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Emotions in Mormon Canonical Texts

Mauro Properzi

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy



Department of Theology and Religion
Durham University

6 November 2009

Emotions in Mormon Canonical Texts

Mauro Properzi

Abstract

In this study Mormon theology has been brought to interact with the socio-scientific study of emotion. The expressed purpose of this dialogue has been to construct an introductory Latter-day Saint (or LDS) theology of emotion which is both canonically based and scientifically informed. Specifically, this examination has highlighted three widely accepted general outcomes which emerge from the socio-scientific study of emotion, namely the necessity of cognition for their emergence, the personal responsibility attached to their manifestation, and their instrumentality in facilitating various processes of human development and experience. In turn, both the basic theological structure of Mormonism and its unique canonical texts have been examined to determine the extent to which LDS theology is compatible with such a three-fold definition of emotion. As a result it was established that at this basic level of explanation science and Mormon theology undoubtedly share a common perspective.

In reaching this conclusion unique LDS texts have been examined with specific reference to their description of six common emotions: hope, fear, joy, sorrow, love, and hate. For each of these emotional phenomena, which have further been classified into three separate groups of emotion types, the extensive report of textual evidence has consistently confirmed an implied presence of the outlined three-fold model of emotion. Furthermore, specific attention to the Mormon theology of Atonement and to its significant role for the LDS framing and regulating of emotions has enlarged this theological examination to include a wider exploration of such areas as epistemology, cosmology, soteriology, and anthropology of Mormonism. In this light, the theological and socio-scientific study of emotions in the LDS social/theological context may benefit from further academic research which could extend in the many possible directions of focus that have been suggested in the conclusion.

Declaration

This work has been submitted to Durham University in accordance with the regulations for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It is my own work, and none of it has been previously submitted to Durham University or to any other university for a degree.

Mauro Properzi

Durham, 6 November 2009

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author. No part from it should be published without his prior written consent, and information derived from it should be acknowledged.

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List of Canonical Abbreviations

Abbreviations of Scriptural books which appear in the text

Bible-King James Version (KJV)

Matt.	Matthew
Rom.	Romans
1 Cor.	1 Corinthians
2 Cor.	2 Corinthians
Gal.	Galatians
2 Thes.	2 Thessalonians
1 Pet.	1 Peter
Rev.	Revelation
Philip.	Philippians

Book of Mormon (BoM)

1 Ne.	1 Nephi
2 Ne.	2 Nephi
Hel.	Helaman
3 Ne.	3 Nephi
4 Ne.	4 Nephi
Morm.	Mormon
Moro.	Moroni

Pearl of Great Price (PoGP)

Abr.	Abraham
JS-H	Joseph Smith – History
A of F	Articles of Faith

Doctrine & Covenants (D&C)

INTRODUCTION

Setting the Stage for an LDS Theology of Emotion

Purposes and Objective

This work is an introductory examination on the nature of emotions within the theology of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Since surprisingly little has been previously attempted or accomplished in this particular area of analysis I have favoured an approach which is preliminary rather than conclusive. Indeed, the exploration of the role and significance of ‘emotion’ as a category of human phenomena can take numerous directions in the context of Mormon theology and virtually innumerable ones in the wider framework of Mormon practices, identity, and culture. While in the latter realm of analysis the publication of various studies has initiated a discussion and interest, which is unlikely to disappear, the former level of discourse still lacks even the most cursory treatment.¹ Thus, one of my purposes and hopes is to provide such a preliminary treatment and to make however small a contribution in a field of theological enquiry that I believe should receive greater attention.

In fact, emotional phenomena are at the core of the very definition of humanity, and the recent new-found interest in their study within a variety of humanistic and scientific disciplines adds support to what already appears as *prima facie* evidence for

¹ Of particular relevance to the study of emotions in a Mormon context are various socio-psychological examinations on the relationship between LDS religiosity and mental health. For an overview of studies of this kind in the twentieth century see Judd (1996), 112-24. For even more recent studies see Overton (2005). However, these analyses never deal with ‘emotion’ as a single category of experience. Instead, it is discreet types of emotional phenomena (such as guilt, happiness, etc.) that function as a variable in some of these investigations. Furthermore, since the main object of inquiry in several of these studies concerns the incidence of emotional disorders (depression, eating disorders, etc.) and the factors associated with their emergence the scope of their examination is limited to the realm of dysfunctional emotions.

this conclusion.² At the same time, particularly in the context of a Western society, which is increasingly fragmented, both socially and academically, the interdisciplinarity that often emerges from this study functions as a powerful reminder of the utter complexity of the human being and of the inability of any single discipline to fully explain and to account for human dynamics and phenomena. Then, it is only in the unity of philosophical, neurobiological, psychological, historical, anthropological, political, and other scientific approaches, methods, and languages that one may begin to grasp the true nature of emotion and begin to appreciate its complexity.

However, for the person of faith, whose worldview is rooted in a theological anthropology as well as in a theistic cosmology and morality, scientific and humanistic understandings of emotion are often perceived as adversarial at worse and unsatisfactory at best.³ Hence, the need to bring natural and socio-scientific views of emotions in dialogue with theological perspectives, both to facilitate inclusiveness in the discussion as well as to enlarge the multidisciplinary input in the exploration. In this context it is true that theology's relationship with science has been and still is much more complicated than the relationship between two socio-scientific sub-disciplines like psychology and anthropology for example. In fact, that science and religion may engage in fruitful dialogue is not a foregone conclusion. I devote greater attention to this question in the section on methodology, but at this point I anticipate a general assumption that dialogue of some sort, to be later defined, is both possible and desirable.⁴ Therefore, a second purpose of this work is to provide an illustration of this form of dialogue in the micro reality of Latter-day Saint (or LDS, when used as an adjective) theology.

Finally, although my examination aims to lay a foundation for a generalized Mormon theology of emotion this theoretical groundwork would fail in both persuasiveness and coherence without direct engagement with at least a few specific paradigmatic 'types' of emotions. In fact, since an already articulated Mormon

² An indication of this popularity in academia is evidenced by the recent publication of several important handbooks that provide large amounts of information on various specific areas in the study of emotion. For example, in the years 2007 and 2008 the following significant contributions have come in print: Lewis, et al. (2008), Corrigan (2008), Coan and Allen (2007), Stets and Turner (2007), Gross (2007). Furthermore, several scientific journals now focus exclusively on the subject of 'emotions' and many articles and monographs regularly do the same.

³ Freud (2005), 49. Freud is perhaps the most well-known representative of this inimical view to a religiously-informed understanding of emotions. See Strachey (1978).

⁴ In this view I largely follow the opinion articulated by Dr. Fraser Watts, my Cambridge supervisor, in Watts (1997), 125-38.

theology of emotion does not presently exist the most significant evidence I was able to employ to begin to infer such a theology involved an analysis of individual usages of emotion-related terms within the LDS theological tradition. Hence, it is a specific concern and objective of this analysis to identify and explain the usage of ‘emotion language’ in the theological discourse of Mormonism. Specifically, I focus my attention on canonical texts unique to the tradition, a choice, which I later motivate by exploring the unique difficulties associated with the term ‘theology’ and the adjective ‘authoritative’ in the Mormon context. The specific emotions I have chosen for this theological examination include hope, fear, joy, sorrow, love, and hatred. I provide greater details on the distinctive way in which I have classified these emotions in the next chapter where I also justify my attribution of a paradigmatic status to them.

Unfortunately, space limitations have only allowed an engagement with these emotions, which is far from exhaustive. Still, in my examination I aim to be sufficiently extensive to lend support for my conclusions by providing an appropriate illustration of these emotions in light of the theoretical concepts explicated throughout the text. For this objective, and at least to limit the apparent risk of circularity, I have employed evidence from sources which are both external and internal to the Mormon tradition, namely socio-scientific understandings of emotion in the former case and canonical usages in the latter. Thus, my construction of a preliminary LDS theology of emotion aims both at *respecting* the internal theological structure and authority of the tradition as well as at attempting to *inform* and possibly to *enlarge* it through some socio-scientific theories and conclusions, which emerge from sources that are external to it. By so doing the boundaries between the internal and the external become more diffused yet the LDS theological perspective remains faithful to its nature since it does not simply tolerate such borrowings from other complementary sources of truth but actually advocates them on theological grounds.⁵

⁵ John Taylor, third President of the LDS Church, explain that Mormonism “embraces every principle of truth and intelligence pertaining to us as moral, intellectual, mortal and immortal being, pertaining to this world and the world that is to come. We are open to truth of every kind, no matter whence it comes, where it originates, or who believes it.” [Taylor (1941), 93]. Brigham Young similarly stated that Mormonism “embraces all truth and every fact of existence...and the sciences are facts as far as men have proved them...The Lord is one of the most scientific men who ever lived; you have no idea of the knowledge he has with regard to the sciences.” [Journal of Discourses, 14:115-17]

General Methodology

At least three different adjectives may broadly be used to describe the methodological applications within this particular work, namely comparative, explorative, and integrative. These distinctions highlight not only the various aspects of the method employed in the overall analysis as a unit, but they also pinpoint successive methodological stages in the development of my specific arguments and conclusions. In fact, the first two chapters can be viewed as loosely comparative in nature, the next three as largely analytically explorative, and the last one as ultimately integrative of the previous comparative and explorative approaches. Yet, while these terms may in general provide an illustrative picture at a superficial summative level to be truly meaningful they now require more precise descriptions, definitions, and clarifications.

Issues of method are particularly significant in those contexts where two or more distinct modes of discourse and explanation are brought to intersect and to interact. Nowhere is this reality more evident than in the historically uncomfortable relationship between science and religion. This centuries-old debate has focused both on the identification and limitation of mutual points of contact as well as on the affirmations and rebuttals of the supposed superiority of one epistemological field over the other. The evidence in the literature suggests that the discussion is complex and not likely to reach a wide consensus at any time in the near future.⁶ In fact, the field on which debates centre seems to have enlarged in the last century or so. While discussions on cosmology, cosmogony, and the origin of life still emerge, the debate between religion and the social sciences in particular is a relatively new area of potential conflict, which is at times actualized even in the political arena. This particular make-up in the current debate may be traced to a variety of factors including the fairly recent academic ‘birth’ of several of the social sciences, their overall concern with many of the human and social factors on which religion is also focused, and their only quasi-scientific status in comparison to the ‘exact sciences’, which are generally held to possess greater empirical authority. Therefore, to some extent at least, conflicts between religion and the social sciences emerge because the two are in some degree

⁶ A good introduction on the history of this relationship is found in Brooke (1991). Ian Barbour, widely considered the *father* of the modern ‘science and religion’ field of study, has schematized the possible directions of this relationship in a famous four-fold typology (conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration) which appeared in several of his writings. See Barbour (2002), 345-59. Each of these ways of relating the two disciplines has in turn its own followers and proponents.

similar. At the same time, there is no denying that they also differ in methods, language, and nature of basic assumptions.⁷

Some have suggested that conflicts could be avoided by emphasizing several of the differences between religion and the social sciences. They have often done so by bracketing out either a separate dimension of reality, a separate kind of question, or a separate epistemological method at the foundation of each 'discipline' (if religion can be identified as such).⁸ As a result when the different modes of explanation are kept separate they are unlikely to come into conflict with each other and each is left undisturbed in its own pursuits and in their own levels of reality. While this 'peacemaking' approach has its truth and its positive function it is distorting of reality if taken to an extreme. Conflict should be recognized and dealt with appropriately when social sciences and religion naturally seem to intersect either in their questions, suggestions, conclusions, or otherwise. Of course there is no easy answer to the question of how conflict should be engaged 'appropriately' and given its complexity and only secondary relevance to my analysis I cannot directly address this question in this context. However, in stating that religion and science should be allowed to dialogue, independent of the conclusions of such dialogue and at the 'cost' of engaging potential conflict I present my own normative methodological assumption that is present throughout my whole exploration.

Clearly, the specific manner in which I bring LDS theology and natural and socio-scientific theories of emotion into conversation could be rejected even when this same methodological assumption of dialogue is shared. In fact, further disagreements may exist on the manner in which dialogical dynamics between science and religion should be carried out and on the ideal final result to be achieved. Some may think that a form of assimilation is desirable, others may want a kind of integration, and still others ideally envisage some degree of interdependence.⁹ Whatever the differences in these objectives the form of dialogue which I bring to surface in this analysis should be evaluated in its specific and limited context and focus. In fact, through this analysis it is not my intention to propose a universal model of psycho-religious interaction since the way in which I bring LDS theology to relate with scientific evidence on emotion

⁷ For a compelling philosophical critique of the social sciences from a Christian theological perspective see Milbank (2006), 51-144.

⁸ A prominent example of this approach is the NOMA (non-overlapping magisterial) proposed in Gould (2001).

⁹ An illustration of these various forms of interaction in the context of the relationship between psychology and Christianity is found in Collins, et al. (2000).

cannot necessarily be generalized to a variety of theological traditions and to numberless other socio-psychological phenomena evincing their own distinct complexities. Still, within its limited scope my analysis aims to provide a specific illustration of how some general standards of multi-disciplinary interaction can be conceptualized and applied in a particular theological context.

There are at least two such standards that I suggest to be important factors for the facilitator of such dialogue, namely transparency of approach, and respect for disciplinary independence. By ‘transparency of approach’ I mean to highlight the significance of determining whether a particular study is to be conducted as a *primarily* theological or as a *primarily* socio-scientific examination. Since we are dealing with contexts of interaction it is clear that both theological and socio-scientific perspectives will somewhat contribute to the dialogue. However, locating oneself in a ‘neutral’ middle where theology and science are claimed to contribute equally to the discourse is wishful thinking at best. In fact, theology and science generally make use of starkly different languages, they often build their own arguments on quite divergent assumptions, and they explore each other for different purposes and in different manners. Therefore, the analyst is unavoidably led to make some choices in terms of language, methods, and assumptions that are usually closer to one discipline than the other. It follows that, for example, it is one thing to conduct a study in the psychology of belief in the supernatural and quite another to write a biblical exegesis on what a specific pericope teaches about the nature of doubt. In the former case the study is likely to appear as socio-scientific in method and language whereas in the latter case its main character will be theological. The objects of both studies, at least partially, pertain to the realms of both psychology and religion, but the first study will be an exercise in the ‘psychology of religion’ whereas the second will be dealing with a kind of ‘theological psychology.’ The present study is undoubtedly primarily theological and is closer to a theological psychology than it is to a psychology of religion.

The second standard follows to some degree from this initial recognition. To continue on the same line of example I personally find both a psychology of religion and a theological psychology valuable in their own right, but the degree to which, if at all, ‘psychology of religion’ should influence or change a particular theology or the degree to which, if at all, a theological psychology should find space and be integrated within mainstream secular psychology is unclear and debatable. However, without going into the specific complexities of this cross-disciplinary potential, I find that

‘respect for disciplinary independence’ may at least function at the general level as the background through which these complex issues may be dealt. Thus, for example, independence is maintained and respected if both psychology and theology are allowed to ‘receive’ such changes and cross-disciplinary influences in the degree to which their own disciplines find relevant, persuasive, and acceptable. Of course, in using these agentive terms I do not wish to anthropomorphize theology and psychology as such, but to point to all those rules, limits, dynamics, and factors that give these disciplines a particular identity in specific contexts and times. Thus, in writing what is primarily an LDS theology of emotions in light of socio-psychological studies and discussions on emotions I bring these latter conclusions to bear inasmuch as Mormon theology is open to such additions and contributions. Thus, they are included with the purpose of informing the theology within its own constitutive boundaries rather than with the purpose to fully shape it or reshape it beyond its fundamental identifying markers. Fortunately for my endeavour I find that in its core affirmations and claims LDS theology is largely open to this kind of scientific contribution, although with some obvious limitations. As these limitations emerge throughout my analysis I explicitly recognize them and discuss some of their implications.

More specifically, the particular methodological structure and trajectory with which I have chosen to carry out my examination is meant to be grounded in and to illustrate this principle of ‘respect for disciplinary independence.’ Thus, the comparative, explorative, and integrative approaches mentioned at the beginning of this section function in their unison and in their particular sequential arrangement as an attempt to structure my analysis in boundary sensitive terms and presuppositions. In fact, in the comparative section I begin by maintaining a separation between the socio-scientific study of emotions and those aspects of LDS theology that largely relate to the topic of ‘emotion.’ I do so by devoting one chapter to each ‘discipline,’ the first to the social sciences and the second to LDS theology. In this manner I allow them to ‘speak’ in their own terms, and I only identify general parallels between basic axioms of their respective perspectives. By so doing I merely suggest that a potential for fruitful interaction is present, which makes the first two chapters ‘comparative’ only in a more implicit and indirect sense. Parenthetically, although my distinctive selection of the theological aspects of Mormonism to examine has its potential limitations, especially in lacking comprehensiveness, the clear preference for LDS tenets about human nature is far from arbitrary. In fact, given the universal significance of emotional phenomena in

the context of human experience, make-up, and aspirations I have found the theological anthropology of Mormonism (as I understand it) to represent fertile ground from which to gather these emotion-related theological foundations.

With the third chapter I move from parallelisms to direct intersections as I explore the Mormon canonical texts' treatment of prototypical emotions in light of a simplified schematic conceptualization, which emerges from the review of the socio-scientific evidence on emotions in the first chapter. Therefore, I explore LDS authoritative texts and begin to construe a Mormon theology of emotion through the tools and the evidence provided by a wider multidisciplinary study of emotional phenomena. In the context of 'respect for disciplinary independence' this step is not problematic for a variety of reasons. First, from the perspective of the social sciences the approach is characterized by a single directionality of the outward kind as the social-scientific theoretical framework on emotions is left intact and unaffected by this intersecting exploration. Second, from the perspective of LDS theology I have already indicated that a generalized openness to influence from scientific conclusions is constitutive of its own identity. Furthermore, the highlighted parallelisms of the first two chapters function to suggest a more specific degree of openness in the particular context of the study of emotion. In other words, a priori obstacles to the engagement with and even selective absorption of knowledge from socio-scientific studies of emotion do not seem to exist within the LDS theological worldview. Still, conflicts could emerge in more specific areas of focus, but it is not the purpose of this work to directly engage such potential difficulties.

Following this explorative section, which functions as the bulk of my analysis, I proceed to propose some general foundations for a Mormon theology of emotion that integrate and summarize all the evidence previously discussed. Therefore, the concluding chapter is primarily integrative in the sense that it attempts to incorporate various kinds of information both intra-disciplinarily and inter-disciplinarily. Thus, in the former case textual canonical evidence on individual kinds of emotions is joined together to form a rudimentary summative coherent schema of theological explanation that could be applied to all or to most emotional phenomena within a distinctive LDS worldview. On the other hand, as already indicated, such evidence is in itself the product of a process of intersection where socio-scientific information has come to bear to some degree in this very explorative endeavour. It is further likely that the effort to draw a summative theological explanatory schema is also implicitly informed by

similar scientific informational input. Then, I further underline the potential for such interdisciplinarity as I suggest possible directions of analysis in the context of ‘emotions in Mormonism.’ In this fashion I conclude what I have largely defined as a comparative, explorative, and integrative theological examination.

More detailed methodological information on such processes as my canonical exploration or on my classification and selection of prototypical emotions is provided in the introductory sections of those later chapters that specifically focus on these endeavours. At this point, to conclude this introductory section on method I supply some needed information on the perspective from which I approach this endeavour, which will influence, albeit subtly, my own exploration and conclusions.

The Insider/Outsider Approach

In addition to and in association with methodology another important issue to explicitly engage when introducing a theological analysis like the present one involves the author’s commitments relative to the object of study. In other words, and particularly in light of postmodern attacks on the very ideal of ‘objectivity’, it is useful and, I would add, ethically desirable to locate oneself in relation to the theological tradition under examination. However, a simple dichotomy of either insider or outsider to the tradition does very little to describe the more complex intellectual and spiritual reality, which characterizes the experience of many individuals. In fact, authors are in the first place common human beings, whose cultural backgrounds and reference groups are often multiply defined, giving rise to commitments of various and at times conflicting type. Furthermore, commitment is only one factor that may be used in classifying an analyst in the insider/outsider typology. Access to significant knowledge, use of relevant and appropriate terminology, and understanding of overall frameworks of meaning may all contribute in locating an individual inside or outside a particular tradition. Thus, a spectrum with insider and outsider at opposite poles or a multilayered schema allowing coexisting elements of both insider and outsider identity are more likely to account for the common complexities of individual authors.

A separate though related question pertains to the normative rather than to the descriptive side of this issue or to the degree to which it is more scientifically desirable to conduct ethnographies either as a ‘native’ or as an ‘outsider.’ In the study of religion this issue has given rise to an ongoing debate among anthropologists with positions which range from one extreme, where a status of insider unavoidably vitiates the

reliability of any conclusion, to the opposite position where it is an outsider who invariably lacks and will continue to lack the appropriate means to accurately describe a reality that is not fully his.¹⁰ Yet, the extreme ends of this spectrum are not typical and many anthropologists have acquired such a nuanced understanding of the meaning of insider or of outsider that they now recognize the importance and desirability of their co-existence. In other words, commitment to a particular theological tradition or lack of commitment toward the same are not generally seen as an a priori obstacle to the usefulness or accuracy of an ethnographic, theological, or other kind of study focused on a specific religious group or on its theological framework. Other factors, such as the ability to entertain a variety of perspectives as well as the depth of one's knowledge on the socio-cultural and theological contexts are also significant. Therefore, discussions now focus on the meaning of being an insider in one sense and an outsider in another as well as on the issue of self-awareness in relation to one's prejudices, biases, assumptions, and relative position vis-à-vis the subject of study, which is needed to facilitate the achievement of superior scholarship in a properly ethical context.¹¹

I do subscribe to the view that a dual status as insider and outsider not only is compatible with rigorous academic analysis but also that it adds to and it facilitates both the explorative and the explanatory processes of academic inquiry. This is particularly relevant and true in the specific context of my present analysis where I bring elements of psychology and of the social sciences to interact with a particular theological tradition, which is still relatively unknown. In fact, effective understanding of ideas variously manifested in separate areas of knowledge as well as their expression to readers from a variety of theological or cultural backgrounds constantly require an author to attempt to function as both insider and outsider. In other words, one must be able to see from the inside and explain to the outside of a particular conceptual schema, whether theological or discipline-specific scientific, which is only possible when one understands what the outsider perceives about the inside. Then, a challenge is often found in explaining the inside to the outside while both respecting the inside's self-

¹⁰ The literature on this subject is voluminous. Some good general discussions on the significant elements in the debate are found in Stringer (2002), 1-20. Also see Wiebe (1999), 260-73. Of relevance to the debate is also the unique terminology applied by Kenneth Pike in describing these different standpoints where, among other things, *etic* has reference to an outside and *emic* to an inside viewpoint in approaching and explaining behaviour. See Pike (1999), 28-36.

