνίαν). Thus the NIV renders the phrase: 'to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings'. The ESV's 'that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings' seems to lose the exegetical force of the repeated accusatives (δύναμιν, κοινωνίαν) which succeed the καὶ.

the nature of the life into which followers of Christ are knit. The beginning of knowing, as we have seen, is joyful praise. As the risen Christ attracts our joyful praise, we enter into a mysterious yet revealed reality defined by the contours of his eternal yet incarnate existence. We may grasp the *gestalt* of the contours in a moment but to understand the inner workings requires an active, thoughtful lifetime of penetrative investigation. Since such dogmatic knowing is the beginning of ethics, the crucified and vindicated Christ is where Christian ethics must begin. Since the resurrection vindicates creation, it is also through such knowledge that the true moral order is discovered. Thus to praise the crucified and risen Christ is to begin to understand in joy the ethics which are appropriate to the whole world under his rule.

To see more clearly, we now examine the way that affections are correlated to Christ's death and resurrection in Paul's second canonical letter to the Corinthians.⁵⁴ In 2 Corinthians 1:3-11, Paul describes the shared life of Christian believers who begin in joyful praise. The opening words of praise or blessing (v3) initiate a meditation upon the way that the church's common life participates in Christ's death and resurrection. Paul envisages God comforting the afflicted church

⁵⁴ For the purposes of this discussion, very little hangs on whether 2 Corinthians was written as a single unit or is a composite piece of writing made up of a number of Paul's letters or even written by multiple authors and editors including or, at times, excluding Paul. What is important is that 1:3-11 and the other texts discussed were written by Paul. This is a view held by Barrett who believes 2 Corinthians 1-9 to be Paul's fourth letter to the Corinthians which was closely followed by his fifth in the more or less finished form of 2 Corinthians 10-13 (Barrett, C.K., *Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Adam and Charles Black, 1974, 5ff). Even those, like Margaret Thrall, who believe there to be more editorial complexity to the composition of the letter than Barrett allows do not doubt the Pauline authenticity of 1:3-11. Thrall moreover believes that 2 Corinthians 1-8, even including the much debated passage 6:14-7:1, was originally composed by Paul as a unit. (Thrall, M., *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* Vol 1, T & T Clark, 1994). Much of the difficulty for historical examination of the canonical 2 Corinthians stems from the fact that evidence is largely lacking in Acts and so internal evidence within the Corinthian correspondence is, on a number of issues, the best we can hope for. However, although historical precision is not unimportant in this present discussion, the focus is primarily on the moral theology which arises from writings which can, with a very high degree of confidence, be attributed entirely to Paul. For the sake of brevity, I will normally refer only to Paul as the writer of the letter. On occasion, when relevant, I will refer to Timothy also. This will be especially important in terms of the shared sufferings and comfort which Timothy and Paul have experienced.

(v4a); God’s comfort results in a communicative sharing in comfort amongst those who are afflicted and in need of comfort (v4b, 6b, 7b); that common sharing in comfort is paralleled with a common sharing in suffering (v7; cf. Philippians 3:10), both of which are rooted in Christ himself through his sufferings (v5) and his resurrection from among the dead (v9); finally, Paul and Timothy’s affliction is said to bring about the Corinthians’ comfort (v6a). So much for how the *terms* of this passage fit together. To begin to understand their meaning and relevance to the account of affections, we will interpret this passage by briefly exploring the use of ‘comfort’ elsewhere in the letter, specifically Paul’s biblically unique combination of *paraklesis* (παράκλησις) with the verb *parakalein* (παρακαλεῖν; “to comfort with comfort”) which is normally found amidst richly affective passages. From here we will return to exposit Paul’s thought at Philippians 3:10.

The combination occurs in 7:4-16 where Paul describes the inner workings of the shared comfort and affliction which was schematised in 1:3-11.⁵⁵ God’s comfort of Paul is a comfort that reorders the affections of the downcast.⁵⁶ Titus was comforted with comfort and intersubjectively drawn into joy by the affections of the Corinthians, especially their mourning (7:7). Paul and Timothy’s shared comfort (7:13) is thus their reordered condition whereby they recognise in joy the affections and the concomitant repentance of the Corinthians, especially their godly grief (7:8-

⁵⁵ Paul’s reference to ‘our affliction’ (θλίψις, 7:4) signals a return to the theme of the letter’s first chapter. This affliction should be interpreted through 2:4 which indicates that the affliction which preceded and surrounded the letter – which is the central subject of 7:4-16 – involved an anguish of the heart (συνοχῆς καρδίας) with tears. This is not to suggest that the letter of 2:4 and 7:8 was necessarily written from Macedonia nor that Paul’s afflictions in Macedonia were limited to his concern for the Corinthians. Rather, it is only to say that the affliction which Paul experienced in Macedonia (7:4-5) seems to be a continuation of that affliction which attended the writing of the letter which grieved the Corinthians (2:4).

⁵⁶ ταπεινός, although it can mean simply ‘humble’ (as in 10:1), is more likely to be affectively toned in this context because of the presence of the fear which Paul was experiencing and the joy which the comfort, mediated through Titus, brought about, alleviating his downcast condition.

12). The complex intersubjective affectivity sketched here results in a renewed communion. It seems that when Paul speaks in this context of being “comforted with comfort”, he is describing how the affections and actions of one part of the church are intersubjectively reordered through the affections and actions of others in the church. The comfort in which all the believers share reorders the affections through affliction to comfort. That comfort should be read through 2 Corinthians 1:9 as the comfort which God brings through Christ’s resurrection. In summary, affliction and comfort define the pattern within which affections are ordered in the body of Christ, the church as she participates in Christ’s death and resurrection. The church is afflicted and comforted as Christ was. As she walks through the world, the church’s affections follow this pattern as forms of understanding which participate in Christ and so in the fulfilment of the moral order.

We can now say more about how the knowing of Christ, the power of his resurrection and fellowship in his sufferings are substantially affective. The affections of the body of Christ are affections in the midst of a fallen world. The people of God participate in the intersubjective affections of the body as it passes, in its diverse localised expressions, on its pilgrimage through the world, experiencing the sufferings and power which Christ experienced. Consider first the fellowship of sharing in Christ’s sufferings. We understand from this that the body of Christ is called to participate in the world as Christ did, without conformity with its sinful fallenness but without withdrawal from its needy brokenness. This wise openness to the world will, as Wannewetsch observed, involve sufferings, which are both similar to and distinct from Christ’s sufferings. According to Paul, grief is central to these sufferings. Paul was afflicted with grief because of the Corinthians’ sin (2:4),

mirroring Christ's grief over the sin of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). In his grief, he wisely participated in affliction 'for your comfort and salvation.' (2 Corinthians 1:6) For with respect to one's own sin, Paul taught that grief may take two forms: a godly grief producing repentance which leads to salvation without regret and a worldly grief which produces death (7:10). In their godly grief, the Corinthians understood their sin *as sin* in light of Paul's grieving, tearful rebuke which attracted their own grief towards their sin. Instead of hardening their hearts, the Corinthians mournfully participated in their own sinfulness, construing it in terms of God's grace in Christ and proceeding thence to the reflection, deliberation and action in which repentance consists. Paul's grief was verified by the Corinthians' affective, intersubjective recognition of the wrong which they had done. Thus the goal of the whole movement was not the beginning in grief but the conclusion of the enterprise in earnest repentance (7:12). This is how Paul's affliction is for the sake of their comfort.

Both Paul's and the Corinthians' differing forms of grief genuinely shared in the sufferings of Christ since they were understandings of sin which were in accord with the salvific death of Christ vindicated in the resurrection. Worldly grief is not of this sort. It is not attracted to and does not understand the meaning of the cross and so ends only in the death of the sinner not the death of Christ for the sinner. That is the path of despair and presumably, this is what Paul fears may happen to the severely chastened sinner (2:7b). In contrast, Paul and the Corinthians were knit more deeply into Christ's death and resurrection through their shared but differentiated grief and so experienced the comfort which follows such affliction. Their fellowship consists in a common affective understanding of Christ's death that

leads to repentant sanctification through Christ's Spirit and ends by sharing in comfort through Christ's resurrection.

This claim points towards how Paul and the Corinthians share in the power of Christ's resurrection. The comfort which their affections are patterned after has a deeply existential quality. When Paul was experiencing an affliction in Asia which threatened his very life, he relied on the God who raises the dead (1:9). The deliverance God wrought at that time was a foretaste of further deliverances and, implicitly, the final comfort of their own promised resurrection (1:10). We have seen the significance of the resurrection with respect to the grief of repentance. The resurrection as existential promise conditions godly grief concerning suffering, persecution or the death of fellow believers. Such grief is not without hope (1 Thess. 4:13). It specifically construes a death in terms of the resurrection to come, understanding it as the gateway into life rather than its permanent conclusion. Thus, when Paul claims that in 'all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy' (7:4), he is reflecting the pattern we observed earlier, namely that joy defines the meaning of other affective experiences, interpreting even grief over the sufferings, deaths and sins of other members of the body. Moreover, not only is Paul joyful but he *overflows* with joy, inviting and attracting others to share intersubjectively in a renewed understanding of the world.