¹¹ Articulate reflections on the unique dynamics involved in approaching a study as a 'default' insider or outsider are found respectively in Jacobs-Huey (2002), 791-804 and in Barker (1987), 127-52. A good article which explores ethical issues of commitment in ethnography is Peshkin (1984), 254-64.

definition as well as making it accessible to outsiders who use different language and often distinct assumptions. To be sure, the exact nature of these explanations is subject to vigorous debate, as witnessed by the literature focusing on the role of *reductionism* in the study of religion.¹² In any case, maintaining the tension and balance of the insider/outsider status is no simple task and it usually involves deep effort in the work of the academic.

Perhaps the usefulness of this duality in status is more clearly recognized in the secondary context of communication than it is in the prior realm of individual study, discovery, and understanding. However, if one thinks of an analyst through the analogy of a ‘translator’ it becomes apparent that prior understanding is just as significant as subsequent expression of the data in more widely understandable terms. The translator first needs to comprehend accurately what he is subsequently to express in a different language so that he can translate insider’s knowledge into outsider’s terms without altering its very nature and meaning.¹³ Thus, on the one hand, as an ‘insider’ he is facilitated in the acquisition of detailed knowledge about the object of analysis in itself with all of its complexities and minutiae. In other words, ‘insider’ status allows the author to explore at close range what cannot be seen or understood from a distance. On the other hand as an ‘outsider’ the author is facilitated in the acquisition of comparative knowledge about the object of analysis with all of its connections and interactions. In other words, ‘outsider’ status allows the author to explore from some distance what cannot be seen or understood at close range. Each of these approaches is problematic in isolation but when joined to the other it is greatly instrumental in both processes of understanding and communication. Thus, through alternating efforts of close-range and distant observations the analyst is more likely to first understand and then to communicate his ‘translated’ understanding accurately and correctly.

Therefore, ideally, scholars will develop their knowledge in a multidisciplinary and multicultural fashion in order to become better ‘translators.’ However, the limitations and practicalities of the human condition often allow individuals to make these attempts in a limited degree. In other words, although the ideal remains and through its presence may even motivate the acquisition of further knowledge it is realistic and honest to recognize that in relation to many objects of study most analysts

¹² Two different positions on the subject of ‘reductionism’ in the study of religion are found in Gardaz (2008), 338-45 and Segal (1983), 97-124.

¹³ Throughout this work I use the masculine pronoun ‘he’ in reference to the generic third person singular as common in most articulations of Mormon theology.

are still identifiable or should identify themselves as ‘primarily’ or more naturally as insider or outsider. In fact, notwithstanding all efforts to maintain separate coexisting and interacting perspectives, to grow in familiarity of different ‘languages,’ and to recognize similar functionalities of diverse worldview in meeting human needs, individuals’ identities are often interlinked with the subject of their studies in a complex manner. Therefore, they continue to stand in relation to them as ‘default’ insiders or outsiders while consciously endeavouring to avoid or to counterbalance any myopic or presbyopic effect respectively. Mine is one such attempt as I come to this analysis of LDS theology first as insider and secondly as outsider.

In affirming that I approach this study where the status of ‘insider’ has a relative prevalence over ‘outsider’ I mean especially two things. First, I am a ‘native’ to Mormonism, to its theology and to its socio-cultural context because of my life-long participation in the faith. Also, I am an ‘insider’ because I am committed to the faith’s basic theological tenets, which I have internalized as the organizing framework of my moral and spiritual identities. At the same time I possess academic and other life experiential tools that have given me understanding and familiarity of outsiders’ perspectives on LDS theology and practices. Thus, although mainly an insider to Mormonism I am sufficiently an outsider to make a fruitful dialogue on the subject possible. On the other hand, trying to identify a ‘default’ position in relation to the multidisciplinary interaction I aim to conduct, namely between Theology and the Social Sciences in particular, is somewhat more difficult. My academic background includes both Psychology and Religious Studies/Theology, but I have received more extensive training in the latter. Hence, it is likely that my approach to the interaction between psychology and religion fits more naturally into a default insider to theology than into an insider to psychology. In this light it is easier to comprehend why the present analysis is structured to be *focused* on a theological examination of Mormonism, in relation to which I am primarily an ‘insider’, both socio-culturally and academically. On the other hand, this same examination is *informed* by socio-psychological sciences and to some smaller degree by mainstream Christian theologies in relation to which, in the latter case more than in the former, I am by default an ‘outsider.’

Self-awareness of these intra-personal dynamics provide perhaps the most significant means in meeting their inherent challenges, which, parenthetically, are likely to be different than the ones encountered by the analyst, who approaches a similar study as a ‘natural’ outsider with some insider status. Specifically, I trust that

my insider knowledge and experience will assist me in my explorative and integrative efforts thus endowing this analysis with richness and depth. One important way to facilitate such a depth involves a close look at the distinct meaning of the term ‘theology’ in the context of Mormonism. Given its significance and recurrence within the examination that follows the term requires some clarifications.

Defining LDS Theology

Theology is commonly defined as the reasoned study and discourse of those matters which focus on God and on His relationship to the world. The main sources for such reflective explorations have been found primarily in historical tradition, sacred texts, social experience, philosophical rules of reason, and liturgy.¹⁴ Some religious traditions, Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism in particular, have emphasized the importance of worship as the framework within which theology is to develop, thus placing liturgy at the theological forefront through an appeal to the principle of *lex orandi lex credendi*.¹⁵ Other schools of theological thought place greater weight on different authoritative sources. Still, as a whole, both ancient and contemporary Christian theologies generally retain both the same wide objective as well as dependence on the same foundational sources. Clearly, variations in approach, loci of focus, and pre-eminence of source have contributed to the creation of a Christian theological picture, which is characterized by sub-disciplines, multiple movements, and fragmentations of different kinds.¹⁶

Such a proliferation of perspectives in theological discourse is likely to be one of the reasons why the term ‘theology’ usually lacks favour among Latter-day Saints (or ‘the Saints’). In fact, for a movement so concerned with institutional unity and doctrinal uniformity theological diversity is perceived more as a threat than as a source of epistemological richness. To be sure, there are many factors which shape the complex relationship of Mormonism with the philosophical discipline of theology. The issue is far too large for the present setting where all I may be able to express is a

¹⁴ Musser (2007), 2-9.

¹⁵ The Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "The Church's faith precedes the faith of the believer who is invited to adhere to it. When the Church celebrates the sacraments, she confesses the faith received from the apostles - whence the ancient saying: *lex orandi, lex credendi* (or: *legem credendi lex statuat supplicandi*, according to Prosper of Aquitaine [5th cent.]). The law of prayer is the law of faith: the Church believes as she prays. Liturgy is a constitutive element of the holy and living Tradition." [Catholic Church (1999), par. 1124, 258]

¹⁶ A good introduction on twentieth-century Christian theologies with accurate descriptions of their differences and complexities is found in Ford (2005).

general clarification of the topic as well as to provide an introduction to my own specific endeavour in the current analysis. Historically, part of the complexity emerges from the fact that Mormon rhetoric on the subject of theology has not been consistent throughout the decades. In fact, in the nineteenth century notable LDS authorities like Parley P. Pratt spoke highly of theology and defined it “the science of all other sciences and useful arts”.¹⁷ Even at the beginning of the twentieth century Mormon authorities made use of the term in neutral if not positive contexts and published various works of theology, although mostly of the dogmatic kind.¹⁸ There were indeed early critical statements on the subject of theology but their focus was usually specific to the theological content of Christian creeds and systems of doctrine. Then, it was ‘sectarian’ theology that represented the problem, not theology per se.¹⁹

In the middle of the twentieth century the word ‘theology’ disappeared from Mormon sermons and writings to only reappear a few decades later in the words of LDS intellectuals, who began to engage main-stream Christian theologians and philosophers on the topic. At the beginning of the twenty-first century it appears that questions about the nature and place of theology within Mormonism has attracted the attention and interest of several LDS thinkers, so much that academic organizations and publications have been devoted to the topic.²⁰ Still, Mormons scholars have gone as far as claiming Mormonism to be atheological or have affirmed that theological pursuits are generally dangerous to the Mormon enterprise.²¹ Yet, when seen in context, and in light of some key Mormon tenets I am about to outline, the LDS rejection of theology appears less categorical and universal. In fact, as stressed by David Paulsen, when

¹⁷ Pratt (1978), 1-2.

¹⁸ See Widtsoe (1997) and Talmage (1899), 2-5.

¹⁹ For example, John Taylor stated: “I consider that if I ever lost any time in my life, it was while studying the Christian theology. Sectarian theology is the greatest tomfoolery in the world.” *Journal of Discourses*, 5:240.

²⁰ In 2003 the *Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology* was organized and in 2005 it began to publish its own journal, *Element*. Also see the edited volume McLachlan and Ericson (2007).

²¹ The context of such statements usually clarify that a restricted meaning of theology is intended, particularly in the form of systematic theology. For example, James Faulconer states that “Latter-day Saints are atheological. In other words, they are without an official or even semi-official philosophy that explains and gives rational support to their beliefs and teachings... As I use the word theology here, it begins with belief and uses the methods of rational philosophy to give support to that belief: dogmatic, systematic, or rational theology... [S]ome Latter-day Saint leaders and thinkers have devoted considerable energy to formulating theologies of various kinds. Nevertheless, none of those efforts have come to fruition (none has been accepted as official...), and I think none will.” [Faulconer (2006), 21-22]. Louis Midgley, a noted LDS apologist, expressed more starkly his negative view on theology by stating that “Whenever we attempt to do theology, or fashion a system of doctrines, we end up in contention and disputation, for the entire enterprise is an exercise in arrogance and pride, against which the Book of Mormon warns.” [Midgley (1989), 104].

theology is understood as “thinking and talking about God,” the Saints obviously do theology and are involved in theological discourse. However, Mormons “want to avoid...the problems of doing theology badly or improperly, and thus many of them would add that theology is a dangerous enterprise that must be handled with great caution.”²² At the foundation of these concerns lie several motivations two of which I find to be preeminent, namely the LDS concepts of ‘revelation’ and ‘authority’.

Most Christian theologians emphasize reason and study, both of current realities as well as of pre-existent biblical ‘revelation,’ as the epistemological instruments of their theological discourses. Mormons, on the other hand, have historically associated ‘doctrinal’ knowledge with continuous, direct, and freshly scriptural divine ‘revelation’. From the very First Vision of the Prophet Joseph Smith to his subsequent theological statements emphasis has regularly been placed on the immediacy of the revelatory nature of these communications.²³ If God could speak and show Himself to His prophet directly then any other source of divine knowledge was secondary at best or suspicious and potentially misguided at worse, particularly when based on fallen human philosophical reasoning. In other words, epiphanies in the form of visions and other divine manifestations and not theology set the Mormon wheel in motion. Thus, the beginnings of Mormonism and the more charismatic phase of its history were characterized by a starker juxtaposition between the theophanies on which its very *raison d’être* was founded and the ‘humanly constructed’ theologies of the other Christian denominations, which had lost the ‘fullness of truth.’

The degree to which contemporary Mormonism has maintained or redefined this juxtaposition is a very interesting and rather complex issue in itself. In the twenty-first century the founding theophanies of the Mormon ‘restoration’ are certainly being emphasized in ways, which make them as theologically significant now for Mormonism’s own claims to truth as they were in the nineteenth century (if not more). However, on-going and continuous institutional revelation through God’s prophet, while remaining a central claim of Mormonism, has somewhat been redefined in the manner of its manifestations, at least in official sermons. Mormon authorities rarely if ever speak of theophanies, angelic visions, or other outstanding experiences of this kind; on the other hand, they emphasize ‘revelation’ by the ‘power of the Holy Ghost.’

²² Paulsen (2007), 12.

²³ Mormons underline the unique role of Joseph Smith as the prophet of the restoration by referring to him as ‘the Prophet’ with a capital P.

As will be examined in greater detail later this kind of revelatory process finds greater affinity with the theological enterprise because it involves, among other things, personal reflection and reason associated with a search for divine will and guidance. In other words, theology acquires epistemic significance in a Mormon context only when occurring as divinely ‘inspired’ because ‘directed’ by the ‘power of the Holy Ghost.’

Of course, certain discerning criteria are necessary in order to determine whether particular ‘information’ is divinely inspired. In the current setting I cannot attempt the difficult task of defining in detail the LDS understanding of how the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested. It is in itself a basic element of Mormonism and of the typical LDS explanation for all religious experience, which tends to resist strict conceptual boundaries. What is important in this context is the fact that such a ‘revelatory’ enterprise is recognized within Mormonism as more ‘filtered’ and thus more complex than the ‘pure’ theophanies of its nineteenth century beginnings. Thus, whatever divine communication emerges in such instances of mental/spiritual forms of ‘revelation’ can become cluttered and potentially distorted by its intersections with the psychological, social and physiological dynamics of the individual. Clearly, one of the greatest challenges for the faithful Saint is to discern between divine revelation and personal desires within one’s own mind. It follows that there are dangers and risks inherent in the theological enterprise, which are perceived to originate more from inadequate levels of worthiness and of spiritual experience in receiving revelation than they are from lack of proper theological or intellectual training.

Although many Saints recognize that the risk to encounter self-deception is both unavoidable and necessary to facilitate spiritual progression they believe that they should limit its danger by appropriately adapting existing and well-established revelation to the realm of personal life choices.²⁴ Thus, as the faithful study canonical texts (and many spend considerable time in doing so) they generally focus their mental energy in the area of personal application of existing theology and shy away from any attempts to develop innovative theologies to fill existing vacuums. These enterprises are left to the prophet and to the apostle, who, in the public Mormon perception, does not run the risks of misguidance, which characterize the common member. Furthermore, since their position or ‘calling’ is specifically one that involves being a

²⁴ Mormons seek such guidance and revelation in all relevant aspects of their lives, and in matters that are not exclusively ‘religious’ according to the common understanding of the word. They are taught to seek and watch for ‘revelation’ in the things they say, do and plan.

mouthpiece for God's will and in light of their recognized spiritual worthiness and experience within the Church it is evident that 'authority' plays a significant role in the context of Mormon theology. Therefore, in the case of those members who may be philosophically trained or otherwise theologically inclined the question of authority or degree of agreement with already existing authoritative statements usually remains at the forefront and is likely to overshadow any factors relating to the author's intellectual preparation in the minds of many Church members. Hence, the LDS theologian is faced with some unique dynamics given the wide perception that conflates the role of the prophet with the role of the scholar.²⁵

On the other hand, this is not a canonically normative connection within Mormonism because it is largely based on an unnecessary conflation of 'theology' and 'doctrine', which was precipitated by the disappearance of the term 'theology' in LDS parlance. In fact, as I understand the terms, 'doctrine' pertains to dogma, which is binding for the whole institution and its members, whereas theology does not require such an authoritative status. It may be expressed as a personal interpretation, which implicitly claims its own authority, but it does not necessarily involve a challenge to dogmatic authority. Thus, the virtual elimination of a classification category for non-binding religious thought, namely 'theology', has often dichotomized pronouncements on religious matters as either 'doctrinal' or 'non-doctrinal'. It follows that Mormons may be uncertain about the proper classification of the 'dogmatic theology' (in the venue of theological reflection upon a dogmatic core) which originates in educators or other individuals who are not General Authorities. On the one hand its derivation from individuals viewed as 'orthodox' and its emergence from what is perceived as 'doctrine' constitute its *prima facie* authoritative justification.²⁶ On the other hand, particularly when theology aims to fill a doctrinal vacuum or when it appears to contradict existing statements perceived to be 'doctrinal' by some, it falls under a perception of suspicion which may even prevent its very emergence.

²⁵ This is no universal conflation in Mormon circles but the issue of relationship of any intellectual pursuit to institutional authority and statements is a subject of recurrent discussion. See Sperry (1967), 74-85. A more recent discussion on the dynamics of LDS scholarship in relation to perceived orthodoxy is found in Duffy (2008), 1-33.

²⁶ As illustrations of this kind of works one may think of the widely popular 'parable of the bicycle' employed by BYU professor Robinson to explain grace. See Robinson (1992). Other more philosophically based works by LDS educators have achieved some recognition throughout the Church in the U.S.A., The writings of Truman Madsen fit in this category. See Madsen (2001).

Still, an extreme a priori resistance to theology, as could be manifested in some perspectives among the Saints, is neither supported by the Mormon canon nor is it in agreement with prophetically revealed tenets of Mormonism about the universal imperative to acquire greater knowledge through *reflection* and faith.²⁷ Furthermore, while the desire to maintain ‘doctrine’ uncorrupted from potentially misguided theological speculations is entirely justifiable, the extension and limits of such an official ‘doctrine’ is a subject, which, as already stated, is not beyond debate.²⁸ Perspectives range from a dogma, which is extensive and encompassing of most if not of all statements ever uttered by an LDS General Authority to the opposite extreme where Mormon doctrine is reducible to very few general tenets largely malleable to shifting historical and cultural applications. The former group will usually allow very little room for original theological developments from non-prophetic sources, whereas the latter group will find room for the acceptance of all kinds of theological innovations, whatever their source.²⁹ This debate encapsulates much that is central to the definition of Mormon identity at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In fact, at the root of this ‘theological question’ intersect at least two of the basic paradoxes, which characterize Mormon culture, as highlighted by Terryl Givens in his very informative historical analysis of Mormon cultural expressions.³⁰

In relation to my own perspective on the question of ‘doctrine’ I do not locate myself at either extreme of the spectrum previously referred to although I am closer to a view of Mormon ‘doctrine’ as limited to relatively few general tenets or ‘principles’, which are subject to wide applicability as directed by divine inspiration. Furthermore, I do not suppose every statement by single General Authorities to be of necessity doctrinally authoritative although I do accept the premise that these individuals may and do declare authoritative ‘doctrine,’ particularly when speaking in unity on specific

²⁷ “Seek learning, even by study and also by faith.” (D&C 88:118; 109:7, 14). LDS authority J. Golden Kimball once expressed the principle in these terms: “There are not enough Apostles in the Church to prevent us from thinking, and they are not disposed to do so; but some people fancy that because we have the Presidency and Apostles of the Church that they will do the thinking for us. There are men and women so mentally lazy that they hardly think for themselves. To think calls for effort, which makes some men tired and wearies their souls. No man or woman can remain in this Church on borrowed light.” [Kimball (1904), 97].

²⁸ For an LDS General Authority position on this issue see Clark (1979), 68-81. A more recent theological discussion on the subject is found in Millet (2007), 265-81.

²⁹ Richard Poll proposed an analogical distinction between Mormons who emphasize the certainty of doctrine and authority over those who emphasize freedom and personal application. They are identified respectively as “Iron Rod” and “Liahona” Mormons (the iron rod and the Liahona are objects found within the narrative of 1 Nephi in the Book of Mormon). See Poll (Winter 1967), 107-17.

³⁰ The two paradoxes are authority vs. radical freedom and searching vs. certainty. See Givens (2007), 3-35.

subjects. Therefore, I proceed to present an analysis, which is indeed a ‘creative’ theological examination of Mormonism, but which aims to remain within its acceptable ‘doctrinal’ boundaries (as I understand them). It is then both dogmatic, in the sense of being rooted in dogma, and constructive, as it attempts to organize its subject in a unique, coherent, and novel manner. At the same time it does not claim to be doctrinally authoritative in the LDS context where such authority is not acquired through persuasive reasoning, but through ecclesiastical ordination to a particular Priesthood office, namely Apostle.

In conclusion, given these unique characteristics of the Mormon context when using the term ‘theology’ it is important to clarify both the nature of the endeavour as well as its relationship with the perceived official dogma to which it is associated. In fact, it can be argued that a truly Mormon enterprise in academic theology is still in its infancy and consequently it still encounters pressures both for justification and for definition. At the present time reflection, revelation, and authority are often interlinked in a complex manner in the LDS theological world so much that some awareness of their interactions represent a necessary step to the development of a Mormon theological discourse, which is both widely accessible outside the tradition as well as faithful to the theological identity from which it emerges.

Before directly engaging LDS theology I have chosen to briefly address the current status of the scientific study of emotion with particular attention to the socio-scientific realm. Therefore, the first step in my analysis involves a survey of psychological, sociological, philosophical, and, to a lesser extent, physiological approaches to the subject as well as a summary of the present broad areas of focus and agreement which shape the investigation of emotion. Since emotion research is a fast-paced developing field of inquiry I have attempted to make use of the most updated findings and publications available, but given the vastness of literature being produced the presence of lacunae is unavoidable. Still, my objective is not a comprehensive summation of the state of the research; instead, I aim to provide an outline of the general direction of analysis in the field as I single out three very broad conclusions that some may even find to be common-sensical. However, as I show, these propositions are the fruit of relatively recent work on the subject that have followed centuries and even millennia of debates and disagreements.

CHAPTER ONE

Emotion: Three Defining Characteristics

As in most cases it is appropriate to begin the present analysis with a definition of the subject to be examined. The definition of emotion I have chosen to employ certainly owes much to the studies and discoveries of various scholars, as will emerge clearly throughout much of this chapter, but in its specific composition it is my own conclusion. *An emotion is a human phenomenon that engages the totality of the individual as he/she regularly responds to circumstances of change which occur within contexts of perceived relevance.* In other words, emotions are human responses, to be later classified in greater detail, which pervade the personal experience of each individual in his/her interaction with his/her contextual world. Thus, life is an emotional experience with emotion-filled relationships, emotional meanings, and emotion caused or causing commitments. Emotions are so embedded in our way of thinking and understanding the world that even the imagination struggles to construe an alternative image of emotionless existence. In the popular science fiction *Star Trek* the logic driven and extremely rational *Mr. Spock* is still subject to occasional emotional ‘infiltrations,’ which emerge from a genetic structure where his mother’s humanity coexists with his father’s perfect Vulcan rationality.¹ In other words, humans never have and never could fully transcend their emotions if they are to maintain the essential characteristics of their species.