What makes the intersubjective affectivity which accords with the suffering and power of Christ possible is the work of the Holy Spirit who not only knits people into Christ but stabilises them within Christ and so within the moral order. This Spirit has, as Paul repeatedly affirms, been given by God into the hearts of believers as a 'guarantee' (*arrabon*; ἀρραβῶν; 1:22, 5:5; cf. Ephesians 1:14). The description of the

Holy Spirit as a guarantee or *first* instalment is congruent with the account of affections as the *beginnings* of understanding. A guarantee in normal market relations points forward to a promised fulfilment of what has already begun. It brings a measure of stability to what are otherwise unstable situations, such as contracts of exchange. If the Holy Spirit himself is the guarantee, then the God who has promised has also given himself as a pledge of what He has promised. The self-donation of God himself brings stability to the affections of those knit into Christ. Spirit-led affections in the fallen world are the enduring first light of the knowledge of the glory of God, the dawning of wisdom.

The stability which the Holy Spirit now brings to affections which follow from faith is a stability of memory. Both the presence and content of a deposit reminds the parties involved of what has happened as well as pointing forward to what is yet to come. The Spirit's work, as we learn from John, is to achieve this by reminding believers of what Jesus had said concerning his life, teaching, death, resurrection, glorification and the coming age (John 14). In this way, the Holy Spirit offers to the church the same stability of affection that Christ knew, the strange stability of participating in the crucifixion and resurrection that Augustine experienced and recounted. Stability for Christians is thus not meant to be an unchanging resilience or an unmoved stagnancy which withdraws from deep engagement with fallen reality and redemption. Rather Christian stability emerges through being knit into the fallen but vindicated creation by the Spirit within the broken, resurrected body of Christ.

The presence of the one Spirit throughout the body provides the possibility of enduring intersubjective, affective understanding. However, as Wannewetsch

observes, a simple homology does not always follow from the givenness of the unity of the church by the Spirit. He comments that as

the practice of a shared language, worship makes possible the political formation of conviction in the direction of consensus. It does so in a way which is barely conceivable in the present confusion of incommensurable moral languages. But here there is a surprising point. The univocity which worship makes possible does not make the discourse harmonious; it actually furthers the dispute.⁵⁷

The church will not simply be characterised by agreement but has the ability to negotiate disagreement within a common framework. Wannenwetsch is not speaking here directly about affections but his approach can be fruitfully adapted in that direction. For, from the beginning, it has not been claimed that diverse individuals' affections will necessarily agree concerning the value of the object of their understanding. As Lacoste said, 'is not the most self-evident thing about our feelings precisely the fact that we need to discuss them?'⁵⁸ So the enduring affective understanding is made available within the context of common praise but consensus will be won out of intersubjective affection only in the discussion, reflection and deliberation which follow affection.

How does this account of the affections of the body of Christ concern social trust? Simply put, social trust is given wise content by the affections of the body of Christ, precisely inasmuch as local churches are participating by faith in Christ crucified and risen. The Spirit, given as a pledge, generates affective understanding which has the endurance to enable steady transposition of believers into Christ by faith and steady transposition (transmission) of the church into the world in affective understanding. In this way, the pledge of God in the body of Christ sustains trust

⁵⁷ Wannenwetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 304

⁵⁸ Lacoste, J.-Y., 'From Value to Norm', 117

between men in political society. Such an account forms the affective interior of Wannenwetsch's claim that as

a public established and restored in worship, the Church represents the truth of a 'constituted' public, on which the public of civil society must draw if it is not to be swallowed up in utilitarian modes of relationship.⁵⁹

Civil society must draw on – or rather be drawn in by – the affections of the Church, the city of light on a hill, if it is to preserve social trust. So when Wannenwetsch says that the world has a double becoming – first, as a world hostile to God and second as turned from hostility to reflection of the Creator's will⁶⁰ – it is the second form of becoming which Christians' affections will hopefully enable. Local churches experience an 'empowerment for political life'⁶¹ in their affections by the Spirit.