However, to say that humans constantly and universally experience and observe emotions is different from claiming that they fully understand them. In fact, some of the greatest minds in the history of mankind have focused their energies on defining, classifying, and analyzing emotions without being able to reach a recognizable consensus in any single one of these areas. In more recent times empirical studies from

¹ Berenson (1991), 33-34.

a variety of scientific disciplines have come to the aid of philosophers by providing observable data and theoretical models through which greater precision and reliable conclusions could ideally be reached. Still, this optimism has only been partially justified since further questions and problems have accompanied the greater complexity and the empirical methods associated with a burgeoning multidisciplinary interest. At the same time one cannot fail to recognize the extensive progress, which has characterized the study of emotions, and which is likely to continue its advance given the massive resources that many academic disciplines are investing into it. While expressing awareness of these unsettled questions and debates this chapter is primarily an attempt to summarize the general consensus on those main areas of agreement, which pertain to the nature of emotions.

Emotion through the ages: philosophical debates

When attempting to circumscribe a subject of great human significance it is sensible to begin with a brief look at what relevant knowledge on the topic comes to us from the past. It is certainly no different with emotions, whose study predates the empirical and scientific era in which we now live by millennia. Philosophers, from the ancient Greeks to their modern counterparts, have frequently debated the nature and significance of emotions. At the same time, even when advocating opposing views, they have shared basic assumptions on the subject, which in light of recent empirical studies appear problematic at best. Thus, as Robert Solomon highlights, philosophical discourse on emotion has been characterized at the core by a distinction between reason and emotion, “as if we were dealing with two natural kinds,” that is still lingering in present times. As will be seen in a later section, this view is too simplistic and fundamentally erroneous. Similarly, a related perspective has focused on the supposed inferiority of emotion in relation to reason, where emotion is seen as “more primitive, less intelligent, more bestial, less dependable, and more dangerous than reason.”² This view is exaggerated at best but, although widely adhered to, dissonant voices have occasionally emerged in its opposition.

In antiquity the focus of the ‘emotion’ debate centred on the role that emotions played in morality. Responses were often polarized, as evidenced for example by a comparison of the Aristotelian and of the Stoic perspectives. Where Aristotle

² Solomon (2008), 3.

understood emotions to be necessary for the ‘good life,’ the Stoics not only saw them as unnecessary but also as the true cause of much human misery. Then, although both Aristotle and the Stoic Chrysippus presented theories and analyses on the nature of emotions they did so with quite different motivations, the former to discern and cultivate them (at least some), the latter to extirpate them. Still, their perspectives on the nature of the emotions, described through their various physiological, cognitive, social, and behavioral components, were equally precocious. For example, the Stoic attribution of emotions to irrational judgments needing correction foreshadowed the basic premise of modern cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy in the treatment of dysfunctional emotional phenomena. But the Stoics went further than modern therapies in aiming to eradicate most individual desires, since these were perceived to lie at the root of all emotion-causing judgments and expectations. Less radically, some of the Stoics’ contemporaries, the Epicureans, aimed simply to divert attention from the illusory and unnecessary to the material and necessary thus coming closer to the present form of intervention advocated by most cognitive therapies.³

The concern with ethics continued to be prevalent throughout the Middle Ages, particularly in relation to the identification of Christian sin, which was usually associated with particular emotions such as anger, envy, lust, etc. Then, given the negative reputation enjoyed by emotions it is not surprising that Thomas Aquinas would equate the greatest virtues of love and hope with reason and not with emotions.⁴ It was not until the early modern period that the emotions began to be rehabilitated, at least in some degree. In fact, it was the very ‘father’ of modern philosophy, René Descartes, who suggested that although our physiologies are ‘moved’ by disturbing emotions, the emotions can also be affected by the soul, namely by reason. In his *Passions of the Soul* he attempted to map a rudimentary neuro-scientific explanation of emotions, which included a ‘meeting’ of the body and of the mind in a small gland at the base of the brain. Although renowned for his problematic dualism of body and mind, Descartes nevertheless attempted to explain the evident ‘interaction’ of the two in the phenomenon of emotion and he did so in quite sophisticated terms for his time.⁵

³ A thorough analysis of the Aristotelian view of emotions is found in Fortenbaugh (2002). For a description of Chrysippus’ view see Sorabji (2000), 29-54. For the Epicurean perspective see Annas (1989), 145-64.

⁴ Aquinas (1967), 1a.2ae.24.2.

⁵ Descartes (1989).

In a radical shift from Cartesian dualism Baruch Spinoza proposed a complex theory of metaphysics, which was rooted in a monistic view of mind and body. In fact, in the most relevant metaphysical premise to his theory of emotion, Spinoza believed that mind and body are only ‘aspects’ of a larger universal reality centred in and controlled by God, however defined. The most significant implication of this perspective is that Spinoza claimed that we are not really in control of our lives although we often think and act as if we were. In fact, emotions emerge from the many failed expectations and desires that underlie a belief in our personal agency and freedom, which cause frustration and misery. Thus, echoing many aspects of the Stoic philosophy of emotions Spinoza warned against the negative effects of emotional experiences although he also made room for more positive ‘active emotions,’ which emerge from our ‘true’ nature and from a correct understanding of our place in the universe.⁶

A thinker who did not share Spinoza’s suspicion of the emotions, and who instead radically celebrated them over and above reason was David Hume. Given his work and reputation as a central figure of the Enlightenment it is perhaps surprising that he would take a stand in their defence. However, unlike Kant, who continued in his unswerving support of reason, Hume had come to question it even to the point of reacting against reason. In particular, he had come to doubt the significance of reason as a means to pursue moral behaviour. In fact, through his large volume *A Treatise of Human Nature*, he aimed to give emotions their rightful place at the very centre of philosophy and of ethics.⁷ In Germany various ‘Romantic’ philosophers seemed to go even further than Hume in their scepticism and in their celebration of the more instinctual and less rational side of humanity. In this context Friederich Nietzsche is worthy of particular mention since, as Solomon pinpoints, in his enthusiastic defence of the emotions he suggested that “rationality itself may be nothing more than a certain product or confluence of emotion.”⁸

Before beginning to address the more empirical era in the study of emotions and in conclusion of this brief and necessarily highly simplified summary of philosophical thought on the subject a clarification is in order. Although I have consistently

⁶ See Parkinson (2000).

⁷ Whether intended or not the order of topics Hume addresses in his masterpiece underlines the centrality of emotions. In fact, the first book of the treatise is devoted to ‘the understanding’, the second to ‘the passions’ and the third to ‘morals’. See Norton and Norton (2000).

⁸ Solomon (2003), 64.

described the views of some renowned thinkers in terms of an ‘emotion’ theory or perspective, most did not use the term ‘emotion’ as such. In fact, as Thomas Dixon highlights, the historical study of the philosophical discourse on emotion is complicated by the fact that the term is relatively recent in its use. It is thought to be dating to Descartes’ 1649 *Passions of the Soul*, but its wide and more consistent usage in reference to a single psychological category of experience did not emerge at least until the 19th century. Prior to that time emotions were conceptualized primarily as two separate categories characterized by opposite valence, namely ‘affections’ and ‘passions.’⁹ The former were useful, appropriate, and God approved phenomena, whereas the latter were morally condemnable and needed to be shunned. The Christian Lactantius well captured this commonly held bi-directional view in the religious discourse, which characterized the context of emotions for millennia. He claimed that the emotions “are planted in us by nature and have a purpose...if for good then they are virtues, if for bad, vices.”¹⁰ His was a common perspective among thinkers, who often held similarly divergent or even more complex views which discriminated among different kinds of emotional phenomena.

Hence, the introduction of a single term to facilitate a scientific form of discourse on the subject presents the usual problem which is typically encountered in any attempt to reach generalized conclusions, namely excessive simplification. As will be seen shortly, this problem characterizes many of the debates on ‘emotions’ where one field typically protests against what is perceived to be an excessive generalization by presenting contrary evidence which is manifested in particular circumstances. Notwithstanding this fact, it is likely that people and scholars will continue to want to address ‘emotions’ as a whole and to search for a single unitary explanatory theory for these phenomena, which in some form are clearly universal. As the search continues so will the debates beginning with the defining issue of what exactly constitutes an emotion.

⁹ Dixon (2003), 1-25. Dixon explicitly takes issue with Solomon’s claim that emotions have been commonly viewed as negative and irrational throughout most of our history. Although I have quoted Solomon at length I am also sympathetic to Dixon’s argument. I find Dixon’s revisionist history and linguistic analysis to function as a needed corrective to Solomon’s claims, which at times involve excessive generalizations.

¹⁰ As quoted in Konstan (2001), 121.

Emotion today: socio-scientific descriptions

“Emotion, first of all, serves as a shorthand for, or pointer to, intrapersonal causal processes and mechanisms. It thereby also points to a human and animal system architecture that enables such mechanisms.”¹¹ This statement captures both the elusiveness and complexity of the concept of emotion. It further suggests that a most fruitful method of emotion research should involve interdisciplinarity where neurophysiology, psychology, and the social sciences necessarily play a central role in its scientific analysis. In fact, most theories of emotion recognize that core foci of these disciplines, namely sensation/feeling (physiology), cognition, and behaviour, function as the three main constitutive elements of emotional phenomena, although relative significance and patterns of interrelationship are still hotly debated. Therefore, comprehensive descriptions of any emotion should include both micro and macro analyses with focus on both the single elements of its manifestation, as well as on the particular combination of its feeling/sensory, cognitive, and behavioural components.

Indeed, we have made considerable progress toward detailed multicomponential ‘mappings’ of various emotions although from the phenomenological perspective emotions are inherently resistant to conceptual capturing, particularly when more than self-reporting evidence is being sought. It is then not surprising that much of the progress has taken place in the neurophysiological ‘mapping’ of emotions, where measurements are more exact and where variables are more easily controllable. Furthermore, if description is also meant to provide or at least to aid in the process of explanation questions of causality must be added and integrated to complicate the overall picture. It is to these causative issues that I now turn my attention as well as to two other factors which are significant for any definition of emotion, namely duration and valence. These are perhaps peripheral and somewhat less controversial elements of emotion when juxtaposed to the more central and hotly debated fundamentals of its components. Still, a description of these three dimensions may well introduce and facilitate a subsequent focus on emotions’ constitutive elements and on their dynamics.

The general cause of emotions was well conceptualized by Aaron Ben-Ze’ev in terms, which are as much common-sensical as they are scientifically valid. He said that “emotions typically occur when *we perceive positive or negative significant changes in our personal situation* – or in that of those related to us. A positive or negative

¹¹ Frijda (2008), 69.

significant change is that which significantly interrupts or improves a smoothly flowing situation relevant to our concerns.”¹² Consequently, emotions emerge as *responses* to such perceived changes, which are characterized by a more or less diffused volition to either welcome the changes or to reject them. An emphasis on the significance of these evaluative processes in the elicitation of emotions constitutes the distinguishing feature of appraisal theories of all kinds, which I examine in greater detail in the next pages. For now, the point is more general as I simply aim to list the number and types of factors that come together in the emergence of emotions, and which involve various possible combinations and results. Thus, the whole process begins with an individual that has distinct drives, appetites, desires, and objectives, who perceives facilitations or resistances to these drives and desires in his interactions with the environment, and who consequently reacts in a potential variety of ‘emotional’ manners given the particular input at stake.

Yet, the challenge within this process involves actually defining the boundaries of the emotion in terms of locating the exact points where an emotion properly begins and where it ends. The issue is indeed more complex than it appears. It would seem that the moment of perception of change should represent the starting point and the completion of the emotional response its ending counterpart. However, human psychology and physiology are rarely neatly or linearly organized. In fact, drives and desires do not only emerge as evaluative standards against which ‘perceptions’ are measured but they also precede and shape those very perceptual experiences of change. Similarly, through subsequent ruminations and memories the duration of an emotion may extend beyond its most immediate emerging circumstances. Then, as Frijda reminds us, the nature of psychological causation is both ‘circular’ and ‘chaotic,’ including ‘feedback loops’ at all levels. For this reason Lewis suggests that we should employ non-linear and dynamic models of explanations which take such ‘processes of vertical causality’ into account.¹³

Still, even in light of this complexity we can make a few basic duration-based distinctions of emotional phenomena in order to facilitate both social communication and psychological analysis. To begin, an *emotion episode* involves “a sequence of behavior and feeling modes that all center around dealing with a particular event.”¹⁴ It

¹² Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 13.

¹³ Lewis (2005), 105-31.

¹⁴ Frijda (2008), 74.

is possible for such episodes to include more than one emotion, consisting for example of a sequential experience of sadness followed by anger or involving the coexistence of two emotions like joy and love contemporaneously. Secondly, emotional attitudes or *sentiments* refer to a latent or dispositional propensity rather than to an occurrent (actual) emotional manifestation. Therefore, although one may have a deep phobia for snakes he will not experience the ‘fear’ associated with this phobia unless in the actual presence of a snake. Similarly, a person may possess an enduring love toward her spouse without a constant experience of a recognizable emotion of ‘love.’ Then, depending on the context the same emotion term, for example jealousy, may refer either to a sentiment, to an emotion, or to both.

Moods and *affective traits* are also distinguishable emotional phenomena. Ben-Ze’ev identifies moods and affective traits as characterized by general intentionality (the attribute of being ‘about’ something) vis-à-vis emotions’ and sentiments’ more specific intentionality. In other words, “the intentionality of moods is not as complex and specific as that of emotions. It is a more primitive type in which the intentional object is diffuse and difficult to specify.” Still, although less specific and less intense than emotions moods involve an occurrent state of emotional arousal, which makes them function as “general background frameworks of the feeling dimension.”¹⁵ On the other hand, affective traits pertain to the general description of an individual’s emotional make-up and thus belong to the realm of personality. In fact, affective traits are obviously included in the common depictions of each of the five classic divisions of personality, namely extroversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. In turn, in those cases where one or more traits significantly impair functioning, we normally make use of a further classification, namely *affective disorders*.

Therefore, to return to the previously highlighted issue of causality, the problem of circularity is clearly evident in the context that emerges from the above given distinction. Indeed, sentiments, moods, affective traits and affective disorders, as longer lasting or as more diffused phenomena, may and usually do shape emergent emotions of all kinds. Clearly, the arrow also points in the opposite direction since various emotions combine to facilitate the emergence of sentiments and moods, as well as to intensify or diminish the intensity of particular affective traits. Then, interactions

¹⁵ Ben-Ze’ev (2000), 87.

between moods and emotions further separate ‘cold’ rational experiences of deliberative judgments from the often ‘hot’ evaluative experiences identified as emotions. These interactions also underlie the fact that emotional phenomena are characterized by a sensation, which is physiologically experienced as a form of arousal in various potential intensities and feelings of a positive or negative kind.

It is in this context of affective variance that emotions are denoted as ‘valenced’, a term widely used to indicate their hedonic tone corresponding to relatively straightforward physiological reactions experienced as pleasant or unpleasant. Thus, for example, the increased heart-rate and sweating associated with fear feel disturbing or unpleasant whereas the full organism’s relaxation constitutive of serenity is clearly experienced to be enjoyable. Consequently and without hesitation, we identify emotions like joy, love, and hope as positive and others like sorrow, anger, and fear as negative. This basic distinction is probably one of the oldest in the history of how humanity has been discussing emotions and is certainly still useful in many relevant contexts. However, at deeper levels of scientific analyses such classifications are simplistic and potentially misleading because they ultimately distort the much more complex nature of emotions. In fact, the affective valence of an emotion is intricately enmeshed with its cognitive defining aspects, which include phenomena like goal-directedness, evaluations, and moral standards. In turn, these cognitive dimensions shape the internal emotional experience, thus restricting or enlarging its valence well beyond its raw hedonic dimension. In this context, Charland’s distinction between a narrower *affect valence* and a larger *emotion valence* seems to be appropriate and beneficial.¹⁶

Furthermore, it is doubtful whether emotion valence should be conceptualized in purely dichotomous terms which measure mutually exclusive positive or negative dimensions. Some emotions are so complex and mixed that it may be difficult to identify their overall valence. Thus, for example, lower-level wishes and drives may come into conflict with higher-level goals and ideals in their emotion-forming interactions, a phenomenon resembling the Freudian tension between the id and the superego.¹⁷ Moreover, even in the context of the narrower concept of affect valence an individual may recognize internal conflicts between different physiological sensations he is experiencing. For example, the approach disposition, which is characteristic of

¹⁶ Charland (2005), 231-54.

¹⁷ Minsky (2006), 81-93, 148.

anger, may feel positive to some degree even while the accompanying increased heart-rate and sweating are experienced as negative. Indeed, emotions are so interesting partly because their nature includes these very self-conflicting, unpredictable and difficult to manage elements. Hence, when applied to emotions, the concept of valence should reflect such intricacies to the highest possible degree. Instead, confusion and conflation in the usage of the term have been common, thus leading some to advocate a much needed refinement of the term and of the concept of *valence*.¹⁸

At the same time, if ‘internal’ valence calls for an expansion of vocabulary ‘external’ valence presents different kinds of issues (I use these locating adjectives to juxtapose the internal evaluations of individuals to the external evaluations of society at large). These distinct forms of valences do not necessarily coincide as evidenced by the fact that the individual who experiences and the one who observes a particular emotion do not always evaluate it in similar fashion. What is clear is that people are more or less constrained by the socially prescribed emotional values of their immediate environments, which are variously internalized. Thus, in order to better focus on this specific object of analysis, historians have devised the term *emotionology* to refer to the ‘emotion rules’ that exist in a particular society at a particular time. Furthermore, to add social-scientific precision to the discussion William Reddy introduced the term *emotives* to describe those forms of societal action and speech that bring into being the very emotional values that they are pointing to.¹⁹ Therefore, rather than functioning merely as descriptive tools *emotives* are social shaping instruments of individuals’ emotions. Clearly, and along with the *emotionology* phenomenon, *emotives* remind us that people’s experiential and interpretative realms of emotion are necessarily constrained by their social environment.

In conclusion of this brief introductory overview I can then re-emphasize that emotions’ complexities are at least tri-dimensional, including physiological, psychological, and sociological inner and inter-dynamics. Emotion has been defined in general terms as a human process with a cognitive-physiological makeup, which is elicited as a response to relevant changes in the context of a social interpersonal environment. Its various components are intimately connected through flexible linkages, which combine according to specific patterns of *synchronization*.²⁰

¹⁸ Colombetti (2005), 103-26.

¹⁹ Reddy (2001).

²⁰ Scherer (2007), 101-26.

Furthermore, emotion is generally recognized as possessing affective and moral valence. It is also a phenomenon that can usually be located in time within the porous boundaries of what are commonly termed *emotion episodes*. With these preliminary signposts in place it is now time to delve into a more thorough examination of emotion's nature, power, and moral significance.

The nature of emotion: features, morality, and function

Any report on the results of the socio-scientific examination of emotions is bound to be selective. Indeed, given the space constraints and the vastness of the available literature on the subject my current examination is no exception. In so doing it may be argued that those aspects I have allowed to emerge from the literature as especially significant are biased towards the purpose in hand, a criticism which I need to address by lending support to my specific selection. The best way to do so is by outlining my trajectory of focalization, which began with a reflection on the definition of emotion and on the history of its examination. It continued with the highlighting of key terms in my definition of emotion which in turn I have associated to three of the core questions, and in some degree to their respective answers, that have characterized the study of emotion in both past and present times. The first term is *totality*, through which I address the question about the nature and characterization of emotion in relation to the never ending debates about its cognitive and feeling/sensory features. The second expression is *response*, which brings both questions of capacity and norm into focus, specifically in terms of what we are able to do and should do about emotions. Finally, the words *change* and *relevance* seem to be most closely related to the functional view of emotion and may guide us in addressing questions pertaining to their use and instrumentality for the happy life.

Having thus identified three important questions with the assistance of key defining terms (which in the case of *totality* also include an initial if very general answer) I next needed to identify those areas of focus that could function as appropriate and scientifically supported responses to these important queries. To assist me in this task I found it helpful to draw a parallel and a contrast between a 'pre-empirical' historical period in the study of emotion and the present scientific time. Of course, and as already outlined, the 'pre-empirical' period was not monolithic in its perspective on emotion, just as the present era also presents its areas of debate and disagreement. Yet, there remains a general trend of emphasis which distinguishes the present from the past

and which may be conceptualized as the distinction between *cognitive* and *non-cognitive* theories of emotions. In other words, although *non-cognitive* theories, more sophisticated and updated than ever, survive in the present day, *cognitive* approaches to emotions function as the dominant model for most respected studies of emotional phenomena. This was not generally the case in the ‘pre-empirical’ stage of study previously examined and in this shift I found the root of my specific selective criteria.

Therefore, the responses I provide to the questions just outlined place particular focus on *cognitive* elements of interpretation and mirror current socio-scientific directions in addressing the nature, ethics, and functions of emotion. In fact, science has demonstrated that emotions are not, as previously believed, purely irrational, ‘beastly,’ and uncontrollable movements of mainly physiological, i.e. non-mental, origin. Instead, and this is my answer to the first question, emotions are essentially *cognitive/feeling-sensory* phenomena which require *cognitive* input. It then follows, to continue in the juxtaposition and to address the second question, that people may exert control and maintain personal responsibility in regulating them because they are not passive victims of externally produced and fully unpredictable phenomena. At the same time, to address my third and final response, emotions are not necessarily irrational and untrustworthy. To the contrary, they can teach us much about ourselves and our environment; hence, they have a significant function in the process of our personal development.

Cognitive necessity

Emotions and deliberative thought processes are clearly different kinds of phenomena. Most people could easily distinguish between the two. In fact, they would describe emotions as mostly intuitive, quick, and affectively ‘charged’ impulsive manifestations whereas thought would be associated with ‘cold’ careful and often elaborate cognitive processes grounded in rationality. If viewed as a stark dichotomy, however, this picture is more fictional than real since no human being reasons only through logic and in a purely emotionally-detached fashion. Furthermore, emotions are not uncontrollable urges, which are wholly severed from the mind’s influence and direction. Both thoughts and emotions are ‘embodied’ and although each is characterized by a different internal structure in relation to feeling and cognition the difference is one of degree rather than of mutual exclusivity.

In stressing the ‘embodied’ nature of emotions scholars underlie, among other things, the centrality of the brain in their emergence. In fact, Damasio has highlighted the significant emotional impairment suffered by people with brain damage.²¹ Further studies have succeeded in developing a proper psychophysiology of emotion through which emotional activity in both peripheral and central nervous systems has been identified and accurately measured.²² Indeed, numerous studies have been especially concerned with emotional processes within the brain. As a result it is now widely recognized that the main seats of emotional activity are both the amygdala and the larger limbic system, located in the sub-cortical region of the brain. At the same time, while it is well established that deliberative ‘thought’ is primarily a function of the higher cortex, science has shown that higher and lower areas of the brain are not insulated from each other. In fact, they are intricately connected as they interact to some extent in most processes of human affect and cognition. For example, sensory processing in the cortex is projected to the amygdala, which in turn “allows it to detect the presence of danger, while the amygdala’s projections to the cortex...allow the amygdala to influence cortical processing very early in an emotional episode.”²³ This is then only one of several physiological indications that both sensation and cognition are constitutive of emotion.

On the other hand, it may be rightly argued that sensory processes are quite distinct from evaluative reflection. To avoid confusion it is then important to specify what the term *cognition* is meant to signify. By *cognition* I make reference to any aspect of human ‘information processing,’ *whether conscious or unconscious*, including memory, concept formation, and language as well as attention, perception, and mental imagery. Ulric Neisser, who originally coined the term *cognitive psychology*, described *cognition* as “all processes by which the sensory input is transformed, reduced, elaborated, stored, recovered, and used. It is concerned with these processes even when they operate in the absence of relevant stimulation, as in images and hallucinations...”²⁴ Therefore, arguing that emotions are necessarily and centrally cognitive does not imply that the cognitive processes at stake must be identified within the realm of awareness. Indeed, such processes may be and often are too quick for singling out, and in many instances are automatically generated. Failure

²¹ Damasio (1995), 1-79.

²² Larsen, et al. (2008), 182.

²³ LeDeux and Phelps (2008), 166.

²⁴ Neisser (1967), 4.

to understand this distinction has often lengthened and confused debates on the primacy of cognition or of sensation in relation to the nature of emotions. Thus, it is in this sense that I argue, as others now do, that emotions are necessarily and centrally cognitive.

Such a view may be contrasted to those perspectives that understand cognition not only as secondary to feeling in the experience of emotion, but also as ultimately unnecessary because intervening as a separate dimension which is not inherently affective. Silvan Tomkins describes this view in these terms,

Affect are sets of muscles, vascular, and glandular responses located in the face and also widely distributed through the body, which generate sensory feedback which is inherently 'acceptable' or 'unacceptable'. These organized responses are triggered at subcortical centers where specific 'programs' for each distinct affect are stored. If we are happy when we smile and sad when we cry why are we reluctant to agree that smiling or crying is primarily what it means to be happy or sad?²⁵

Matthew Elliot, in a book which provided great insights for the present examination and which will be later described in greater detail, labels theories of emotion of this kind as *non-cognitive*. Yet, the term should not be understood as referring to a necessary absence of cognition in the occurrence of emotional phenomena; rather, it indicates that emotions may take place independently of cognition. In other words, "There is no argument as to whether cognition is a sufficient cause of emotion; the question is whether it is a necessary cause."²⁶

Tomkins and Izard are two of the remaining scholars who have followed in the footsteps of William James, the great philosopher and father of modern psychology, who had been one of the first to attempt an empirical explanation of emotion in the new scientific era of psychology. Thus, another label for this family of theories is *James-Lange* theories or also *affective* theories of emotion given the primacy of physiological sensation which they advocate over cognition.²⁷ James viewed emotion as a function of motor and sensory areas of the neocortex, and as *results* of the body's physiological changes we associate with emotions. He said: "My theory ... is that the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion... we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we

²⁵ Tomkins (1970), 105-06.

²⁶ Izard, et al. (1984), 5.

²⁷ In this text, whenever used in juxtaposition to or in association with the adjective 'cognitive', 'affective' is meant to underline the physiological (feeling/sensory) dimension of emotion vis-à-vis its cognitive one. Instead, when used in any other context 'affect' simply functions as a synonym of emotion.

strike, afraid because we tremble.”²⁸ A significant implication of this theory was the association of each emotion with a unique physiological manifestation, which functioned as the primary element of each emotion. Thus, in James’ view, which was dominant in the first half of the 20th century, *feeling* and *sensation* came to define affect more closely and more directly than cognition ever could.

Contrary to this view, cognitive theories of emotion emphasize a reversed order of primacy where cognition precedes arousal. These views started to emerge in the sixties, particularly through Magda Arnold and Richard Lazarus, but it was only in the eighties that they began to take root and to seriously challenge the previous dominance of non-cognitive theories of emotions.²⁹ Lazarus summarized his views in these terms, “I offer the following manifesto for cognitive theorists that sums up the issue: emotion and cognition are inseparable...cognition is thus the key to emotion and to integrated human functioning.”³⁰ To be sure, while cognitive theories took the ascendancy over their non-cognitive counterparts the latter did not completely disappear. In fact, the often heated debate between Lazarus and Zajonc in the eighties significantly polarized the field and some respected scholars, like the previously mentioned Tomkins and Izard, defended Zajonc’s non-cognitive position.³¹ Almost three decades after that famous and prolonged discussion a few non-cognitive perspectives are still existent and to some degree have been revived as they have encountered renewed commendation.³² Still, cognitive theories of emotion are undeniably dominant as they keep being refined in light of those non-cognitive dynamics that invariably constitute the wider picture of emotional phenomena.³³

Specifically, cognitive theories of emotion place *appraisal* at the centre of the emotion phenomenon. *Appraisal*, a term first used in the emotion context by Magda Arnold, refers to those conscious or unconscious dynamics of evaluation and judgment, which give an emotion its particular identity and ‘tone.’³⁴ As such, appraisal involves recognition of value in a particular object, particularly as it relates to personal goals and to their achievement. At the same time it also involves evaluation of the perceived

²⁸ James (1884), 189-90.

²⁹ Most cognitivists would recognize these publications as the foundations of modern appraisal theories: Arnold (1960) and Lazarus (1966).

³⁰ Lazarus (1990), 9.

³¹ See Lazarus (1984), 124-29; Zajonc (1984), 117-23; Tomkins (1984), 163-96; and Izard (1984), 17-37.

³² Prinz (2005), 363-83.

³³ Clore and Ortony (2008), 628-41.

³⁴ For Arnold’s earliest usage of the term see Arnold (1960), 171.

change that the individual is in the process of experiencing vis-à-vis these very same goals and desires. As Keith Oatley puts it, “emotions occur at the junctures of our inner concerns with the outer world; they are evaluations of events in terms of their importance for our concerns. This importance derives jointly from genes, individual experience, and society.”³⁵ Thus, we experience a negative emotion upon perceiving that our goals or concerns are being obstructed or otherwise threatened. On the other hand, progression and facilitation towards goals give rise to positive emotions.

It is then through appraisals that emotions acquire their unique intentional character. Furthermore, appraisals emerge in a context of desires, drives, beliefs, and values that combine to form the large background of dispositional motives against which an object or event will acquire emotional meaning. In this sense emotions may be viewed as pre-occurrent dispositional states that protract a particular perspective in perceiving and interpreting the world. In another sense emotions are occurrent manifestations, which involve or cause motivation in action or belief, whether as general ‘activation states’ or as specific ‘action tendencies.’ Thus, in relation to motivation, emotions can be “defined as event-instigated or object-instigated states of action readiness with control precedence.”³⁶ Therefore, they are in a sense voluntary, although their volition emerges automatically and impulsively rather than through deliberative foresight. We then return full circle to one of the core questions that each appraisal theory needs to address, namely whether it is appropriate to speak of appraisals in a motivational context characterized by unconscious impulses rather than by conscious planning. Responses vary but generally fit within one category of at least three possible suggested approaches to this question.

In the first place, as already stated, since cognitive processes can be automatic and unconscious they may occur at extreme speeds.³⁷ In other words, they “can precede almost any directed action pattern” without emerging into awareness. As some have argued it would need to be so because “to withdraw from a painful stimulus requires the retrieval of a plan of action for withdrawal...similarly, approaching something requires an evaluation of the object being approached, as well as a plan of action.”³⁸ These processes may very well be ‘mindless’; still, they often originate in previous patterns of learned associations. In fact, through practice and experience, the

³⁵ Oatley (2004), 43.

³⁶ Frijda (2008), 72.

³⁷ Moors and Houwer (2007), 11-50.

³⁸ Stein, et al. (2008), 579.

cognitive appraisals that are constitutive of emotion can become increasingly rapid and automatic.³⁹ At the same time, it is true that reflexes and affective reactions of various kinds are based on ‘low-level’ *imprinted* processes. For example, studies have shown that people naturally seem to respond more favourably to smooth over sharp-edged objects.⁴⁰ Similarly, a clear preference for familiar over novel stimuli has been repeatedly demonstrated by studies of minimal conflict social situations where prevalent in-group bias confirms this general tendency.⁴¹ Such ‘low-level’ processes are undeniable, yet they do not necessarily create a problem for appraisal theories. Indeed, these early reactions involve undifferentiated affect, and as such are not yet to be considered full-blown emotions.⁴²

In addition to redefining automaticity as a cognitive process, a second approach to the issue aims at integrating cognition with affect as parallel and interacting elements of the phenomenon. These theories are usually based on a ‘dual-process’ model that distinguishes between purely affective and other elements in emotion, which are more directly cognitive. The resulting improved cognitive theories have come to be expressed in a variety of forms and details. For example, some theorists now distinguish between “rule-based processing” and “associative processing,” or between systematic and heuristic kinds of thinking. This latter view claims that particular emotions can be elicited simply by affective association with a previous experience where the same emotion had emerged.⁴³ Other models draw sharper distinctions by distinguishing between emotion proper and unconscious affect, where the former is defined as a conscious, memorable state that is only instrumental in providing information and the latter is identified as the actual drive, which triggers behaviour. The point of contact between the two is found in the “affective residue” that emerges *from* emotion to constitute in turn the unconscious affective drive that motivates action.⁴⁴ Still others emphasize the role of ‘low-level’ reactions as a component of the wider response system that constitutes the impetus for emotion.⁴⁵

³⁹ Siemer and Reisenzein (2007), 1-20.

⁴⁰ Bar and Neta (2006), 645-48.

⁴¹ Tajfel, et al. (1971), 149-78.

⁴² Ortony, et al. (2005), 174.

⁴³ Smith and Kirby (2001), 129.

⁴⁴ Baumeister, et al. (2007), 167-203.

⁴⁵ Huron, for example, situates emotions in the context of responses to ‘low-level’ expectations. See Huron (2006), 355-62.

Some theories maintain a distinction between ‘low-level’ and ‘high-level’ processes, but attempt their integration in a single-network model. For example, as already suggested, emotions have been defined as transformed undifferentiated affect through appraisal, where both feeling and perceptual framing can occur automatically.⁴⁶ Another approach understands levels of processing to be ‘iterative,’ namely to involve a sequence of successive processes that give rise to ‘the evaluative cycle.’ In this context the first few iterations may involve only automatic evaluations whereas appraisals become more reflective as iterations increase in number.⁴⁷ In physiological terms this means that information processes function “as a series of recursive feedback loops that involve additional regions of the cortex as the process continues. With continual interaction of limbic and cortical areas, evaluations that start out as automatic become situated and progressively refined.”⁴⁸ According to this and other theories here outlined, emotions emerge only when ‘high-level’ processes, conscious or unconscious, become involved in the network.

Finally, a third way to address the issue of automaticity involves the removal of the phenomenological distinction between affect and cognition. According to this holistic view of emotion the intricacies of the phenomenon are such that any bracketing out of its components will invariably display a skewed picture on the nature of the subject being examined. In other words, new concepts are needed rather than simplistic distinctions between affect and cognition in order to describe such multi-componential bodily processes. One concept, which has been devised to describe emotional experiences more accurately, is “embodied cognition”.⁴⁹ “Enactive appraisal” is a different term used to address a similar concept. What unites these approaches is the objective to make appraisal more corporeal than mental by placing greater focus on the body as the instrument of appraisals. Specifically, it has been argued that through *enactive appraisal* perception and action are deeply integrated so that “our capacity to perceive presupposes the ability to orient in the environment i.e. an ability strictly dependent on having a body.”⁵⁰ Others have also recognized the importance of motor representations particularly as they underline emotion recognition as well as action

⁴⁶ Ortony, et al. (2005), 179-89.

⁴⁷ Cunningham and Zelazo (2007), 102.

⁴⁸ Clore and Ortony (2008), 638.

⁴⁹ Niedenthal, et al. (2005), 192-94.

⁵⁰ Colombetti (2007), 530.

representation and foresight in social contexts.⁵¹ Thus, one of the main challenges for these theoretical approaches of embodiment involves devising descriptive models of emotion, which fully integrate all its constitutive elements not only physiologically, but also socially.

In fact, *enactive appraisal* approaches function as effective reminders of the necessary social-embeddedness of emotions, of which it may be easy to lose sight if the debate remains focused exclusively on issues of affective and cognitive morphology. I return to this topic in greater detail in a later section, but for now I simply want to underline that this is a significant implication of the ‘enactive appraisal’ approach. In short, not only are the appraisals inherent to emotions nuanced by the larger affective reality of the individual but also all constitutive elements of emotions are socially nuanced in their emergence and manifestation since the experiencing body is regularly situated in a temporal-spatial and interpersonal context, which makes up its very existence. This is certainly a further complicating factor in emotion analysis, but at least it contributes to ground the ongoing discussion on the relative roles of affect and cognition phenomenologically.⁵² In this manner it clarifies the subject entity of emotion by removing the mistaken implied idea of a cognitive homunculus or of a bundle of neural activity, and replaces it with a feeling, sensorimotor, and self-conscious individual, who possesses a social identity.

Then, although several recent theories have supplied many new questions and more complexities, it is encouraging to begin to witness a departure from the polarized debates that have characterized the 20th century study of the affective-cognitive dynamics of emotion. This is clearly an indication of the progress in the field, which has mostly moved away from chicken and egg kinds of arguments to more sophisticated examinations of the intricate dynamics of emotions. It follows that it is now rare to find scholars who deny the necessity of appraisals, however defined, in the emergence of emotions. Similarly, it is not as easy to classify particular theories of emotions as either ‘cognitive’ or ‘non-cognitive’ given the wider and co-existing recognition now attributed to affective factors, which has contributed to make the picture more complex. In other words, we can conclude that the attention has now moved from the ‘what is necessary’ to the ‘how is it necessary’ in the emergence of

⁵¹ Gallese (2005), 41-44.

⁵² For a general survey and analysis on the phenomenology of emotion see Solomon (2006), 291-309.

emotional phenomena. It is also for this reason that I identify *cognitive necessity* rather than *cognitive primacy* as a key defining characteristic of emotion.

In summary, modern socio-scientific studies on emotion have broken down the ancient separation which associated emotion with ‘reasonless’ body and reason with ‘emotionless’ mind. It is now recognized that emotions are inherently cognitive since they require perceptions and especially appraisals in order to fully emerge. To be sure, these appraisals mostly take shape at the subconscious level of awareness and they frequently do so with rapid automaticity, but such unreflective dynamics do not necessarily invalidate those theories that place ‘appraisals’ at the centre of the experience. In fact, these potential problems are usually resolved by appealing to the speed of cognition, to dual-process models of emotion, or to ‘embodied cognition’ respectively. Thus, emotions are as much about what we ‘subconsciously’ think and value as they are about what we explicitly feel. It is my next objective to explore how this conclusion affects our personal responsibility in relation to the emotions that we experience.

Personal responsibility

Non-cognitive theories of emotions have been criticized not only for their physiological conclusions but also for their philosophical implications. One such implication, as it has been argued, involves the removal of individual accountability for the emotions experienced by the individual. In fact, “in a non-cognitive approach, emotion cannot be evaluated; one emotion cannot be said to be more appropriate than another...Pain or bodily feelings are morally neutral and cannot be classified as justifiable or unjustifiable.”⁵³ In other words, physiological reactions of an uncontrollable nature, as emotions are held to be by some non-cognitivists, are amoral, at least in their emergent state. Therefore, not only is it impossible to evaluate emotions in their pre-expressive condition but it is also erroneous to apply moral responsibility on individuals for erratic stimulus-response physiological manifestations which in a sense are comparable to nervous ticks. At most, moral responsibility may be applied to the potentially controllable behaviour triggered by emotional phenomena; yet, even in these cases, accountability is necessarily dependent on the intensity of the emotion being experienced. Indeed, if the physiological reaction is especially strong it

⁵³ Elliott (2005), 28.

will unavoidably force itself to find expression in the context of whatever circumstances are present at the time of actualization.

To be sure, this characterization of a non-cognitivist perspective is somewhat simplistic. Both philosophers and psychologists of this persuasion have recognized that emotions have moral valence and that individuals should engage their emotions according to the moral standards which they have internalized. However, in this context moral interventions are mostly to occur as late or post-emotion attempts to allow, suppress, or redirect those emotional manifestations or behaviours, which seem to emerge by necessity. Thus, they apply personal responsibility to emotional expression proper rather than to the preceding realm of emotional causation. In other words, emotions are still viewed as ‘forces’ that come upon an individual, and which need to be controlled a posteriori rather than prevented a priori in the very initial stages of the process. Emotions or ‘passions’ differ from ‘actions’ in that “the individual feels the actions or inclinations for them passively coming over him or her, rather than flowing from their initiative.”⁵⁴ With few exceptions, Aristotle being a notable one, most past philosophers and modern non-cognitivists seem to subscribe to this perspective.

Instead and as already suggested, appraisal theories of emotion advocate a degree of personal responsibility which extends from the causative to the expressive factors of emotional phenomena. Therefore, in the recurring context of a nature versus nurture debate, cognitive theories aim to strike a more balanced conclusion vis-à-vis the arguments of their non-cognitive counterparts, which are generally skewed on the side of nature. Indeed, while they recognize the biological basis of emotion and the unconditioned nature of some emotion-causing stimuli appraisal theorists add a significant ingredient, namely *concern relevance*. This factor “points at emergent properties that reside not in the positive or negative stimuli as such, but in a more involved interaction.”⁵⁵ At the core of these interactions lie not only drives but also beliefs, values, desires, and commitments for whose internal presence one holds at least a measure of responsibility. Indeed, one can only speak of a degree of responsibility because cognitive freedom is evidently constrained by a variety of physiological and social factors limiting the alternatives to which one is exposed to in the development of various beliefs and commitments. Thus, if one judges voluntariness to be a prerequisite

⁵⁴ Frijda (2008), 68.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 78.

for moral responsibility the extent to which an individual's existing cognitive evaluative structure is voluntary, as manifested in beliefs, values, and desires, is at least debatable.

Yet, and without delving into the age-long debate about the voluntariness of belief, or between determinism and free will, we can only conclude that “the fact that few, if any, beliefs are the object of choice does not threaten the claim that many beliefs are *sufficiently* voluntary to be subject to evaluation in the sense of moral evaluation.”⁵⁶ In other words, to follow the reasoning of Descartes, William James, and many prominent Catholic thinkers, if our thoughts, values, and beliefs embody our will, then our emotions, when triggered by these same beliefs and values, function as manifestations of our will, and as such may be evaluated.⁵⁷ Furthermore, several modern philosophers underline the connection between responsibility and cognitive mediation in emotions by broadening the discussion beyond pre-existing beliefs. Thus, Solomon for example, states that “the key to overcoming the passivity view of emotions is to appreciate the power and pervasiveness of reflection in our emotional life. If we continue to feel passive with regard to our emotions, then that is something that we choose to do.”⁵⁸ Others, like Oakley and Schlossberger, stress the need to morally own our emotions by extending our understanding of ‘responsibility’ beyond the issue of immediate control over their emergence.⁵⁹ What they all stress is the centrality of cognition in emotions and the existentialist tenet “that man is responsible for his passion.”⁶⁰

But to return to psychology, and to put it in computer related terms, emotions are as much about software and data as they are about hardware. In fact, emotions involve “the structure (properties, capacities, propensities) of the individual; incoming and stored information; and online dynamic interaction with the environment.”⁶¹ In this context, even if structural components are assumed to be fixed individual choices significantly shape a variety of other factors such as the kind of information the person is exposed to, the nature of the information that will be stored, and various accompanying patterns of individual interaction with the environment. In fact, even a relatively fixed structural component of personality associated with emotional

⁵⁶ Zagzebski (1996), 68.

⁵⁷ A very brief summary of this philosophical position may be found in *Ibid.*, 61-69.

⁵⁸ Solomon (2007), 198.

⁵⁹ See Oakley (1992), 122-90, and Schlossberger (1992), 112-39.

⁶⁰ Priest (2001), 32.

⁶¹ Frijda (2008), 70.

propensities, i.e. *temperament*, or “a set of hypothetical constructs describing individual differences in reactivity and self-regulation,” does not rigidly predetermine emotional behaviour. Indeed, when studying the association of temperament with social adjustment (which involves emotional ‘appropriateness’) we learn that “the predictive links...are of a moderate size.”⁶² In other words, there are other factors beyond biological predisposition, which significantly affect the make-up of one’s emotional life.

Specifically, cognitive perspectives emphasize unconscious appraisals as the paramount factor in this equation. Emerging from recurrent patterns of evaluation, which in the long run become automatic, unconscious appraisals ultimately form both our dispositional and occurrent motives for emotions. It follows, perhaps in too simple terms since the process is often long and difficult, that in order to change emotions an individual needs to change the evaluations and beliefs that lie at their root. Since beliefs and desires to a large extent are learned it should also be possible for them to be unlearned or at least modified. Various forms of psychotherapy focus exactly on this objective in order to facilitate emotional health and to dispel negative patterns of affective coping. As Mathew Elliott explains it, when we are aware of an emotion, “we must acknowledge what it tells us about our belief. If it is a belief that we dislike or hold as morally objectionable we can begin to work to change this belief.”⁶³ What is entailed by this affirmation is that whatever we believe about the developmental origin of our emotions we are at least responsible for intervening over them when we recognize that they are morally unacceptable.

Clearly, our power over our emotions should not be overstated because involuntary life events, particular aspects of upbringing, and genetic factors may all exert significant impairing influence over emotional experiences and over our capacity to manipulate them. Obviously, the situation is particularly difficult in cases of emotional pathology where the horizons of change appear especially limited. Notwithstanding this fact, and particularly in the realm of normal populations, “we *are* our emotions” in the words of Robert Solomon,

as much as we are our thoughts and actions. They are sometimes...*strategies* for getting along in the world. They are a means of motivating, guiding, influencing, and sometimes manipulating our own actions and attitudes...Accordingly, we are to a significant extent

⁶² Bates, et al. (2008), 485-86.

⁶³ Elliott (2005), 37.

responsible for our emotions, something that we often deny for the most self-serving of reasons, to make excuses for ourselves.⁶⁴

Therefore, particularly in light of the potentially destructive consequences of some emotions, many scholars of emotions are increasingly turning their attention to *emotion regulation*.