Christian political affections may of course provoke hostility from the world. Yet the hope is that the world will be drawn into the way of seeing what the church offers and so be knit more truly into the world as it is and into Christ in whom the world holds together. Thus they may share in the intersubjective affections which accord with the wisdom of God. As Brock puts it, 'the renewal of humanity through the Spirit generates ripples of moral renewal throughout the social fabric.'⁶² Wise affections spring as fruit from faith by the power of the Spirit and this 'fruitfulness is...the restoration of connectivity to a creation suffering from its lack'.⁶³ The affections of churches, patterned by the affliction and comfort of Christ's death and resurrection, offer the beginnings of reconnections between the people walking in darkness and the wisdom of God for life in this world and the world to come. In

⁵⁹ Wannenwetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 275

⁶⁰ *ibid.* 249

⁶¹ *ibid.* 11

⁶² Brock, B., *Singing the Ethos of God*, 210

⁶³ *ibid.* 190

Luther's terms, 'the blessed [are] as mobile conduits of the divine springs in a world dried out by sin's refusal of reciprocity'.⁶⁴ Such springs of affection well up from faith, making the dark stubbornness of the world visible and offering to it the beginnings of a new life begun now in half-light. The intersubjective union of these mobile conduits in a local institution is what we are calling the local church. It is through these localised centres of affective wisdom that representation, law and nationhood may be critically renewed.

A threat to trust

If affections are ordered in institutions, institutions consist in practices and the body of Christ is the institutional community which experiences the most stable affections, then it will seem to some that what we are proposing here is congruent with a form of virtue theory whereby the stability of affections is achieved by their habituation into virtues through common institutional practices. Robert Roberts moves in this direction when he claims that 'Christian virtues are, in large part, a matter of being disposed to a properly Christian joy, contrition, gratitude, hope, compassion and peace'. These 'emotion-virtues' are 'fruits of the Holy Spirit' which could only arise either through intentional habituation or through the direct action of God for which humans must passively wait.⁶⁵ He strongly favours the former option on the grounds that the self-knowledge we have concerning the nature of emotions can be put to good use to promote their habituated occurrence as virtues. Although approaches which construe affections in terms of virtues have already been found wanting in

⁶⁴ *ibid.* 189

⁶⁵ Roberts, R., *Spiritual Emotions*, Eerdmans, 2007, 8-10

light of the attractive quality of the good created order, the power of memory and the participative nature of affection, it will be instructive to consider again the question of virtue but this time from an explicitly political and ecclesial perspective.

As we have seen, a common turn for those Christians who think of emotions in terms of virtues is towards the work of Alasdair MacIntyre and Stanley Hauerwas.⁶⁶ We will consider Hauerwas in particular because of his explicitly theological approach. Virtues, Hauerwas informs us, are achieved through common practices. His account of the failure of universal moral theories ‘to train our desires and direct our attention’⁶⁷ is the central critical dynamic in his most comprehensive book, *A Peaceable Kingdom – A Primer in Christian Ethics*, which will be the focus of our study. His constructive claim is that we ‘can only act within the world we can envision, and we can envision the world rightly only as we are trained to see’ and that ‘we cannot see the world rightly unless we are changed, for as sinners we do not desire to see truthfully.’⁶⁸ Training involves initiation into skills of faithful living whereby one can envision ‘the world as it is, namely God’s creation’ and learn that ‘at the center of creation is a cross and resurrection.’⁶⁹

Although this last claim has a surface similarity to my account, the structure of thought as a whole is quite different and, I suggest, considerably less adequate. The core problem is his virtue epistemology which only appears in a systematic way later in the book. However, its traces are detectable not only in the quotations above but also in the second chapter where his debt to Iris Murdoch leads him to say that it

⁶⁶ Cf. Lauritzen, P., ‘Emotions and Religious Ethics’; Barton, J., *Ethics and The Old Testament*, SCM, 1998; Wenham, G., *Story as Torah*, T & T Clark, 2000