Emotion regulation usually refers to the process of control of one's emotions, although it is indeed possible to think of a parallel process of extrinsic regulation of others' emotions. Furthermore, it is important to remember that 'emotion regulation' should not be mistaken to imply an independent process, which is separate and subsequent to the 'pure' experience of emotion. In fact, some have convincingly argued that emotion and emotion regulation are concurrent processes, which are not separable in functional terms.⁶⁵ In other words, given the fact that cortical inhibitions are structurally in place prior to our experience of emotional phenomena, regulation is bound to shape emotion in all stages of its manifestation, namely in the occurrent, and pre or post-occurrent phases. Notwithstanding this complexity, which makes emotion regulation harder to pin down, the concept is theoretically useful in the context of description of emotional dynamics. In fact, scholarly discussion on the topic has blossomed and emotion regulation is currently being addressed with unprecedented levels of detail and sophistication.

One of the key figures in the field is James Gross, the editor of the *Handbook of Emotion Regulation*. His 'modal model' of emotion directly addresses the many kinds of regulating processes that can take place in connection with emotional experience and conveniently situates them in a coherent yet not simplistic order.⁶⁶ Gross begins by heuristically distinguishing between sequential core features of emotions before locating various forms of regulation at different points of focus throughout the trajectory of the emotion process. Indeed, regulations may variously be distributed throughout the emotional phenomenon since they can take place at a single phase only, in particular combinations at various phases, or at all four phases of the emotional experience. Specifically, Gross identifies the four phases of emotional phenomena as *situation, attention, appraisal, and response*. In this context he further identifies five families of emotion regulation strategies, which are individually associated with these

⁶⁴ Solomon (2007), 3.

⁶⁵ Campos, et al. (2004), 377-94.

⁶⁶ The summary of this model, which I present in these pages is mostly extracted from Gross (2008), 497-512.

four stages of emotion as well as with a ‘pre-emotion’ preparatory phase, namely *situation selection*. The initial regulation mode of the *situation* level is *situation modification* whereas for the *attention* phase *attentional deployment* functions as the main regulatory intervention. Finally, *cognitive change* and *response modulation* function as the regulation strategies for the *appraisal* and *response* dimensions respectively.⁶⁷

In the first place, through *situation selection*, an individual attempts to direct an emotional trajectory which is yet to originate by seeking or by avoiding situations that are believed to trigger specific desirable or undesirable emotions. Of course, the person’s ability to make such choices will vary according to the particular setting being examined. For example, the selection of a movie to watch on television and the avoidance of one’s boss at work are not situations at equal levels on a hypothetical scale of freedom to select one’s situation. Still, within variously constrained social contexts emotional prediction based on personal experience is at least one factor that affects the innumerable choices of situation exposure encountered in daily life. To be sure, the degree of emotional predictive accuracy involved in these decisions need not be significant in order for them to occur; in fact, studies have shown that people often perceive a potential emotional trajectory through skewing biases of various kinds.⁶⁸ Yet, as Gross points out, “even if we had perfect information regarding past and future emotional responses to situations, there would remain the thorny issue of how to appropriately weight short-term benefits of emotion regulation versus longer-term costs.”⁶⁹ Indeed, one could argue that these are the sort of choices that make life both challenging and rewarding.

On the other hand, through *situation modification*, the focus shifts from complete avoidance or exposure to circumstances to various attempts for their amelioration. These endeavours may take different forms, but their general purpose involves the *manipulation* of a particular situation’s emotional impact. For example, if an individual fears encountering a usually grumpy superior at work he may attempt to influence the nature of the situation by straightening out papers on the desk prior to his boss’ visit. Alternatively, or in addition to it, by paying close attention to the superior’s words the employee may demonstrate that he holds his opinion in particularly high

⁶⁷ See also Gross (1998), 271-99 and Gross and Thompson (2007), 3-24.

⁶⁸ For studies showing exaggerated predictions of negative affectivity see Gilbert, et al. (1998), 617-38. For other studies focusing on biases in predictions of happiness see Kahneman (2000), 702-08.

⁶⁹ Gross (2008), 502.

regard. Similarly, the person may enquire about the recent victorious game of the boss' favourite football team and show enthusiasm in discussing the topic. Modifications of this kind involve an effort to prevent or decrease the predicted anger of the employer, which, if successful, tend to diminish the fear experienced by the employee. In other words, these actions aim to influence external circumstances in relation to potential emotional processes, thus leading to modifications of the characteristics of an emotion triggering situation. To be sure, in some cases the changes involve such degrees of situational modification that in all practicality a whole new situation is brought into being. For this reason it may not always be easy to distinguish between *situation selection* and *situation modification*, although in most circumstances the difference between the two will be apparent.

With *attentional deployment* the focus of regulation shifts from the external environment to internal mental processes. Gross explains that *attentional deployment* is "an internal version of situation selection, in that attention is used to select which of many possible 'internal situations' are active for an individual at any point in time."⁷⁰ Thus, to return to our example of the angry boss, an employee may choose to focus his attention on whatever positive messages are being expressed by his superior, albeit far and few. This kind of positive focus is emotionally efficacious if it helps to reduce the fear that the individual is experiencing upon encountering his boss. Since the positive nature of the boss' message is objectively lacking or minor this form of attentional intervention can be identified as a kind of *distraction* from emotionally charged stimuli, one of the most common strategies of *attentional deployment* that even infants regularly use. In fact, and in support of its regulating efficacy, it has been shown that infants' ability to shift attention from emotionally frustrating stimuli to positive areas of focus is correlated with later qualities of social adaptation.⁷¹ On the other hand, *ruminatio*n over emotionally-charged stimuli generally tends to correlate with the negative symptoms associated with depression.⁷² In fact, *ruminatio*n extends and thus intensifies a particular emotional impact, but since its occurrence is often characterized by inflexibility over the powers of volition *ruminatio*n is usually associated with emotional pathology rather than with constructive emotion regulation.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 502-03.

⁷¹ Rothbart and Bates (2006), 130-31.

⁷² Spasojevic and Alloy (2001), 25-37.

If the gist of *attentional deployment* is change in focus, the essence of *cognitive change* is change in meaning. Specifically, since individuals attribute meaning to emotionally relevant stimuli through appraisals *cognitive change* intervenes “by changing how one thinks either about the situation itself or about one’s capacity to manage the demands it poses.”⁷³ In our example, the fearful employee may choose to explain the boss’ unpleasant behaviour as a manifestation of stress caused by his difficult family circumstances or by serious health problems rather than as a direct and personal attack expressing displeasure and anger over the employee’s job performance. Whether realistic or not, *reappraisals* of this kind have been shown to generally lead to a decrease of negative emotion experience.⁷⁴ Furthermore, preliminary studies suggest that *reappraisals* do not significantly impair other concurrently functioning cognitive processes like memory.⁷⁵ Indeed, *reappraisal* may function as one of the most effective strategies in emotion regulation although it makes sense to suppose that its impact will be indirectly related to one’s level of certainty in assessing the nature of any apparent reality. In other words, since reappraisals usually involve the application of readings to available perceptual evidence which appear ‘less obvious’ in the context of normal patterns of evaluation, its emotional impact will likely be larger where greater flexibility exists to accept a reality that justifies different directions of empirical interpretation.

Finally, the strategy of *response modulation* takes place at the latest stage of the emotion process or whenever an individual attempts to directly influence his already initiated physiological or behavioural response tendencies. The employee who makes an effort to look at his boss in the eyes while the latter is speaking is attempting to modulate the fear response by hiding it behind a behaviour that is associated with assertiveness and self-security rather than fear. Therefore, *response modulations* often take the shape of *expressive suppression* of those emotional manifestations that are considered inappropriate for whatever reason. Interestingly, contrary to the highlighted evidence on *reappraisals*, *expressive suppression* is associated with both social and cognitive costs in the course of concurrent activities. For example, partners in social psychological experiments expressed greater discomfort when interacting with

⁷³ Gross (2008), 503.

⁷⁴ Gross (1998), 284-85.

⁷⁵ Richards and Gross (2000), 418.

suppressors than when engaging with non-suppressors.⁷⁶ Similarly, various studies have shown that recall of material presented during a time of emotional suppression was significantly worse than in circumstances unregulated by suppression.⁷⁷ Then, if at all possible it would seem that it is preferable to intervene on emotions at the earlier stages of *appraisal* and *attention* rather than in the later stage of *response*. At the same time some preliminary evidence indicates that patterns of emotion regulation may include both effortful as well as automatic unconscious interventions, thus making the modulating of regulations partially elusive to conscious awareness and guidance.⁷⁸

In summary, emotion regulation is a process characterized by potential multiple stages and multiple modalities of intervention, which are used to modulate our emotional life, both in its experience and in its expression. Its wide extension on the trajectory of emotion, from its pre-emotional to its post-emotional ends, captures the essence of appraisal theories in their relation to personal responsibility about emotions. Since emotions only emerge in the specific cognitive contexts, which characterize individuals, humans are indeed responsible, whether fully or partially, for the emotions that they experience. Thus, people produce their emotions first through background beliefs, values, and desires on which subsequent conscious or unconscious appraisals are dependent. Secondly, they uniquely shape them through patterns of attention, of situation selection, situation modification or response modulation. At the same time it must be remembered that these phenomena take place in the context of broader or narrower constraints of a physiological or environmental nature.

To be sure, this whole regulatory process is built on the premise that emotions play a significant enough role in our existence to warrant the use of our resources and energy in attempting to control them. In fact, as we are engaged in the managing of our emotions we learn to discern between those emotional manifestations which are destructive and dysfunctional and those which are constructive and developmentally instrumental. Furthermore, we realize that such instrumentality often centres in the epistemic value of emotions from which we extract 'teachings' about our reality, whether subjective or objective, and whether internal or external. In other words, through emotions we come to know ourselves as well as our environments. It is indeed this topic, the epistemic instrumentality of emotions, which represents the next area of

⁷⁶ Butler, et al. (2003), 52, 61-62.

⁷⁷ Richards and Gross (2000), 414, 18, 20-22.

⁷⁸ Mauss, et al. (2007), 699-700, 06-07.

focus in my analysis. Then, in the upcoming section, I highlight the last of the three selected points of departure between modern science and past philosophy in relation to the understanding of emotions.

Developmental instrumentality

In the context of the master-slave metaphor that characterized the reason-emotion dichotomy of ages past it is hardly surprising that the pedagogical function of emotions was judged to be minor or null. In fact, when viewed as non-cognitive irrational bodily movements that are schematically located at the opposite end of reflective reason emotion emerged primarily as an obstacle rather than as a catalyst to the pursuit of truth. Then, within this particular conceptual framework it was the exercise of the purer and higher capacities of the mind, soul, or reason, which led to the acquisition of truth. Emotions were not to teach; they were rather to be taught. The conceptual extension of this view involved an association of emotions with irrationality and moral suspicion, a perspective which exerted a high degree of influence on much post-enlightenment ‘positivist’ thinking although hotly opposed by such thinkers as Hume and Pascal. Hence, modern scholars of emotions have often encountered resistance in their attempts to recast emotions under a more positive light, perhaps finding further obstacles as a consequence of the publicity received by the prevalence and symptoms of various debilitating emotional disorders. Still, the breadth, depth, and academic relevance of current literature on such topics as ‘emotions and ethics’ and ‘emotional intelligence’ highlight the fact that we have largely overcome our anti-emotion prejudices of the past as we study emotions with greater accuracy and with finer discernment.

At the same time, while much has been done to shed light on the positive function of emotions there is yet more that remains to be examined. Given the breadth and complexity of the subject, which necessarily involves multiple areas of inquiry and conceptualization, this is only to be expected. Therefore, the issue of instrumentality may be approached from a variety of perspectives and emphases. For example, the subject may be examined with particular reference to the role of rationality, physiology, ethics, identity, perception, culture, or some other factor. Thus, in this brief overview I can only scratch the surface of those questions that address the where, when, and how of the human value of emotions. For this purpose it is useful to begin with a general organizing schema, such as Ben Ze’ev classification of emotions into three main

functional areas, which include the *indicative*, the *mobilizing*, and the *communicative*. Yet, as Ben Ze'ev recognizes, the foundations for this distinction are not original to his thought; instead, they were laid out by Charles Darwin in one of the earliest scientific studies on the evolutionary function of emotion: *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*.⁷⁹

In this work and through extensive observations Darwin concluded that emotions had evolutionary advantages because they motivated adaptive behaviours like flight and procreation. For example, fear energized potentially life-saving escapes from predators and lust allowed sexual reproduction of the species to continue. In this sense emotions mobilized needed resources. Furthermore, he saw emotions as modes of signalling and communication, which conferred survival advantages to both individual organisms and to groups. In this second sense they indicated circumstances of danger or highlighted other relevant stimuli to the individual while communicating a similar need for attention to other individuals and groups, who were present on the 'emotional' scene. More recent studies have both supported Darwin's conclusions and extended his paradigm of evolutionary functionality to emotions like joy and embarrassment.⁸⁰ At the same time, other scholars have warned that although "functional advantages of emotions can readily be thought of; that does not make these advantages actually occur, nor do they actually explain the emotions' origin."⁸¹

Parenthetically, I should underline that although Darwin's evidence for the evolutionary function of emotion was later utilized in support of several non-cognitive theories of causation the scope and implications of the 'indicative' function are currently understood to be much larger than and not necessarily bound to the limited issue of affective or cognitive primacy. In fact, since it has been abundantly shown that emotions involve unconscious appraisal processes, the presence of an emotional phenomenon is indicative not only of the specific activating perception but also of various elements of background information included in its constitutive appraisals. Indeed, as evaluations are shaped by internal beliefs and values, which to some extent lie beneath the realm of consciousness, emotions provide potentially relevant input for

⁷⁹ Ben-Ze'ev (2000), 168.

⁸⁰ The most prominent psychologist who has followed in Darwin's footsteps by regularly defending the innate versus the cultural nature of emotional expressions is Paul Ekman. See Ekman (1984), 319-44. For a theory about the evolutionary function of the 'positive emotions' see Fredrickson and Branigan (2001), 133-35. An argument for the evolutionary function of embarrassment is found in Keltner and Buswell (1997), 258-63.

⁸¹ Frijda (2008), 81.

the identification of both nature and relative hierarchy of the said values and beliefs. Emotional explorations and analyses of this kind have undoubtedly been at the forefront of clinical interventions for emotional disorders where they have generally been effective in facilitating treatment.⁸² To be sure, ‘emotional processing’ is both post-emotional and reflective thus differing somewhat from processes inherent in the absorption of automatic and unreflective information concurrent to the experience of emotion. Still, whether obtained through unreflective or reflective processes, and whether available immediately or only subsequently, the identifiable information which accompanies emotions usually possesses some measure of epistemic value.

Similarly, current conceptualizations of the mobilizing and communicative functions of emotions have broadened in scope since Darwin’s stage-setting analysis. In fact, our whole understanding of the instrumentality of emotions has increased in accuracy and complexity as emotional functions have come to intersect in intricate patterns of mutual relationship and even of dependency. In this more advanced yet more conceptually entangled era the *self* has emerged as the core conceptual pivot around which all emotional experiences rotate. Indeed, in many current theories it is the preservation and enhancement of the *self* in its unity, as a biologically-centred cognitive and social construct, which drives both emergence and expression of all emotional experiences. The *self* then lies at the root of the mobilizing function of emotion as a ‘first cause’, hence ultimately making all emotions self-referential.⁸³ Furthermore, the information that emotion provides, either indicatively to the experiencer or communicatively to its observers, are received by each individual self-referentially, namely in terms relevant to self preservation or to self enhancement. In fact, the whole process of identity formation, which involves the acquisition of a self-conception that includes both stable and dynamic characteristic, is itself rooted in emotional processes.⁸⁴

To be sure, placing the *self* at the centre of emotion does not mean isolating it from its social environment; in fact, the very concept of *self* is vacuous when removed from the social context that contributes to its definition. Indeed, it suffices to remember that both self-awareness and self-conception (two inter-related but distinct processes) emerge from the individual’s continuous social interactions which are characterized by

⁸² See Greenberg (2008), 88-101. For the potential information-feedback that may emerge from *moods* see Schwarz and Clore (2003), 298-301.

⁸³ Kaplan (2007), 224-53.

⁸⁴ For a good survey on emotion-based self theories see Boyns (2007), 254-75.

exchanges in both linguistic and emotional ‘currency.’ Thus, emotions give significant shape to most if not all interpersonal communicative dynamics, certainly a core reason for the increasing attention that the sociology of emotions is presently receiving. Indeed, sociological theories of emotion have mushroomed in all directions including at least five theoretical research traditions which distinguish between five separate areas of focus in relation to the emergence and the shaping of emotions. One of the most prominent of these sociological traditions is the symbolic interactionist approach just highlighted, which emphasizes identity and *self*, both as situational and trans-situational entities. The remaining traditions, namely the dramaturgical, the structural, the ritual, and the exchange one, instead place their focus on culture, social structure, ritual practices, and cost/reward dynamics respectively.⁸⁵

Similarly, to underline the self-relevant function of emotions does not imply a necessary association with selfish motivations and behaviours. The degree to which individuals manifest ‘selfish’ emotions is dependent on a variety of factors, including the particular content of various areas of their personal identities, which incorporate cultural, religious, gender, professional, and other areas. Among these factors is also found a collective dimension, which involves identification of the self with particular groups. If this sense of group belonging is experienced as particularly significant the collective dimension may overshadow other areas of personal identity thus driving the individual to make significant sacrifices for the primary benefit of the collective entity. A further factor that may contribute to influence emotional responses in altruistic directions is empathy. In fact, as a state which triggers emotional sensitivity to the particular conditions of others empathy lies at the foundation of what we often identify as ‘moral behaviour.’ Indeed, experimental evidence shows that it is common for most people to experience empathic distress and to generally desire to be helpful.⁸⁶

The potential or actual presence of empathy in emotional responses reaffirms the need for a broad symbolic-interactionist conception of the *self*, which includes an ethical dimension of identity. In fact, the influence that internalized moral norms exert in profiling the nature of emotional experiences can hardly be overemphasized. Hoffman makes this point convincingly when he highlights the significance of empathy in shaping the decisions which defined some of the major political and legal milestones

⁸⁵ Stets and Turner (2008), 32-46.

⁸⁶ Hoffman (2000), 29-36.

in the recent history of the United States.⁸⁷ At the same time, one needs not look at the macro level to recognize the ever-present yet subtle normative dimension, which characterizes all emotional phenomena. In fact, ethical considerations affect all stages of emotional experience, beginning with background beliefs and values that shape evaluations, through regulations of emotional expressions, to post-emotional reflections in assessing the impact of affective experiences. In this context, it is important to use care when making generalizations since ethical norms vary in emphasis from individual to individual and especially from one culture to the next. Still, it is possible to cluster distinctive normative structures in various cultures around one of three core ethical paradigms, which centre respectively on moral objectives of autonomy, community, and divinity.⁸⁸ Then, in an ethical context where the individual, the group, or God acquire supreme significance emotions become truly teleological. In fact, as constrained by ethical norms surrounding their kind, time, place, focus, and intensity emotions ultimately “reveal the goals or ends toward which human beings are meant to strive.”⁸⁹

Of course, whether individuals succeed or fail in achieving such moral goals is a different question, which hinges on a variety of both external and internal dynamics and constraints. In fact, it is apparent that goal failure or frustration is a regular occurrence in most people’s daily experiences, at least in relation to their short-term objectives. In these instances it is common for individuals to resort to coping mechanisms in response to the encounter with their failed expectations. In this context and as previously indicated emotions essentially act as the first and most automatic coping responses to goal interruptions and obstructions; moreover, they accompany the various positive circumstances of goal achievement. Then, when goals are frustrated, emotions provide a signal that in relation to the present circumstances some portions of currently held beliefs are false and in need of revision. In turn, “the inertial persistence of the emotional arousal, and its slow decay, leads to continued recycling or rehearsal of those encoded events viewed as causally belonging to the emotional reaction.”⁹⁰

What emerges from these considerations is the significant role emotions may play in learning processes of various kinds. In fact, as the first form of coping response to novel stimuli emotions should unavoidably be located at the core of humans’ life-

⁸⁷ Hoffman (2008), 450-52.

⁸⁸ Schweder, et al. (1997), 140-50.

⁸⁹ Schweder, et al. (2008), 424.

⁹⁰ Bower (1994), 304.

long direction learning experiences, which generally involve the processing of fresh information. In fact, studies have shown that in both children and adults a three-stage 'learning' sequence typically follows emotional responses to goal failure. As a form of reflective processing which immediately follows or is even co-occurring with the experience the first stage entails updating those beliefs that have emerged to be inadequate, which, if left unmodified, may further debilitate emotional functioning in future circumstances. Secondly, individuals identify the nature of the consequences and damages, which followed the failure in their expectations, both internally and externally. Finally, they evaluate the probability of generating a successful plan of action for future possibilities of goal achievement and subsequently determine whether to maintain, modify or discard the original goal.⁹¹

To be sure, much of the direction learning that emerges from personal goals is firmly rooted in the social realm of interpersonal relationships. Hence, the *self* develops by necessity through interactions with other individuals towards whom various attitude stances may be manifested. Then, emotions are socially instrumental inasmuch as they constitute a primary mode by which people strengthen or loosen their interpersonal relationships either through social engagement or disengagement. Specifically, emotions' social function centres on three possible areas of universal goals or motivations: affiliation, attachment, and assertion. Through *affiliation* we commit ourselves to a relatively large number of individuals with whom we desire to establish friendly cooperation. On the other hand, *attachment* involves the search for intimate relationships with a restricted number of people where mutual protection is ensured through the exchange of trust and dependency. *Assertion* further differs from both affiliation and attachment in that our objective centres in the desire to establish our status or power as we experience conflict within the social environment. Therefore, although circumstances do not always permit absolute categorizations, sympathy may be classified as the main affiliation emotion, love as the core emotion of attachment, and anger as the ultimate assertion indicator.⁹²

In addition to being applied to individual relationships socially engaging or disengaging emotions also function in the context of group relationships. Indeed, people undergo a form of 'depersonalization' when they identify so much with a group that their social identity becomes more salient than their individual one. In these

⁹¹ Stein and Hernandez (2007), 299-300.

⁹² Oatley, et al. (2006), 228-31.

settings, which usually emerge when social comparisons or conflicts among groups are particularly significant, individuals see themselves as relatively interchangeable members of the group to which they belong. Hence, they experience group-based rather than individually-based emotions since the context mainly involves intergroup rather than interpersonal relationships. At the same time, group emotions often include two distinct dimensions, which relate concurrently to intergroup and to intra-group social motivations. In fact, while an individual relates to outsider groups in a mostly depersonalized state he also experiences within his own group group-focused interpersonal relationships, which in turn may strengthen or loosen the intra-group affiliation bond. Interestingly, some emotions can simultaneously play opposite social functions in the respective contexts of intergroup and intra-group relationships. For example, shared hatred serves an assertive distancing function in intergroup relationships while at the same time potentially strengthening intra-group affiliation.⁹³

A larger exploration of the function or instrumentality of emotion would involve many other dimensions of human behaviour and cognition. If the focus is on behaviour examples include an examination of emotional influences over patterns of economic activities and an analysis of individuals' emotional responses to physiological symptoms that relate to personal health.⁹⁴ Indeed, an increasing number of experiments and studies are focusing on the many aspects that characterize the emotion-health relationship.⁹⁵ In the realm of cognition examples are so numerous to include entire volumes dedicated to the exploration of the effects of emotion over specific cognitive processes.⁹⁶ Given the current level of interest it is likely that more studies of such focused nature will continue to emerge in both behavioural and cognitive areas of exploration. In this process of discovery we will also continue to apply our moral views to those affective genetic traits in our emotions that we find to be dysfunctional or even harmful. After all, since most would agree that humans are not genetic robots, we should not merely consent to our genes' programming, especially when our goals and values differ from our puzzling genetic predispositions.⁹⁷

In this very context one cannot help but notice the increase in popularity of *emotional intelligence*, a unitary concept, which variously frames human capacities for

⁹³ See Smith and Mackie (2008), 428-34. Also see Fischer and Manstead (2008), 461-65.

⁹⁴ See Rick and Loewenstein (2008), 138-56 and Diefenbach, et al. (2008), 645-60.

⁹⁵ See for example Kemeny and Shestyuk (2008), 661-75 and Consedine (2008), 676-90.

⁹⁶ For one exemplar see Yiend (2004).

⁹⁷ Stanovich (2004), 81-94.

emotional control and direction. Although still in its infancy ‘emotional intelligence’ has already captured the enthusiasm of popular writers and observers, whose exaggerated claims and confused conceptualizations are being criticized by the very originators of the concept. In fact, while recognizing the utility of a unitary framework that gathers all individual emotional competencies under one conceptual umbrella Peter Salovey and his colleagues have emphasized both the multifaceted nature of emotional intelligence and the need for clarity in analyzing its various components. For this purpose the same authors distinguish four main branches of emotional intelligence, each of which is characterized by specific emotion-related abilities. The first branch involves the realms of perception, appraisal, and expression of emotions while the second concerns the use of emotions to facilitate thinking. Then, the third branch measures the ability to understand and analyze emotional information whereas the final dimension is specifically concerned with the management of emotions, namely with emotional regulation.⁹⁸ To be sure, since social situations and problems are inherently filled with affective information ‘social intelligence’ is bound to overlap with emotional intelligence. Thus, as is true for every other human dimension, emotional intelligence as a distinct aspect of emotional instrumentality can only be defined in the social contexts, which characterize human existence.

In summary, emotions inform, mobilize, and communicate, whether functionally or not. In fact, their instrumentality is contingent on factors that include the adequacy of appraisals as well as other dynamics, such as the manner of their expression.⁹⁹ Still, as a means to achieve ‘learning-centred’ personal development emotions are both necessary and prominent since they motivate and are constitutive of most processes of self-preservation, self-enhancement, and both interpersonal and intergroup relationships. Furthermore, emotions possess potential epistemic value in relation to both internal and external sources of knowledge and they often act as louder-than-words communicators of the very beliefs and values which lie at the root of individuals’ personal identity. In this light it would seem appropriate that common conceptualizations of individual intelligence should include a specific dimension of emotional competency in addition to measuring other capacities of an intellectual and social nature. Indeed, since emotions are at the core of what is involved in being and becoming a functional human being emotional intelligence is highly instrumental in all

⁹⁸ Salovey, et al. (2008), 533-47.

⁹⁹ Parrott (2001), 180-86.

major processes of individual development and progression. Then, while these conclusions do not imply naive denying of the distorting or dysfunctional nature of some emotional expressions we now stand in stark departure from stoic and other related perspectives, which categorically opposed emotions to reason or invariably associated emotions with a form of bondage.

The developmental instrumentality of emotions is the final of the three general points of socio-scientific achievement in the study of emotions that I have selected for my brief review. In this process of exploration it has become apparent that the attribute of instrumentality follows logically from the two previously highlighted aspects, namely the cognitive necessity as well as the personal responsibility inherent in emotions. In turn, this tripartite philosophical and scientific foundation for understanding emotional phenomena frames the great majority of current directions in the socio-scientific exploration of emotions. Then, one final issue remains open for brief examination at the conclusion of this chapter: the problem of emotional classification. Given my own later attempt to classify emotions within the context of Mormon canonical texts I certainly need to provide both a general introduction to the issue and a description of my own criteria of classification.

Distinguishing different emotions: three major approaches

At present no universal agreement exists on a single mode of emotion classification or on the exact boundaries of meaning in the linguistic labels that have been attached to particular emotional phenomena. This is the current reality notwithstanding the fact that for centuries scholars have been developing a range of possible emotion taxonomies in order to reduce complexity and to facilitate discourse and understanding. In turn, these taxonomies have varied in relation to the manner in which they describe the interaction and organization of particular emotional components since some have placed greater emphasis on one specific element or on a defining emotional dynamic over another. Yet, when we limit our focus to modern socio-scientific theories of classification it is possible to identify three main families of such hypotheses which distinctively describe and thus classify emotional manifestations. The three approaches involve respectively *basic-emotion*, *multi-componential*, and *hierarchical* theories, each of which boasts its own followers and supporters. My current objective is to briefly highlight each perspective before

concluding the section with a reference to a less comprehensive yet useful manner of classification, which involves the employment of ‘prototypical emotions’.

As Frijda succinctly explains, within the *basic-emotions* hypothesis “the various components form solidly coherent packets, each based on a common neural and neurohumoral disposition. Activation of the dispositions by events jointly activates the various components.”¹⁰⁰ Building on Darwin’s work, scholars in this vigorous tradition have placed great emphasis on the claimed universality of certain facial expressions like smiling, frowning, or sneering and on the existence of dedicated brain circuits for various emotional experiences.¹⁰¹ Although heavily neurobiological in focus, this perspective leaves ample room for cultural and individual differences because each basic emotion can also be viewed to represent a functionally defined class of experience. Furthermore, to use Frijda’s words once more, “within each class, the precise antecedents, nature of the objects, full gamut of appraisal components, precise type of action goal or action...all may vary.”¹⁰² Hence, complex emotions differ from their basic counterparts in that the former involve the addition of culturally refined or idiosyncratic developments with a basic core, which is innate and universal.¹⁰³ Still, lack of consensus on the criteria for the identification of a basic emotion, with the accompanying problem of no clarity in distinguishing basic emotions from their complex counterparts make this perspective somewhat problematic. Even Paul Ekman, seems to imply that such classifications are elusive since he recently added nine categories of basic emotions to the original six (anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise) which he first proposed.¹⁰⁴

Instead, *multi-componential* views of emotion are not concerned with clearly demarcated classifications. According to this perspective emotions are “more or less unordered collections of components, jointly activated by how an emotional event is appraised and by individual component propensities.”¹⁰⁵ In this light, as emotion labels are somewhat arbitrary identifications that mainly reflect cultural concerns they only ‘fuzzily’ have reference to the actual sub-regional structures and dynamics of emotional

¹⁰⁰Frijda (2008), 76.

¹⁰¹ For a good definition and description of ‘basic emotions’ characteristics see Ekman (1992), 169-200. For neurobiological ‘mappings’ of emotional phenomena see Buck (1999), 301-36. Also see Panksepp (2008), 47-67.

¹⁰²Frijda (2008), 76.

¹⁰³ A similar view is advocated by Lindholm in Lindholm (2005), 40-43.

¹⁰⁴ Compare Ekman (1999), 55 and Ekman (1992a), 550-53.

¹⁰⁵ Frijda (2008), 76.

experiences. A major proponent of this perspective, Klaus Scherer, used the term ‘synchronization’ to highlight the necessary condition for the emergence of emotion, which potentially involves innumerable combinations of relevant cognitive and physiological components in interaction with external conditions.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, multi-componential views seem to be well equipped to account for the cultural variations that characterize much of the existing emotion language and classification. Yet, improved validity may have been achieved at the cost of diminished ability to communicate about emotion given the inherent difficulty to conceptually ‘freeze’ emotional phenomena for analytical purposes within a multi-componential framework.

Perhaps, this problem is partially reduced by the third *hierarchical* approach, which attempts to organize emotions both horizontally and vertically and to consider both their individual characteristics and their overall nature. One prominent illustration of a theory rooted in this kind of perspective was proposed by the late Robert Plutchik, whose ‘circumplex model’ involves both a ‘vertical’ classification of emotional intensity and a horizontal (as well as circular) ordering of the emotions according to their mutual similarity. Therefore, since the model identifies eight primary emotions in a hierarchical structure of componential significance Plutchik appears to propose a middle ground between the basic-emotion and the multi-componential views previously highlighted.¹⁰⁷ Other scholars have also employed similar hierarchical models although the locus of their focus has often differed from Plutchik’s. For example, Ben-Ze’ev has suggested a comprehensive hierarchical classification of emotions along two separate dimensions, i.e. their affective valence on the one hand and the object of their focus on the other.¹⁰⁸ As a whole it appears that hierarchical perspectives are similar to multi-componential approaches in their shift of emphasis from categorical to process conceptualizations. At the same time, in comparison to most multi-componential approaches hierarchical perspectives preserve a more systematic form of structural organization, which I believe to have its own attractiveness for both analytic and communication purposes.

Finally, in addition to the three classification approaches I have just outlined it is possible to identify other forms of emotion classification, which are not devised with the purpose of presenting a detailed picture of comprehensive organization. In fact,

¹⁰⁶ Scherer (2000), 70-76.

¹⁰⁷ Plutchik (1997), 23-31.

¹⁰⁸ Ben-Ze’ev (2000), 92-104.

there are instances where scholars are so concerned with exploring the characteristics and dynamics of single and widely recognized types of emotions that the issue of their organization in an overarching structure of emotion classification appears to be secondary. In these cases the use of *prototypical categories* of description is particularly common. Through this specific focus various emotions are given membership in a particular category if they are judged to possess a high degree of similarity to the best existing exemplar which defines that very category. For example, gladness, anticipation, or excitement are all clustered into a prototypical category of ‘happiness’ and are examined as such. Furthermore, within this descriptive framework all identified emotional phenomena are treated as if they were unrelated to any particular context since the main focus of the analysis involves what is typical rather than what is valid in each instance.¹⁰⁹

Clearly, the use of prototypical categories is an attempt to simplify a complex picture in order to facilitate work with existing data. Therefore, as an organizing principle it has its utility and place although disagreements are likely to emerge in relation to both the particular selection of prototypical emotional categories as well as to the judgments that determine inclusion of a specific emotion into one category over another. Still, the concept is helpful particularly when classification functions as a means to facilitate analysis rather than as the ultimate focus of one’s examination. Therefore, I make use of it in my own classification since it fits well within the larger context of the present analysis.

Emotion classification in the present analysis of LDS texts

The upcoming theological examination of the emotional content of Mormonism’s sacred texts is built on a rather narrow pragmatic focus. In fact, my aim is only to analyse specific textual emotion-related terms and instances rather than attempting to develop a full-blown systematization of all LDS scriptural emotional phenomena. Indeed, while I do explore basic overarching standards of emotion conceptualization in the Mormon theological milieu these conclusions cannot be properly developed in detailed articulation within the limited space of the present endeavour. Thus, a full-blown LDS theology of emotion must await a later project in which it can be unfolded with greater coherence and completeness. At present, a few

¹⁰⁹ Russell (1991), 37-47.

specific emotions are my main object of focus and it is in relation to their selection and classification that I now need to present my own organizing criteria. In this context my method generally involves a syncretism of elements from both hierarchical and prototypical perspectives since I aim to strike a balance between clarity of focus and faithfulness to complexity.

In the first place I have selected only three main classes of emotions for my present study. Each category or 'kind' is thought to exist in a multiplicity of manifesting forms, which in turn are identified through a variety of linguistic expressions. The dependent variable that determines distinctions within the same emotional category is affective *valence*, or the degree to which a particular emotional experience generally feels pleasant or unpleasant. Therefore, a specific 'kind' of emotion appears as a spectrum of experience where location is determined by relative valence, either on a positive side or on a negative one.¹¹⁰ Yet, while suggesting this general form of background organization I am not concerned with the creation of a detailed internal hierarchy of emotional intensity. In other words, I am not interested in associating individual emotion terms with specific degrees of valence nor do I intend to identify the exact emotion, which is located at each extreme end of the experiential spectrum. Instead, I choose one prototypical positive manifestation, for example joy, and one prototypical negative one, sorrow in the same example, to represent the two specific loci of focus for the examination of that single class of emotion. Hence, my classification is prototypical at least at two different levels of description: first, in the selection of three prototypical 'classes' of emotions, and second, in the internal selection of a positive and a negative prototypical manifestation of that same category.

At the same time, this method is hierarchical, at least in rudimentary fashion, because it lays out a basic valence-dependent dichotomy within each emotional category. Furthermore, the selection of the three core emotion classes to be explored ensues from organizing criteria that include a hierarchical dimension. In fact, mine is an attempt to distinguish between a few core emotional forms of experience by highlighting the most prominent of their distinctive emotional components. In other words, each category is identifiable primarily in relation to one or two characteristics that are present in all emotions, but which emerge with unique visibility or intensity in one kind of emotional phenomenon. Therefore, the paramount components function as

¹¹⁰ This method of classification has some affinity with the one outlined in Rolls (2005), 14.

the mark, which distinguishes that particular emotion class from other emotion categories. To return to the previous example of joy and sorrow, the class of emotion they represent seems to display the common emotional characteristics of evaluation and goal directedness with particular prominence and visibility. For this reason I have named this particular class of emotional experience the *assessing* category. Therefore, it may be observed that within the classification I am presently employing prototypical categories of emotions and their positive or negative manifestations intersect with a basic hierarchy, which in turn is founded on a multi-componential view of emotional phenomena.

To be sure, no single aspect of this form of classification is beyond dispute. One could certainly focus on more emotional categories than these three and both identifying components and labels for each selected class are not self-evident. Still, for my present purposes these distinctions are sufficiently workable while also remaining illustrative of the core emotional phenomena in the human experience. In any case, and to set out my classification in some order, I have labelled the three highlighted classes of classification as the *predicting*, the *assessing*, and the *relating* categories of emotion. The prominent components in the *predicting* class are *change* and *uncertainty* whereas the selected forms of manifestation with opposing valence centre in *hope* and *fear*. Then, as already indicated, the *assessing* category emerges from the visibility of *evaluation* and *goal directedness* and with opposing manifestations of *joy* and *sorrow*. Finally, *desires* and *interpersonal connections* prominently characterize the *relating* class in which *love* and *hatred* function as the two prototypical directions of expression.

The contours and significance of each of these categories of emotion within the bounds of the LDS canon will be analysed in detail in subsequent chapters, particularly in relation to the three defining characteristics of emotion described in this chapter, namely *cognitive necessity*, *personal responsibility*, and *developmental instrumentality*. However, before commencing the extensive examination, which constitutes the bulk of the present endeavour, I find it necessary to draw a bridge between what has emerged as a socio-scientific survey on the existing emotion research and what will later materialize as a theological analysis of emotion in a very specific religious context. At the core of this bridge is also found a survey, although in this instance its nature is theological rather than scientific. Therefore, in the following chapter I set out to highlight some of the central theological foundations of the Mormon worldview with the purpose of sketching the contextual ideological background against which LDS

emotional interpretation may be understood and described. Furthermore, and in this light, I hope to draw preliminary attention to the affinity between the previously highlighted characteristics of emotion and some of the core tenets, which theologically define Mormonism.

Hence, in introducing the detailed textual analysis that will later follow I assemble the theological scaffolding against which the concept of emotion appears to fit quite naturally, not as a scientific concept, but as a theological one. In fact, only by understanding the LDS theological framework can one begin to construct a proper LDS theology of emotion, which will include both theological assumptions and linguistic expressions unique to Mormonism as well as connections with a different yet related mode of explanation, i.e. the socio-scientific one.

CHAPTER TWO

Mormon Theological Foundations of Existence

At the root of Thomas Dixon's historical examination *From Passions to Emotions* lays a distinction between the usually dyadic religious language employed in reference to emotional phenomena and the post-enlightenment conflation of terms like passions and affections under one single semantic umbrella, 'emotion.' Hence, Dixon's subtitle: *The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category*.¹ From this volume's detailed analysis and from its author's reasoned conclusions I extract at least two quite evident implications, which are of relevance for my current purposes. First, theologians and religious devotees have always spoken and written about emotions. In fact, given the centrality, intensity, and frequency of emotions in humanity's daily experience emotions have regularly appeared at the forefront of sacred writings, of sermons, and of spiritual exercises of all kinds. Indeed, they have been the object of significant theological work by major thinkers like Augustine or Thomas Aquinas, to name only two.² Nevertheless, and this is a second conclusion of Dixon's work, there is no necessary equivalence between socio-scientific and theological discourses on emotion. At times both disciplines are concerned with addressing similar questions, but in other instances their focus and assumptions differ significantly. Hence, one needs to avoid the assumption of semantic correspondence and in so doing pay particular attention to distinctive contexts of explanation.³

¹ Dixon (2003), 1-5.

² See Dyson (1998), 359-89, 581-633; Aquinas (1967). Also, for both Augustine's and Aquinas' views on emotion see Dixon (2003), 26-61.

³ The most prominent author who is exploring with academic depth the realm of interaction between religion and emotion is John Corrigan. Within this context he has provided both acute theoretical analyses of the study of religion and emotion and informative historiographical surveys on the current state of the research. See, Corrigan (2004), 3-32; Corrigan (2002), 269-80; and Corrigan (2000), 1-19. Also see his most recent edited work, Corrigan (2008).

In the present age the need for contextual attention is especially relevant given the fact that much of the secular psychological terminology about emotion has been adopted in both popular religious circles and in academic theological settings. Therefore, if commonality of terms is perceived to justify the absence of any degree of ‘translation’ the fact that science and religion do not always speak about the exact same phenomenon is likely to be obscured. At the same time, it is true that a large degree of semantic correspondence has been reached especially in those instances where theological borrowings from scientific perspectives, as well as inflow in the opposite direction, have extended from mere terminology to include values and objectives. Intricate relationships of this kind are perhaps best exemplified by such sub-disciplines as transpersonal psychology or as counselling-focused pastoral theology.⁴ However, it is clear that incorporations of this nature can only occur in a theological context which is already open, on its own terms, to such additions. Therefore, it is through awareness of a tradition’s fundamental tenets or assumptions that one can facilitate the process of multidisciplinary communication, respect, and exchange, thus allowing theologies to provide their unique contributions to the study of emotion.

All these considerations are certainly applicable to the theology of Mormonism. As many others do Mormons regularly speak, teach, and reflect about emotions. Furthermore, although some of their terminology is unique, much of the emotion language in LDS sermons and lessons matches common psychological or popular terminology. Yet, the theological context and the underlining assumptions that permeate the use of emotion language within Mormonism considerably shape its meaning and significance. Moreover, Mormon theology is obviously selective in its absorption from secular socio-scientific sources of emotion-related knowledge, particularly in the realms of theological anthropology and ethics. At the same time, because the fundamental structure of Mormon theology is not incompatible with the current major scientific conclusions on the subject of emotion, LDS theology may ‘converse’ with and ‘appropriate’ much from the empirical study of emotion.⁵

⁴ On transpersonal psychology see Kaspro and Scotton (1999), 12-23. Of course, there may be several theological approaches to pastoral counseling. One specific and well-articulated example may be found in Louw (1999).

⁵ The noted LDS psychologist Allen Bergin repeatedly uses both psychological and Mormon theological insights when addressing emotional phenomena in Bergin (2002). At the same time, another Mormon psychologist and philosopher, Richard N. Williams has emphasized the need to construct an LDS psychology that is built on proper theoretical ‘Gospel’ foundations in Williams (1998), 1-30. A volume, which is wholly devoted to the theoretical exploration of the intersection between psychology and the LDS theological framework is Jackson, et al. (2005).

Similarly, non-Mormon social scientists may find that examining both distinctive and common approaches to the conceptualization and regulation of emotions in an LDS religious setting may provide some useful insights.

My current analysis hopes to provide a contribution to this realm of exchange. In this chapter I am particularly concerned with drawing attention to what Mormons consider some basic and authoritative principles of the LDS theological worldview which owe their existence to the nineteenth-century theological revelations of their founder and prophet Joseph Smith.⁶ As I turn to three of these foundational ‘principles,’ which I have purposely selected for association with the three defining characteristics of emotion outlined in the previous chapter, the resonance between the socio-psychological characteristics of emotion and Mormon cosmological explanations of existence will clearly stand out. In this manner, my preliminary suggestion that emotion processes are central to the LDS theological worldview will receive some initial support. Then, prior to engaging in the textual analysis, which constitutes the bulk of the present examination, I conclude this chapter with a discussion of the Mormon understanding of ‘Atonement’ as the paradigmatic instrument that facilitates the theological framing of emotional understanding, regulation, and intelligence in an LDS context. Yet, to properly introduce this very context and before examining the three theological principles of present concern I begin by turning my attention to the nature of ‘authoritative’ LDS theology and to the significance of the term ‘principle’ in the Mormon conceptual framework.

Mormon theological certainties: the Gospel as principles in mutual tension

In the introduction I briefly outlined the LDS preference for the term ‘doctrine’ over ‘theology’ where I also recognized some of the difficulties involved in what often appears as a fuzzy distinction of terms. I have further highlighted the similarity if not equivalence of the LDS term ‘doctrine’ with what most Christians identify as ‘dogma’ given Mormonism’s necessary connection between doctrine and the institutional authority invested in the First Presidency and in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Thus, in order to avoid confusion it should be understood that when I use the term ‘theology’ in the LDS context I am referring to the ‘authoritative theology’ or

⁶ The most comprehensive Joseph Smith biography in existence is Bushman and Woodworth (2007).

‘doctrine’ which is existent in the Church at the beginning of the twenty-first century.⁷ Yet, given the problem that ‘doctrine’ is not explicitly detailed by any document that could be considered a ‘creed’ such exposition is bound to be dependent on my own understanding of the subject, particularly of those areas which allow for a variety of possible interpretations. In fact, as previously stated, theological boundaries are somewhat larger or narrower as contingent on individual LDS members’ perspectives on a variety of issues including the exact nature of revelation, prophetic infallibility, openness to theological change, etc.