⁶⁷ Hauerwas, S., *The Peaceable Kingdom*, 11

⁶⁸ *ibid.* 29-30

⁶⁹ *ibid.* 30

is habituated virtue which gives to humans moral vision.⁷⁰ Objections to this epistemology have already been considered and found compelling in chapter two. A further objection, reflecting a tendency in Christian virtue theory, is that, in the 174 pages of *A Peaceable Kingdom*, the Holy Spirit is only mentioned twice. This is particularly significant for our purposes in light of the role of the Spirit in attracting and sustaining the affective understanding which follows from faith and contributes to social trust. On the first occasion, Hauerwas quotes the great Mennonite John Howard Yoder who writes: ‘Christian ethics calls for behaviour which is impossible except by the miracle of the Holy Spirit.’⁷¹ Hauerwas does not comment on the mention of the Holy Spirit here and uses the quotation to explain how non-violence leaves space for the ‘possibility of miracles, of surprises, of the unexpected.’⁷² One may grant that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of surprises without saying that this is the sum of his activities. For example, nowhere in the book do we find Hauerwas claiming that the Holy Spirit is the One who convicts us of our sin or is the stabilising guarantee of our inheritance. Rather, he seems to be merely the one we need to step in when non-violent resistance meets the threats and violence of the world.

On *the other* occasion the Spirit is mentioned, Hauerwas states that the starting point for entering a life of non-violence is ‘the assurance that God has made his peace a present reality through his spirit.’⁷³ The lack of a capital letter for ‘spirit’ might not be significant in other contexts but here it suggests a neglect of the

⁷⁰ *ibid.* xxiii, 29; cf. index

⁷¹ *ibid.* 106 citing Yoder, J.H., *The Original Revolution: Essays on Christian Pacifism*, Herald Press, 1971, 121

⁷² Hauerwas, S., *The Peaceable Kingdom*, 106; it is not within the remit of this discussion to consider the rich tradition of Christian pacifism.

⁷³ *ibid.* 151

significance of the Holy Spirit for ethics. Specifically, in the context of the book and our argument here, it suggests that the sources of a stable, ecclesial moral epistemology can be understood very well without the need to mention God the Holy Spirit. As a follower of MacIntyre, Hauerwas has naturally turned instead to tradition and virtue. This is precisely the move which Aristotle would make. Hauerwas' account is of course un-Aristotelian in that it is centred on Jesus. But it is precisely Aristotelian in that it is deeply committed to the human project of the formation of the self by habituation and to the kind of moral vision which is dependent on virtue epistemology.

The heart of the problem emerges very clearly in the claim that if

it is true that I can act only in the world I see and that my seeing is a matter of my learning to say, it is equally the case that my "saying" requires sustained habits that form my emotions and passions, teaching me to feel one way rather than another. We are therefore quite right to think that questions of feeling are central for determining what I ought to do since they are signals that help remind us what kind of people we are.⁷⁴

On this view, the reason that feelings are important is not because they are attracted to and understand the world beyond ourselves but because they inform us about our own character which in turn helps us to work out how to act. This is a return both to the virtue epistemology we found implausible and, in part, to the eudaimonism of Nussbaum which we found unsatisfying. The alternative proposed here has been that it is the *object* of our affections which is decisive for affections' significance to moral reasoning. The Holy Spirit's special operations in believers attract their affections into participative understanding of the world. Their affections gain

⁷⁴ *ibid.* 117

stability primarily through engagement in the world, its Maker and the believer's memory.

What then of social trust? As we have seen, the central political affection is joy, which is focussed not on individual or communal character but on the common objects of joy. This is not to say that an awareness of one's own or one's community's predictable tendency to repeated good actions is of no relevance to moral reasoning. Indeed, a critical consciousness of an institution's practices seems essential to that end. Rather, it is to affirm that the affections' contribution is not limited to what is already in the person but is substantially dependent on the creaturely moral order in which the person lives and the Creator God. Neither does this claim fall prey to Roberts' criticism of those who simply depend on some direct unmediated activity of God. For if we reckon on God working by his Spirit through a wide variety of creaturely objects to attract our affective understanding, then affections are neither simply summoned directly by God nor simply habituated by our own efforts. The point is that virtue epistemology threatens rather than supports churches' contribution to the renewal and sustenance of social trust. Instead of joy in the common goods of churches and political societies, Hauerwas' approach would leave us with affections which are internally self-referential not publicly communicable and beneficial. The missiological and apologetic power of affective understanding would be neutralised.