At the same time, Mormonism is not as malleable as it may appear. In fact, it possesses a theological core, which although changeable in theory, is unlikely to ever be significantly altered by any Mormon authority of present or future times. Such a core is largely retraceable to numerous theological revelations received by the Prophet Joseph, as the Saints like to refer to him, which has usually been canonized in one of the Scriptural texts that Mormons use in addition to the Bible. These doctrinal tenets give Mormonism its theological identity and constitute an integral part of what Mormons see as the theological illumination that emerged through the Restoration, a term used in reference to the historical and theological ‘return’ of God’s appointed church to the earth.⁸ Still, it would be simplistic to imply that the exact boundaries of such a theological core were clearly delineated by Joseph Smith himself. Furthermore, the transmission of this doctrinal nucleus to the present day has not been carried out in the absence of any alterations. This is an issue, which is both historically and theologically nuanced, but whose detailed examination lies beyond the scope of the present endeavour.⁹

Indeed, in the present discussion the affirmation of the existence of a practically unchangeable doctrinal core is more relevant than its exact description. Thus, the Saints regularly use terminology, which points in this very direction of core theological

⁷ James Faulconer writes of this use of ‘theology’ as “a set of beliefs” in the LDS context. See Tracy, et al. (2007), 468-78.

⁸ With this doctrinal core Ben Huff proposes that Mormons should work towards a tentative systematic theology while still allowing for future corrections and additions in light of continuing revelation. See Ibid., 478-87.

⁹ To name only a few complicating factors in relation to the founder’s central role in this picture, not all of Joseph Smith’s purported revelations have acquired canonized status. Other revelations, while remaining in canonized print, are rarely if ever spoken of, and some, which have never been officially canonized, seem to retain importance at some level of Mormon discourse (the King Follett sermon). Furthermore, while few in number, statements from Joseph’s successors as Church presidents have been canonized in the LDS Standard Works (D&C 136, 138). Some statements have applied a single official interpretation to some of Smith’s revelations (‘interest’ interpreted as ‘income’ in the context of D&C 119, the tithing revelation).

stability, as exemplified by the expression ‘the Gospel’. Although inclusive of its common Christological meaning as used by most Christian denominations, within Mormonism the meaning of ‘the Gospel’ extends well beyond these commonly recognized boundaries. The extent of its semantic reach is once more dependent on various interpretative factors, which make it to a large degree synonymous with the term ‘doctrine’. Thus, for many ‘the Gospel’ is broadly defined as ‘the truth’ or more specifically the whole body of truths, which the Church teaches through its doctrines. Yet, Jesus Himself defines ‘the Gospel’ in a Book of Mormon (BoM) passage where the definition is more restrictive since it largely points to the common Christian understanding of the term. Here ‘the Gospel’ is the good news of Jesus’ earthly mission as Son of God which culminates in His sacrifice. Thus, the Gospel’s core components centre around the human response to Christ’s salvific mission on our behalf as manifested by faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour, repentance, baptism by water, and reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit.¹⁰

Significantly, these four expressions of acceptance are the primary representatives of the two soteriological concepts, which organize the whole of the LDS theological discourse, namely principles and ordinances. In fact, in the Church’s fourth *Articles of Faith*, it is affirmed that faith and repentance are the *first* ‘principles’ of the Gospel, whereas ‘baptism’ and ‘the gift of the Holy Ghost’ are the *first* ‘ordinances’.¹¹ Therefore, whether the ordinal qualification is indicative of precedence in temporal sequence or of pre-eminence in theological significance the associated implication is equally evident: ‘the Gospel’ centres in these principles and ordinances, but it includes more. In the first place, Mormons have clearly identified which sacred ceremonies are necessary for salvation and the list is mostly limited to a handful of ordinances performed in LDS holy temples.¹² On the other hand, it is not as straightforward to identify all individual Gospel ‘principles’ and the task is subject to the qualifications and problems previously mentioned in relation to the issue of definition of doctrine. Furthermore, while Mormons distinguish between necessary and useful ordinances, which are not required for eternal salvation (like the blessing of the sick), this classification is problematic if not impossible in relation to ‘principles’.

¹⁰ 3 Ne. 27:13-19.

¹¹ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. (1981a), 60.

¹² A ‘sociological’ overview of Mormon temple worship may be found in Mauss (1987), 77-83.

In fact, as Douglas Davies observes, ‘principle’ is closely associated to the concept of ‘law’ in Mormon theological rhetoric. Thus, “‘principle and ‘law’ comprise a category of LDS thought: they are ideas necessary for thinking about everything else and are themselves non-reducible to other ideas.”¹³ It is further significant that Mormons commonly prefix the noun ‘principle’ with the adjective ‘eternal’, thus suggesting that eternal principles are both temporally unchangeable and philosophically ‘basic’. Davies continues: “Principles have a certain impersonality: they resemble scientific laws more than the outcome of any one divine intention. The gods themselves, including Heavenly Father, have had to learn these principles, so that divine wisdom consists in precisely such an ever-growing knowledge.”¹⁴ In other words, ‘principles’ are to be learned through a process of assimilation, which involves cognitive understanding, emotional internalization, and practical embodied praxis. In this sense ‘principles’ are more than just laws; they are virtues that define identity. Therefore, in the context of the Mormon doctrine of Deity, their significance centres in the claim that they are perfectly embodied in the person of God rather than in the radical assertion that they precede and transcend God. Thus, although Gospel ‘principles’ challenge the cosmological view of a divine first cause, they do not replace it with a different subject; they eliminate the question altogether by appearing as constitutive of a universe where both God and eternal principles are needed and co-existent.¹⁵

More will soon follow on Mormon cosmology but now I need to explore a final element of significance in the context of this introductory framing of LDS doctrine. While the recognition and description of basic ‘eternal principles’ is central to any attempt to understand Mormon theology a deeper and more accurate theological picture only emerges where these same principles are examined in their mutual relationship. In other words, if isolated from its ‘relations’ each highlighted principle may appear distorted within the theological schema in which it is meant to function since its nature is only correctly comprehensible in the context of a ‘principles’ and ‘relations’ root equation.¹⁶ To further clarify, as core complementary ideas principles describe an ideal

¹³ Davies (2003), 23.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁵ There are some similarities between the LDS view of ‘principles’ and the ‘metaphysical principles’ of process thought. See Griffin and McLachlan (2007), 181-82.

¹⁶ Douglas Davies first acutely highlighted this foundational pairing in Davies (2003), 27. Yet, I mean to enlarge Davies’ paradigm by placing greater focus on relations among principles whereas Davies understood relations mainly as interpersonal phenomena.

existence within which perfection exists not only in their presence but also through their ideal relative balance in mutual relationship. I will soon provide some examples of these relationships as I describe the three principles I selected for my analysis, but now I simply want to highlight this general concept of necessary ‘relation’ with its implications of an accompanying ‘tension’ which generally exists among foundational principles.

As previously mentioned, Terryl Givens has provided a well-written analysis of some of the tensions that have characterized Mormon cultural expressions throughout the Church’s history. In his account Givens identifies four tensions or paradoxes which are at the core of the Mormon experience in both its theological as well as in its artistic materializations. These paradoxes are expressed as concepts or ‘principles’ which pull in opposite directions from each other and he organizes them as four distinct dichotomies, namely authority and radical freedom, searching and certainty, the sacred and the banal, exile and integration.¹⁷ These tensions have not been ultimately resolved, and indeed, in both Givens’ and in my own opinion, much of Mormonism’s vitality and strength is manifested through their presence. At the same time, tension is not humanity’s natural or preferred condition; thus, pressures to reduce tension in either one direction or in the other continue to characterize Mormons as they do all homeostasis-seeking humans. Hence, to say that these strains are a theological reality of Mormonism is neither to say that most Mormons regularly achieve this ideal balance of opposing principles, nor that most Mormons regularly engage in this uncomfortable search. Indeed, I suspect that many individual members fail to perceive any existing theological tension either because they have highlighted one theological principle to the neglect of other tension-provoking ones, or because they fail to see the necessary relationships between various opposing principles.

Several difficulties associated with the issue of LDS doctrinal definition are traceable to the presence of these very tensions, especially to the ‘authority vs. radical freedom’ and ‘searching vs. certainty’ dichotomies. Perhaps, the question of boundary setting in the Mormon theological realm is only a single but particularly good example of one larger issue and problem, which is at the root of all realms of human experience and of all individuals’ and groups’ dynamics. It may be that one of the great paradoxes in the human experience involves the coexisting drives to achieve both stability and

¹⁷ Givens (2007), xi-xvi.

innovation, to find comfort and security in the unchangeable while also leaving room for the adaptable and the new; it is to keep searching when certainty has been reached. This makes the question of the possible systemization and delimitation of LDS theology one of ultimate struggle between the needs for security and the drives for learning and progression, where a perfect balance is difficult enough to envision that alternating prioritization of each may appear as a more conceivable ideal target. However, at the individual level, and given people's differing capacities, desires, and propensities, it is natural that not only actual behaviours but also normative objectives will greatly diverge, depending primarily on how individuals choose to situate themselves in relation to this paradox.

On the other hand, I suppose that the LDS Church does not intend to fully resolve this tension as it aims to continue to provide both theological security in an increasingly unstable world and pragmatic adaptability to these very same changes.¹⁸ In fact, it may be argued that the presence of this tension has facilitated the Church's international growth. This conclusion may also be inferred from an official statement entitled "Approaching Mormon Doctrine" which was released in 2007 on the Church's Newsroom website.¹⁹ Addressed primarily to news media personnel the statement begins with the recognition that "much misunderstanding about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints revolves around its doctrine." Then, it continues with some clarifications on the nature of authoritative Mormon theology and with clear references to the relationship between theological stability and change:

The doctrinal tenets of any religion are best understood within a broad context... Not every statement made by a Church leader, past or present, necessarily constitutes doctrine... With divine inspiration, the First Presidency...and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles... counsel together to establish doctrine that is consistently proclaimed in official Church publications. This doctrine resides in the four "standard works" of scripture (the Holy Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price), official declarations and proclamations, and the Articles of Faith... Some doctrines are more important than others and might be considered core doctrines... the Church does not preclude future additions or changes to its teachings or practices. This living, dynamic aspect of the Church provides flexibility in meeting those challenges.

¹⁸ While some Latter-day Saints distinguish the unchangeable 'doctrine' from changeable 'policies' of the Church flexibility has been manifested in both theological and administrative realms. However, neat compartmentalisations in specific instances are often made a posteriori in light of already existing patterns of change. Thus, this distinction may be effective at the explanatory rather than at the predictive level, as was the case in relation to the revelation that extended the priesthood to males of African descents. What for many was a 'doctrine' before the change became a 'policy' because of the change.

¹⁹ Approaching Mormon Doctrine (2007).

In other words, the theological picture of Mormonism centres around a constructive tension between the static and the dynamic, being both stable at the core and innovative when required by circumstances and revelation.

It is, then, in this context of a fundamental core that I have chosen to highlight the three principles which are about to follow. The first principle, which I have named *materialistic monism*, has significant affinity and overlap with Givens' third paradox of 'the sacred and the banal'. The second principle is *moral agency* and the final one is *eternal progression*, which is encapsulated primarily in three processes, i.e. *revelation*, *repentance*, and *family relationships*. In carrying out this examination I should once more emphasize that these principles are neither meant to be comprehensive in describing Mormonism's fundamental theology nor should they function as the paramount representatives of LDS principles. Indeed, there are other principles which could be viewed as more central to Mormon theology; yet, in the context of the current examination of the LDS theology of emotion, the relevancy of the presently selected threesome is uniquely apparent.

Materialistic monism

About one year prior to his death the Prophet Joseph Smith stated: "There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; we cannot see it; but when our bodies are purified we shall see that it is all matter."²⁰ Thus, by setting matter as the common denominator of all substance, whether spiritual or non-spiritual, Joseph Smith took one more step in his fundamental break from the views that characterized other theological anthropologies, cosmologies, and Christologies of his time. For him there was no stark and impenetrable division between mind or spirit and body or matter, and he did not share in the common a priori condemnation of the material vis-à-vis the spiritual; to the contrary, he intricately intersected the two and reappraised the physical in a positive direction. In this manner a dualistic cosmos was replaced by a monistic one, still divided into at least two major material forms but fully material nevertheless.

To be sure, it is debatable whether Joseph Smith wholly rejected Cartesian dualism given that he did not go as far as eliminating 'spirit' as a unique ontological category. He did not 'translate' it, like modern monists often do, into specific bodily or

²⁰ D&C 131:7-8.

cerebral processes but he only transformed it into a kind of invisible material substance, a sort of ‘dark matter’ (to put it into astronomic terms), which interacts with visible and recognizable matter. Still, his emphasis went much further than a linguistic rehabilitation of the term ‘material’; it was a much sharper turn in the direction of a new understanding of the relationship between the spiritually material and the physically material. In fact, he redefined *soul* as the unity of ‘the spirit and the body’, where the intricate intersection of the two is not to be seen as a temporary burden, but as the eternal and welcomed destiny of all redeemed humanity. Joseph explained it in these terms: “For man is spirit. The elements are eternal and spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fullness of joy. And when separated, man cannot receive a fullness of joy.”²¹ Therefore, he did not only claim that our world and the larger universe are fully and inevitably material, but also that within this materiality the ideal condition of being involves a fully blended coexistence of the finer and the grosser, or of the spiritual and the physical.

In this context what Joseph Smith revealed about the defining characteristics of individual human spirits is also relevant. On the one hand the Mormon perspective is not unique in affirming that each human body is enlivened by a spiritual being or person which, at the time of death, separates from its physical envelopment to continue in its existence. On the other hand, other details are distinctive of Joseph Smith’s radical revelations. For example, the Prophet taught that God did not create individual spirits *ex nihilo* but out of eternally pre-existing and indestructible ‘intelligence’.²² Similarly, these same spirits, being material in the finer sense, were ‘organized’ (in this context an LDS synonym for ‘creation’) according to a particular form and shape, which mirrors the form acquired by the physical body that would envelop them on earth. Thus, when the brother of Jared, a visionary BoM prophet, sees Christ’s spirit in human form prior to the days of His incarnation he is taught the uniquely Mormon concept of *spirit body*: “Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh.”²³

Therefore, Joseph’s redefinition of the nature of spirit and of its relationship to matter distinctly shaped the Mormon theology of Deity. Indeed, Joseph Smith’s

²¹ D&C 88:15; 93:33-34.

²² D&C 93:29-30. I provide greater details on the subject of ‘intelligence’ in the next section within this chapter.

²³ Ether 3:16.

teachings on the divine, as well as his first-hand claims in support of these teachings were both novel and controversial. He stated, for example, that “the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit.”²⁴ Later on, in his non-canonical King Follett Sermon, he went even further with statements associating God’s distant past and humanity’s potential future that sounded blasphemous to the ears of many.²⁵ Whatever one makes of these later statements, affirming the corporeality of God and breaking from the classical Trinitarian orthodoxy that had come to define Christianity was sufficient to cause the kind of theological rift that has often characterized LDS and main-stream Christian relationships.

Specifically, the Mormon theology of deity became especially problematic for many given its implications for a unique theological anthropology. Indeed, by interpreting God’s fatherhood of humanity in spiritually literal terms Joseph bridged some of the distance between God and man and thus redefined the relationship between humans and the divine. In the first place, Mormons understood the *imago Dei* to include humans’ physical resemblance to their Creator, whose features are not temporarily (as in the case of the Incarnation) but eternally corporeal. Furthermore, God and humanity share such general bodily structure at two levels of embodiment, i.e. in both ‘spirit body’ and ‘flesh body’. True, LDS theology recognizes that God’s embodied person greatly surpasses humanity in glory, knowledge, character, and even some physical characteristics given the canonical tenet that God and all resurrected beings possess a bloodless body of ‘flesh and bones’ unlike mortal humans.²⁶ Yet, these qualifications have not usually softened the perceived negative impact caused by the LDS removal of a ‘wholly other’ divine category of being.

In fact, Mormons underline human-divine similarities as they explain their corporeal resemblances in relation to a family centred mode of discourse, which is at least allusive to a phenotypic if not to a genotypic pattern of ‘spirit body’ trait transmission. And while on the one hand it is easy to understand the common LDS

²⁴ D&C 130:22. For an LDS perspective on the philosophical/historical belief in God’s corporeality see Paulsen (1996), 6-94.

²⁵ The substance of his message is encapsulated in a couplet coined by Lorenzo Snow (later to become the fifth president of the Church) prior to the King Follett Discourse in June 1840. It states that “as man is God once was; as God is man may become.” [Snow Smith (1884), 46]. Also See Larson (1978), 193-208.

²⁶ D&C 129:1-2. Immortal ‘flesh and bone’ is juxtaposed to mortal ‘flesh and blood’ to explain various passages like 1 Cor. 15:50, Matt. 16:17, and Luke 24:39.

manner to address the divine, ‘Heavenly Father’, as a metaphoric description of a loving relationship between creature and Creator Mormons are uncomfortable with any interpretation that fully strips this title of its literalness.²⁷ Indeed, if the official status of the human potential for development to Godhood is at least debatable, the God-like ability to ultimately acquire a spiritual progeny when humans are resurrected and ‘exalted’ is firmly canonized. Joseph Smith taught that only in the highest degree of the Celestial Kingdom, which is the greatest in Mormonism’s stratified heaven, worthy couples married by the authority of the Priesthood may obtain an ‘increase’, a term which has been consistently interpreted as ‘spiritual offspring’.²⁸ Then, with this tenet in place, the heavy emphasis on eternal marriage, the common references to spiritual brotherhood and sisterhood, and the many family centred practices and sermons that characterize Mormonism it is not surprising that speculative pressures should arise in attempting to complete the theological family picture with missing pieces like a ‘Heavenly Mother’, God’s own family history, or Jesus’ marital status.

With the former in mind it is then possible to return to my previous claim that a ‘tension between principles’ is a core element of the Mormon theological structure and subsequently recognize an illustration of this very tension within the present subject of examination. If ‘materialistic monism’ is the highlighted principle whose ramifications underline similarity or closeness to God at a variety of possible levels principles that counter these influences in the opposite direction would instead emphasize differences and distance between humans and the divine. Several candidates exist for this counterbalancing role including ‘sin’, ever-present in the human experience, the attributes of God as described by the ‘omni’ adjectives, the need for processes of transfiguration in order for humans to withstand the presence of God, the recognition that revelation is limited to our capacity, that God ‘will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God,’ and others. While not all these theological tenets fit the proper definition of ‘principle’ they still may function as theological warnings that reduce the drive to associate the human to the divine to a point of distortion.

At the same time, ‘materialistic monism’ is so embedded in LDS consciousness that its ramifications are apparent at several levels of the Mormon experience. Far from

²⁷ In recent years Blake Ostler has provided the most comprehensive exposition of the LDS doctrine of Deity in juxtaposition to classical theism in his 3 volume treatise entitled ‘Exploring Mormon Thought.’ See especially Ostler (2001), 1-25. Also see Roberts (1998).

²⁸ D&C 131:4.

being merely an item of theological interest ‘the collapse of sacred distance’, as Givens puts it, came to ground the very identity of the Church, its members, and its founder.²⁹ In fact, Joseph Smith himself embodied such monistic tendencies as he claimed spiritual experiences of a tangible, direct, and vivid nature, whether involving day-light visions of angelic beings or translations of sacred texts from metallic plates. It further characterized his teachings and counsels, which ranged from the most sublime to the most practical and economical, involving God-given mandates for cities, armies, universities, banks, stores, etc. Certainly, as many contemporaries recognized it was infused in a personality that managed to reconcile prophetic revelation with wrestling, and dedicating temples with rambunctious playing with the boys. Contemporary Mormonism is not far removed from this picture with a Gospel that expands to include all of life’s relevant aspects, meetinghouses built both for worship services and recreational activities, bishops that may conduct meetings in Church on Sunday and business consultations throughout the week in their regular employment, or knowledge that is pursued for both secular and spiritual purposes.³⁰

Space does not allow me to list most relevant examples but to describe the depth and pervasiveness of this pattern it is sufficient to remember Armand Mauss’ general characterization of Mormonism, namely the nicely constructed metaphor of “an unending struggle between the angel and the beehive.”³¹ This tension is both constant and pervasive because it emerges within the context of a religion that embraces the totality of life and the totality of knowledge. Therefore, Mormonism is largely at odds with the post-enlightenment separation between the secular and the spiritual, since these are not seen as incompatible and dualistic categories but as intricately intersected aspects of daily experience. True, the Church has managed to absorb this distinction as it has accommodated to larger secular societies in the realms of government, politics, and economics; yet, history has not completely obliterated Mormon monistic perspectives in other areas of experience.³² For example, to underline the unity of the secular and the spiritual in the realm of knowledge acquisition there is no other

²⁹ Givens (2007), 37-52.

³⁰ For an historical review of the institutional church’s involvement in ‘temporal’ endeavours see Arrington and Bitton (1979), 262-83.

³¹ The angel is the symbol on top of most LDS temples, which Mauss associates with Mormonism’s focus on the spiritual and otherworldly. On the other hand, the beehive is the symbol of the state of Utah, pointing to Mormonism’s practical, industrious and this-worldly orientation. See Mauss (1994), 3-17.

³² For an accurate historical description of the process of institutional assimilation in early twentieth century America see Alexander (1986).

statement that is used more often at Brigham Young University than Brigham Young's commission to the institution's founding father Karl Maeser that he "ought not teach the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the Spirit of God."³³ And while it would be going too far either to conclude that Mormonism is pantheistic or to assume that LDS theology admits no metaphysical realm, the principle of materialistic monism has shaped Mormon theology so distinctly to clearly set it apart from other Christian theologies and theological anthropologies.

Whether this reality is to be judged as salutary or detrimental to Mormonism is a question for a separate context. Still, as with all LDS principles of its unchanging eternal Gospel, if materialistic monism is excessively highlighted to the neglect of other counterbalancing principles distortions are likely to emerge. Thus, Terryl Givens pointedly inquires about this possibility: "If God is shorn of ineffability and transcendence, or is construed in human terms, how does one find the reverential awe that moves one to true worshipfulness? If Jesus is our 'big brother,' how can he be our Lord and God?"³⁴ Yet, Mormon theology is sufficiently large and flexible to provide its own internal response to these questions in the form of a balance between the distance of apophatic theology and the closeness and comfort of anthropomorphic divinity. Furthermore, if the partial collapse of sacred distance can coexist with Otto's *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* Mormon perspectives on human nature can similarly accommodate the co-presence of the divine with the human, of the immortal with the mortal, or of the good with the fallen. In fact, as will increasingly become apparent, the complexities and difficulties inherent in this intra-human coexistence are at the core of both LDS and other Christian perspectives on emotions.