The deep reasons for this threat to trust are implicitly challenged from another direction by Brian Brock. He comments that

the conduits of God's grace are kept open when believers have a clear view of their sinful divergence from Christ and thus are conscientious in confessing these divergences; yet when they observe their merits, they see only Christ's. God's way

into the world is blocked by the human tendency to focus on the “formation of the self”...⁷⁵

‘God’s way into the world’ is his way of leading people out of sin and into the life of the Spirit. The Hauerwasian tendency to focus on the formation of the self blocks up the conduits of grace meeting sin and calling forth political worship characterised by joyful praise. Hauerwas looks for stability in the self’s virtue rather than solely in Christ and in the Holy Spirit who gives the simultaneous vision of Christ’s merit and the self’s sin (*simul iustus et peccator*). The root of this tendency lies in Hauerwas’ treatment of justification and sanctification.⁷⁶ He claims that ‘justification is only another way of talking about sanctification’, that ‘the language of “sanctification” and “justification” is not meant to be descriptive of a status’ and that justification ‘is but a reminder of the character of that story [of Jesus] – namely what God has done for us by providing us with a path to follow.’ In just a few pages, Hauerwas dismisses, without argument, classic Protestant thinking on justification and sanctification and, most significantly for our purposes, reflection on the nature of faith. He claims that ‘faith is not so much a combination of belief and trust, as simply fidelity to Jesus’.⁷⁷ This means that Romans 5:1, quoted immediately afterwards, should be interpreted as ‘Therefore, since we are justified by *fidelity*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Instead of faith being explicitly dependent on Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit, Hauerwas offers ‘fidelity’ which, according to his rationale, is a virtue formed as a habit within the practices of the church. Such a move would run counter to our claim that political ethics follows the joyful praise which preserves social trust inasmuch as it springs from dependent, clinging faith. It

⁷⁵ Brock, B., *Singing the Ethos of God*, 226-7

⁷⁶ Hauerwas, S., *The Peaceable Kingdom*, 91-95

⁷⁷ *ibid.* 93

is a reversion to an ‘argument of impenitence’ whereby virtue and tradition become the arbiters of moral goodness and rightness. By contrast, we claim that the Holy Spirit calls people out of corrupted visions of goodness and virtue and into the repentant life that begins in joyful praise of the One who is Good and whose works are good.

Where the Spirit is, there is the freedom to be the joyful children of God. But the Spirit is found where faith is found in the justifying word of God. Neither the Spirit nor the justifying word is found in Hauerwas’ peaceable kingdom. And therefore, there is not the joy which is the beginning of true ethics, that joy which arises from those who have experienced the justifying righteousness of God and who therefore do not turn inwards to their character as the source of moral wisdom but outwards by transposition into Christ by faith and the world in affective wisdom. Perversely, in attempting to emphasise the importance of a lived life of fidelity, Hauerwas has cut himself off from the roots of Christian good works (and indeed the Christian *character* which the Holy Spirit can bring). He recognises the dangers of ‘self-righteousness’⁷⁸ but leads people towards the perils of stubbornness. Thus, contra Wynn and Lauritzen, Hauerwas does not present a helpful route into considering the emotions in the context of a whole life.⁷⁹

This argument against Hauerwas shows the worth of a detailed discussion concerning the affections which characterise the free children of God in their common life of affliction and comfort participating in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Emotion has been central to much virtue theory ever since Aristotle. Christian virtue theory, such as Hauerwas’, has been a response to the lack of modern

⁷⁸ *ibid.* 94

⁷⁹ Lauritzen, P., ‘Emotions and Religious Ethics’; Wynn, M., ‘Emotions and Christian Ethics: A Reassessment’

Christian interest in the intersubjective life of the community and the inner life of each believer. But the account of affection given in this thesis undercuts the need to be yoked with Aristotle by showing the true pattern of personal and communal moral psychology. We have shown that there is a way of taking affection very seriously without having to construe it in terms of a virtue theory of habituation and character formation. Thus chapter two's criticism of Aristotle was not an arbitrary starting point but rather a recognition of the threat of neo-Aristotelianism both to the way ethics is conducted in the church and to the work of affections in political society at large.

The constructive account of the place of affections in local churches will instead be illumined by thinking of Christ himself as the "evangelical institution" whereby intersubjective affective recognition is properly ordered. Just as Israel participated within the festive institutions, so local churches today participate in Christ who has been instituted by God as Lord and Saviour by being lifted up on a cross, raised up from the grave and given all authority. Christ crucified, raised and installed as King on God's holy hill (Psalm 2) is the common good in whom local church communities repeatedly participate in a structured way. The structure is not essentially the ordered, communal practices of a church (its liturgy) but is already provided by the Holy Spirit and Christ's very afflicted and comforted being in and through whom churches have fellowship in his sufferings and know the power of the resurrection. But the liturgy of a church can helpfully reflect this structure so that people are assisted in coming to the common good in an appropriately affective manner. This is most decisively achieved by the preaching of God's word and by the ministry of the sacraments in conformity with that word. Other features of the

church's life – its wide and subtle range of good deeds in all spheres of civic life, its sung worship, its formal and informal patterns of prayer (to name but a few) – are authorised and governed by these two essentials.

Truly Christian affections are structured and directed towards understanding within this institution which is Christ, consisting of the head and the body, a single harmoniously differentiated organism inhabited and intersubjectively united by Christ's Spirit. Just as Israel was united as a differentiated harmony at the feast, understanding the land in joy, so the whole world may now be united in diverse unity, understanding Christ in joyful praise. Thus the beginning of ecclesial ethics is the praise of Christ, the institution in whom the church lives. The ongoing beginnings of ecclesial ethics are in the affections which are called for by the word of God with respect to the body of Christ in accordance with the leading of the Holy Spirit. The overflow of local churches' affections renews the affective understanding of the localities and political societies where they dwell as pilgrims.

The return to praise: ethics, politics and dogmatics

The discussion in this chapter has described a movement from faith in God to joyful praise of God and his works as the beginning of ethics. That praise recognises the outline of ethics, within which affections participate in the pattern of the object of praise, namely the crucified and resurrected Jesus. The beginnings of ethics in such affections gain their ultimate stability through the presence of God in the current experience and memory of God's people. This God comes in gracious initiative supplying them with a knowledge of himself which is first grasped in clinging faith.

Thus there is a movement from grace to faith to joyful praise to the ordering of all affections as the beginnings of ethics.

In closing, we observe that God's promise of an eschatological life of restored affections opens up the possibility that praise is the last word as well as the first. For just as the transition from dogmatics to ethics was accomplished by the act of joyful praise so too the transition back from ethics to dogmatics comes through praise. This last movement does not at all suggest that dogmatics is ultimately dependent on ethics – the reverse has been the argument of this chapter. Nor does it suggest a real separation of dogmatics from ethics. However, it does indicate that ethics finds its place within dogmatics just as it is situated within the passage from praise of God and his works in the beginning to praise of God and his works at the end. Ethics may explore the depths of God's goodness, the wisdom of his law, the wonder of his works of creation and salvation; ethics may do so precisely with a view to clarifying the nature of the object of praise and so engendering that richer praise in the end. Ethics which has begun in praise is therefore at the service of praise.

Accordingly, politics – as a dimension of ethics – also has a place within dogmatics. The political worship of the church is seen partially in its affections of faith which appear as shafts of half-light throughout political societies. Not only does such light draw attention to itself as a public – the catholic public of the Spirit which is open to all the world – but also it hints at how political authority should itself operate. Thus one can observe how the 'model for the political process is still the council of the apostles in Jerusalem'.⁸⁰ Inasmuch as it reflects that model of the

⁸⁰ Wannenwetsch, B., *Political Worship*, 298

Spirit's work, politics, while deeply ambivalent, may play a role in the movement from praise to praise. Chapter three focussed not so much on the council itself but rather on the work of the Spirit in preparing people affectively for this council through the joy and gladness of affective recognition. The reality of the body of Christ – now Jew *and* Gentile – was discovered affectively. This discovery obliged the church to reflect and deliberate ethically in order to reach consensus and action. The Spirit is given that the light of Christ may be seen today not only in the affections of the church but also in the reflections, deliberations and actions which follows such affections. The responsibility of the world is to be attentively drawn to this light and to enter into the faith from which the light proceeds.

The church returns to dogmatics having gone through the experience of ethics and politics. Its praises have been clarified through this experience so as to become deepened, more articulate understandings of God and his works. Ethics has been told that 'God is good and God acts'. Ethics, begun in affections, 'can fill [this dogma] with content.'⁸¹ This happens as the understanding which has begun in joy, grief or fear leads on into a knowledge of the moral order in Christ and action which accords with that order. But just as affections are not monarchical in their epistemological power so too all ethical enquiry does not offer the absolute clarity of logical necessity. Rather, ethics offers a 'sufficient certainty' about the good and the right which enables a return by approximating analogy to a deeper understanding and praise of God and his works.⁸² This second joyful praise, constantly repeated and renewed in this life, is the foretaste of the permanent joyful praise which

⁸¹ O'Donovan, O., 'What Can Ethics Know About God?', 35

⁸² *ibid.* 36

characterises the understanding of those whose faith in God receives its reward around the throne of the risen Lamb.

The joy of all the earth

Clap your hands, all you nations;
shout to God with cries of joy.
How awesome is the Lord Most High,
the great King over all the earth.

God has ascended amid shouts of joy
The Lord amid the sounding of trumpets.
Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.
(Psalm 47:1-2, 5-6; NIV)

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,
in the city of our God!
His holy mountain, beautiful in elevation,
is the joy of all the earth,
Mount Zion, in the far north,
the city of the great King.
(Psalm 48:1-2; ESV)

We have been enquiring about the nature of human affections, their role in morality and their place in politics. To conclude our account, we turn finally to the permanent joyful praise which will permeate the life of the only permanent political community, the city of God. The chief characteristic of this city is the presence of God who is seated on his throne (Psalm 47:8). He has gone up into the city (47:5) in the same way as the ark of the covenant was brought up into Jerusalem by David with shouts of joy (2 Samuel 6:12-15). In Psalms 47 and 48, all the nations are called to recognise in joy the awesome King who has founded the political community into which the elect of all nations are to be gathered as one. They are summoned to praise God with joyful claps, shouts and songs (Psalm 47:1). They are called to the holy mountain of the far north, the city of the great King (48:2). This place, where God is present, is where the joy of all the earth is found. That joy is, like all affections,

defined in relation to its intentional object. True, stable, right understanding consists of joy in the God of this mountain-city. On the Christian account, the ascension of Jesus Christ into the far north, the Hebrew vision of the heavenly city (cf. Isaiah 14:13), is the fulfilment of Psalm 47's expectation. The great joy of those who saw Jesus go up into heaven (Luke 24:50-53) mirrors the shouts of joy which surrounded God's ascension in the Psalm. The joy of all the earth is focussed solely on the God and the Lamb to whom the throne belongs (Revelation 22:3).

However, this one joy for all the earth is not yet the current international experience. The nations of the world are characterised by highly diverse forms of affective understanding. Their affections follow different orders of value, rejoicing, sorrowing, hating, fearing and being ashamed in many different ways. Yet even these orders of value stand in an intelligible relation to the created moral order and, through it, to one another. For the goods of the created order are stable in their generic and teleological relations and it is *these goods* which the nations evaluate in affective understanding. Thus, in the midst of the diverse orders of value, we have seen that local churches in the nations of the world may guide the affections of each particular community into common goods thereby sustaining the social trust on which political society depends. In this way, the churches prefigure the possibility of united affectivity. But even this is far from the cries of Psalms 47 and 48 and a pale reflection of the true recognition which will accompany the unveiling of the city of God. Despite but also because of that distance, these Psalms add depth to the affective account of political worship which we have endeavoured in the preceding chapter. For they place the work of local churches in the largest possible eschatological context. The joy of local churches within their specific locality is the

first light of the joy of the whole earth and thus of the utmost significance. No doubt those churches and their localities are full of unreasonable affectivity which values wrongly what God has made. Nonetheless, the city of God on the holy mountain is even now glimpsed down in the valleys of this present age through attention to the life of the Spirit in the body of Christ and in his providential operations amidst the diverse cities of men. But the holy mountain is not like the freezing Kantian heights. Instead it is the destination of our thick, creaturely existence, continuous and yet discontinuous from it just as the resurrected Christ was recognised and yet strangely unrecognisable. And so the valleys of this life are not the Scrutonian valleys of land mysticism but rather are preliminary reflections of the land to come, never complete either as an account of themselves or what they may become but always pointing forward to the mountain-city. To speak of a life between facts and norms, as Habermas did, was to speak with the anguished insight of humanity in tension, struggling unwittingly to live with a godless politics in a world where the post-national dream is scattered and smashed again and again in the cold, dark night of a thousand petty arguments and tribalisms.

How different with the city of God, the holy mountain, where God dwells! To that one place the nations will gather in a single community. In continuity with the past there will be representatives from every tribe, tongue and nation (Revelation 7:9). But in wonderful discontinuity all those who gather will recognise in joy only one Ruler in a life beyond fallen human politics. Sing praises to the King of this mountain-city, sing praises! Rejoice in the King of all the earth!

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