Specifically, as previously outlined, Mormonism emphasizes that internal unity and harmony between the individual grosser and finer elements, i.e. the body and the spirit, is central to the happy life. In this context, it is generally understood that the spirit is to function as the main guide and leader of the body although LDS theology does not create a stark evaluative separation between a godly spirit and a devilish fallen body. The difference in priority is rooted in functionality rather than in evaluations since the body is utterly non-functional or dead when separate from the spirit. Yet, human limitations are experienced as a whole person and the structural fusion of body and spirit makes it difficult if not utterly impossible to distinguish between purely

³³Maeser (1928), 79.

³⁴Givens (2007), 48.

spiritual or purely physical influences. Thus, while in a mortal state, there is no need for spiritual promptings or other kinds of divine influences to bypass the physical brain and to necessarily appear as ‘supernatural’. The Mormon soul is an intricate union of body and spirit; hence, a cognitive/affective concept of emotion has great affinity to a view of human nature where mind and body or spirit and physiology are essentially one.

At the same time, such internal fusion complicates matters in the actuality of daily life where the ideal of unity gives way to the reality of personal fragmentation as individuals feel pulled in different directions by conflicting desires, pressures, and drives. LDS theology partially conceptualizes the issue as an internal tension between the fallen and the divine as taught by Benjamin, the embodiment of a righteous BoM king, who states that “the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam,” “according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate” as Lehi, the first BoM prophet, had previously concluded.³⁵ On the other hand, a different LDS scripture states that “man was in the beginning with God...and every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning” and king Benjamin qualifies his previous statement on necessary enmity by adding “unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ.”³⁶ Thus, the Saints are driven to resolve their inner emotional tensions by seeking spiritual divine influence from without rather than by following a particular spiritual element from within. To be sure, the reception of divine communication is a process rooted in complexities, but this is a subject for a later focus.

In conclusion, Mormon materialistic monism has significant implications for an LDS theology of deity and for a theological anthropology relevant to the topic of emotions. It underlines LDS views on ‘spirit’, the corporeality of God, human nature and eternal destiny, unity versus fragmentation of the self, and other related issues. Specifically, it seems incompatible with older theories of emotion that proposed fundamental distinctions between the cognitive and the affective with the purpose of protecting the former from the latter. To the contrary, it appears to fit well within a view of emotion as an experience which is necessarily both cognitive and affective. Yet, materialistic monism is only one of the unchanging Mormon principles of the

³⁵ Mosiah 3:19; 2 Ne. 2:29.

³⁶ D&C 93:29, 38; Mosiah 3:19.

eternal Gospel and as such it needs to be kept in tension with other principles of equal significance within the wider picture of a Mormon theological worldview. One such principle is moral agency.

Moral agency

Agency is the personal ability to choose freely between alternative options. Therefore, agency requires both the minimal presence of two available choices as well as the absence of complete external coercion over one's process of selection.³⁷ The expression *moral agency* further qualifies both criteria and consequences that are inherent to common processes of choice; thus, within the 'high-accountability' theology of Mormonism *moral agency* is generally preferred to the popular term *free agency*.³⁸ In fact, LDS authorities have expressed concerns about potential distortions that could emerge from a concept of agency which is exclusively defined in terms of freedom rather than of morality.³⁹ Specifically, within the Mormon universe of eternal principles freedom of choice never admits the possibility of circumvention or of manipulation of the eternally fixed consequences attached to individual choices since this necessary association emerges from a principle of justice, which is constitutive of both God's and of the universe's very natures. Thus, divine *justice* as embodied in eternal law functions as the common paradigm of explanation for both punishments and rewards which emerge in consequence of individual choices.⁴⁰ In other words, although Mormonism contextualizes *justice* and *merit* through a counterbalancing principle of *mercy* (to be later explored) freedom never obscures accountability since freedom coexists with fixed moral boundaries.

³⁷ While the concept of agency overlaps significantly with the common philosophical and theological notion of 'free will' the LDS theological context uniquely frames the Mormon definition of agency. For a more detailed theological discussion on the LDS definition and significance of agency see Ostler (2001), 201-46. Also Widtsoe (1997), 16-18, 32-37 provides a lengthier description than the present section allows.

³⁸ Yet, many Latter-day Saints commonly use the term *free agency* in church lessons and sermons, although the expression appears with less frequency in the discourses of the Church's highest authorities.

³⁹ For example see Packer (1992), 66-68 and Uchtdorf (2006), 14-19.

⁴⁰ Such a deterministic link of choice and consequences is not limited to the Mormon ideas of eschatological judgment and eternal salvation. The inter-link between action, thoughts, behaviours and related consequences applies to some extent to the micro reality of the daily human experiences, although in manifestations, which are not necessarily self-evident. In fact, it is assumed that an immediately obvious link between actions and consequences could lead to 'conditioned' obedience rather than to choices based on principles of love for truth, God, and neighbour. Were agency to regularly cause this state of affairs, it would fail in the very purpose for which it is so crucial, namely in facilitating genuine spiritual growth and progression through pondered experience of life's choices and consequences.

There are yet other reasons which complicate any picture of automatic interlink between freedom and choice as amply demonstrated by the age-old philosophical debate on the subject. In fact, especially in the realm of behaviour (as opposed to thought) the human experience of agency usually occurs in contexts characterized by several constraints of both biological and social nature. LDS theology recognizes these difficulties and does not deny that choice options are often very limited or that the strength of enticing pressures in different directions is usually uneven. Yet, Mormonism remains *libertarian* in relation to ‘the free-will problem’ since it proclaims that freedom ultimately characterizes the core spiritual identity of individuals at the level of desire.⁴¹ Indeed, although desires are influenced and constrained in all possible directions Mormon theology recognizes a deep core or self which is ultimately non-reducible to other external factors as it involves an independent if only diffused desire in the general direction of good or of evil. Neal A. Maxwell (1926-2004), one of the members of the LDS Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in recent decades, summarized it thus: “Of course our genes, circumstances, and environments matter very much, and they shape us significantly. Yet there remains an inner zone in which we are sovereign, unless we abdicate. In this zone lies the essence of our individuality and our personal accountability.”⁴² In order to understand the theological roots of such ‘inner zone’ it is then necessary to provide further details on the Mormon concepts of *being*, *creation*, and *plan of salvation*.

As previously mentioned any concept of ‘beginning’ of existence must be understood in light of the Mormon rejection of creation *ex nihilo*. Thus, since Joseph Smith taught that all matter is self-existent and indestructible (although modifiable in form and characteristics) the universe did not materialize through a *First Cause* and individual beings never ‘began’ to exist.⁴³ With few others in the Judeo-Christian world LDS theology defines ‘divine creation’ as organization or transformation of matter, whether in relation to the ‘grosser’ matter of the natural world or to the ‘finer’

⁴¹ The literature on our civilization’s perennial debate about ‘free will’ is obviously voluminous. A good summary of its main problems and taxonomies is found in Kane (2005) or more succinctly in Kane (2002), 1-24.

⁴² Maxwell (1996), 21.

⁴³ Joseph Smith logically associated forward infinity with backward infinity in these terms: “Is it logic to say that a spirit is immortal and yet has a beginning? Because if a spirit has a beginning, it will have an end. That is good logic. I want to reason further on the spirit of man, for I am dwelling on the spirit and body of man--on the subject of the dead. I take my ring from my finger and liken it unto the mind of man, the immortal spirit, because it has no beginning. Suppose I cut it in two; as the Lord lives, because it has a beginning, it would have an end.” [Larson (1978), 203].

spiritual matter of individual beings.⁴⁴ Such distinct view of creation that denies a pre-existent nothingness has significant implications for the LDS perspective on agency. In fact, the divine creation of spirit ‘beings’ is said to have involved the transformation of a disembodied and independent form of existence called *intelligence*. As the Prophet explained, “all truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence.”⁴⁵ Such independence seems to imply a degree of agency, which is natural to the condition of intelligence.

To be sure, this is an area of LDS theology fraught with speculations and with varieties of interpretations. Whilst it is generally accepted that gross matter is only ‘acted upon’, lacking the ability to respond independently to other agents, some uncertainty exists on whether agency characterizes spirit-matter in its primal unorganised stage of existence as intelligence. B.H. Robert, an LDS authority and theologian living between the nineteenth and twentieth century and one of the greatest Mormon intellectuals, claimed that spirit-matter is matter that ‘acts’ at any stage of its own eternal development or progression. He characterized spirit-matter as inherently endowed with individuality and personhood, as well as possessing the power to act in some capacity as an agent, prior to any divine intervention, which would further organise it into a more developed being capable of greater agentive functions. Significantly, this perspective is particularly attractive to LDS theology because its philosophical foundation provides Mormon thinkers with unique tools that have been used in presenting a unique rational response to the ever-present ‘problem of evil.’⁴⁶

On the other hand, Bruce R. McConkie, prominent Mormon apostle and theologian of the late twentieth century, claimed that spirit-matter necessitates God’s act of creation and organisation in order to acquire both individuality and the ability to exercise agency. For McConkie spirit-matter in its pristine form exists as raw material for spiritual beings, superior to gross matter in quality and refinement, but similarly lacking individuality and ability to act. Therefore, he distinguishes between the singular undifferentiated *intelligence* that precedes spirit creation and the plural individualized *spirit intelligences* or *spirit beings* that emerge in consequence to God’s creative act. In this exegetical framework agency is not natural to uncreated

⁴⁴ A Jewish theologian who has criticized creation *ex nihilo* as biblically unfounded is Levenson (1994), xxix, 121-27. Some Christian process theologians have also rejected the concept. See Griffin (2001), 108-44.

⁴⁵ D&C 93:30.

⁴⁶ See Paulsen (2000), 53-65.

intelligence because it necessitates divine intervention in order to emerge as one of the core individual characteristics of spirit beings.⁴⁷ My personal reading of D&C 93 is closer to Roberts' interpretation, although McConkie rightly attempts to make use of other scriptural texts (especially Abr. 3) to elucidate this passage.⁴⁸

In any case, whether understood as a self-existent eternal reality or as a creating concession from a loving God the independence of personal will is at the foundation of the Mormon perspective on agency. Indeed, within the highly 'progressive' LDS theological framework of eternal growth it is possible for these separate views to co-exist comfortably since many Saints speak of agency both in terms of *eternal principle* and of *divine gift*. The connecting link between these distinct designations centres around divine interventions or transformations, which bring about those conditions that allow agency to continue and to develop in such circumstances as were not previously experienced. In other words, although God could potentially manipulate and limit His children's individual agency through the superior knowledge and power that He enjoys He instead chooses to endow us with expanded opportunities to make use of and to increase in the exercise of this very freedom. Mormon theology affirms this point strongly and repeatedly in its accounts of the pre-mortal realm of existence in which our early processes of development and transformation by means of God's 'creative' interventions are briefly highlighted.⁴⁹

In the first place, as I began to explain, intelligences' are transformed and embodied spiritually through a process of creation in which God acts as their Father. As a consequence of this first level of transformation and embodiment individuals find themselves in a higher stage of development with an increased capacity to act, to will, to know, and to feel, and with emerging attributes of unique personalities and identities. Yet, although descriptions of the characteristics of such spiritual beings are sketchy at best the Mormon saga of pre-mortality clearly depicts this first embodiment as a condition that is still characterized by significant limitations and obstacles, which are inherent to a spiritual form of existence. Therefore, as earlier highlighted, a further

⁴⁷ A scholarly theological review of various historical statements and questions associated with 'intelligence', including Roberts' and McConkie's, is found in Ostler (2001), 82-95, 99-100. Also for the historical development of the LDS doctrine of pre-mortal existence see Ostler (1982), 59-78.

⁴⁸ In support of McConkie's position it should be recognized that the five LDS canonical references which explicitly mention agency generally support the divine gift perspective. See D&C 101:78, Moses 4:3, and Moses 7:32. Also see Cannon (2007), 233-48.

⁴⁹ In the wider context of Western philosophical, literary, and theological perspectives on the subject of pre-mortal existence the forthcoming exploration by Terry Givens presents itself as a promising and needed publication in a largely neglected field of analysis. See Givens (2009).

developing stage and a further embodiment were held to be necessary, thus leading to what Mormons call the *second estate* or the human mortal condition of life on this earth.⁵⁰

To be sure, the *first estate*, or the interval between the creation of individual spirit children and the beginning of physical embodiment on earth, is conceptualized as a period of learning and maturation in the presence of the Heavenly Father. Yet, such progress is held to have been insufficient for the full potential development of God's children. Therefore, according to the Mormon narration of the pre-earthly existence, God devised a plan to overcome this obstacle and to enable His spirit children to pursue growth and progress in a different location and under different circumstances. He then presented and taught this plan to the spirits in His presence, who thus learned that life on earth would involve the possession of a physical, mortal body of flesh and blood, that the gift of agency would continue to be central in the lives of each individual on earth, and that the spiritual first-born of the Heavenly Father would come to the world to sacrifice Himself, to die, and to resurrect as the incarnate Jesus Christ. Indeed, His mission would provide the necessary redemption for a 'fallen' humanity following the transgression of Adam and Eve, which was bound to occur. Such then was God's *plan of salvation*, a term the Saints commonly use to identify the saga of humanity's eternal progression that spans from the pre-mortal to the post-mortal realms of existence.

The Mormon account continues by emphasizing that the plan of salvation as just described was not fully welcomed by one of the eldest of the spirit children, who was also one of the most advanced in knowledge, Lucifer or Satan. His opposition centred on some key aspects of the plan, particularly on the ability that God's children would have to choose whether to obey or to disregard their Heavenly Father's commandments. Thus, Satan proposed himself as the enforcer of obedience in an alternative to the original plan. Yet, God rejected his addendum and Lucifer responded in turn by rebelling against his Father and by attempting to persuade the heavenly spirits to follow him in opposition. This act of persuasion, which involved arguments, counterarguments and other forms of rhetoric as implicitly suggested, constituted a *war* for the loyalty of individual spirits. Since the focus of the debate involved the role that agency would acquire in the earthly experience this mythic event is often known as a

⁵⁰ The main canonical references for the descriptions of pre-mortal existence that I am about to outline are found in the PoGP, specifically in Moses 4:1-4 and in Abr. 3:22-28. Latter-day Saints also clearly use Rev. 12:7 and D&C 29: 36-38 when speaking of the *War in Heaven*.

War for Agency or *War in Heaven* and its casualties, the rebels, were numbered in the amount of ‘a third part’ of God’s children. In fact, as a consequence of this rebellion, the story continues, Satan and his followers were cast out from the presence of God, were denied physical embodiment, and presently continue their revolt on earth against God’s plan and against Jesus’ atonement.⁵¹

In the context of this narrative there are some elements of significance which are relative to the principle of agency. In the first place the focus on agency as the main issue of contention leading to the heavenly war functions to elevate its overall importance within the wider schema of LDS cosmology and soteriology. In other words, agency becomes, as it were, the eternal principle *par excellence* upon which the whole plan of salvation is founded and sustained. Furthermore, the *War for Agency* intensifies human accountability in the sense that the principle itself was chosen freely by each individual who has lived or is yet to live on earth. In fact, in the face of a possible alternative existence without agency the majority of God’s spirit children chose to preserve this valued principle alongside its accompanying risks and lack of guarantees, which involved the possibility of sin, separation from God, and living in the presence of others who could choose to live lives in radically negative directions. Therefore, for the Mormon faithful, personal responsibility for one’s present condition reaches backwards into the realm of pre-mortal existence, at least at the general level of our assent to an agency-driven plan. In short, we freely accepted a plan which involves necessary outcomes for our erroneous choices as well as negative consequences for the evil choices of some external agents, particularly of those with whom we share some kind of relationship.

Indeed, by explicitly interlinking loyalty to the Heavenly Father with agency the *War in Heaven* account underlines the inextricable connection between agency and personal relations. In this manner, as Douglas Davies indicates, principles and relations come to function in unison as the core organizational structure of Mormon soteriology.⁵² Yet, in the highly pragmatic and present-oriented theology of

⁵¹ In this summary I have attempted to outline what I see as the most common understanding of the *War in Heaven* narrative among contemporary Latter-day Saints. Historically, since canonical information on the subject is very limited, several LDS thinkers and authorities have suggested interpretations and additions aimed at completing this theological picture. Most of these speculations have not encountered widespread acceptance or even awareness by the main body of contemporary Saints although in the twentieth century some exegetical expansions received considerable exposure and became popular among Church members. Interpretations with racist overtones in particular have come to represent a source of embarrassment for present leaders. See Bush (1973), 11-68.

⁵² Davies (2003), 27.

Mormonism this eternal bond is mirrored in the daily realities of mortal life on earth, both at the motivational and at the consequential levels of experience. In fact, interpersonal relations often constitute a significant factor in the evaluation of alternatives, which precede the implementation of particular choices. Furthermore, the same relations often emerge affected, in either positive or negative directions, as a consequence of particular agentive decisions. In other words, no human ever functions or chooses in total isolation and the *War in Heaven* narrative rooted in a spiritual family context underlines the LDS belief that social contextualization of even the most significant decisions is an eternal reality. This is largely perceived as an unavoidable and even desirable state of affairs as long as relations are properly prioritized and organized according to principles of truth, such as love and obedience to God's commandments. In the context of an LDS theology of emotion this recognition is significant because it allows for and encourages a complex interconnection between emotional and rational elements in decision making.⁵³

The *War in Heaven* is further significant for its inferences about God's relationship to His spirit children. In fact, God's love is highlighted by His decision to place agency at the centre of His plan since agency appears as the only principle of infinite development, which can ultimately bring His children to obtain "all things". To be sure, and as previously indicated, the story suggests that a being superior in knowledge and intelligence may potentially restrict an inferior being from exercising his agency, since Satan had proposed exactly this particular course of action. Yet, although God similarly could override agency or constrict it in various manners He generally chooses to respect it even at the cost of spiritual casualties. In this light, the love He has for His children is underlined by His desire to see them reach their highest

⁵³ Such interconnection can also be extracted from the *War in Heaven* narrative through a particular exegetical reading. In fact, the narrative possibly implies that Satan's success in bringing one third of the heavenly spirits to follow him may have originated in his ability to appeal to emotions of fear and uncertainty associated with God's plan of salvation. On the other hand Satan's proposal guaranteed a form of salvation which, although lower, did not appear to include the risks inherent in personal choice. Furthermore, God's plan may have been presented as particularly risky inasmuch as it was based on trust in Jesus' perfect life of obedience and in His act of Atonement, which had not yet taken place. Had Christ failed in just one instance, the whole plan would have been frustrated and Satan may have played on this fear in order to gather followers. Therefore, each individual's decision in this regard may be seen as a complex interconnection of motivating factors including one's relationship to Jesus, trust and loyalty to Him, one's fears about personal abilities to deal with freedom, and the core tension between desires for security, freedom, and progression..

possible potential as He allows agency to continue unhindered through a deliberate decision rooted in love rather than by a logical necessity that He is bound to abide to.⁵⁴

Given such high divine regard for the principle of agency a particularly complex question for the faithful Saint involves the degree to which God is believed to intervene in the daily lives and problems of His spirit children. In other words, although on the one hand Mormons are not deists on the other hand the LDS view of divine omnipotence needs some qualifications since human agency appears to be a major factor that affects God's interaction with His children on earth. In this respect the God of Mormonism resembles the being described by the relational theologies of both process and open theisms.⁵⁵ In fact, in divine/human relationships not only do humans have the choice to either welcome God or to reject Him but they can also choose to affect God in some degree through their wishes, experiences, and desires. Of course, God's knowledge, power, and attributes, especially love, make the interaction quite unbalanced so that when viewed in relation to human knowledge and understanding divine power cannot be defined as anything less than perfect or complete. Thus, through these claims Mormons do not renounce God's omnipotence but contextualize it in tension with the personal responsibility which is inherent to individual moral agency.⁵⁶

In conclusion, the heavy emphasis on agency which roots LDS cosmology, theodicy, soteriology, and all other areas of Mormon theology is likely to find no equal within the theological spectrum of Christian traditions. This is probably both good and bad news for Mormons. In fact, while on the one hand the non-reducible nature of

⁵⁴ At the same time distinguishing between God's will and God's logical possibilities of behaviour is a theologically useless endeavour. In the Mormon theology of Deity God's actions conform to those laws that are associated with the condition of Godhood without which 'God would cease to be God' (Alma 42: 13, 22, 25). Clearly, LDS theology views God as a being who is perfectly willing and rejoices in following these laws so much that He embodies them in His character, will, and disposition. Being a god and doing the things of a god are one and the same natural condition for the Father in Heaven. Whether God has a logical possibility to go against the laws which He has chosen to submit to is a point of no relevance in light of the fact that His perfect will and character make it an impossibility in actuality.

⁵⁵ Good summarizing chapters that explore the similarities and differences between LDS and Christian relational theologies are Griffin and McLachlan (2007), 161-210 and Pinnock and Paulsen (2007), 489-553. Also see Ostler (2001), 43-65.

⁵⁶ Mormonism has not followed classical Christianity in its philosophical efforts to protect divine omnipotence from all possible external influences. For many classical theologians a God moved by His creatures as well as by His own choices is not sufficiently independent or omnipotent. Mormon theology, instead, has been more concerned with maintaining the focus on a perfect God with whom humanity could interact. Thus, Mormons are willing to redefine God's perfection if it understood to mean that the divine lies above and beyond any influence that His own creatures' actions and feelings could exert. To be sure, such emphasis on divine passibility is not unique to Mormonism since several modern Christian theologians, like Moltmann for example, have similarly embraced the theme of an empathic suffering God. See McGrath (2006), 211-14.

eternal moral agency uniquely strengthens the Mormon response to the classical *problem of evil* on the other hand such pervasive prominence functions as a liability if this awesome sense of accountability is experienced by the Saints as an excessive discouraging burden. Indeed, overemphasizing personal responsibility for salvation to the neglect of divine grace is bound to shift to the individual the weight of responsibility for all imperfections. In turn, this condition may lead the faithful down a path which culminates in the spiritually and psychologically damaging effect of a compulsive perfectionism with either an accompanying hopelessness or a false sense of security. The popularity and quantity of publications by LDS ‘neo-orthodox’ writers, which attempt to bring greater balance and hope through a renewed emphasis on grace, suggest that this distortion has indeed affected a number of Saints.⁵⁷

However, as writers like Millet and Robinson repeatedly argue, such distortions are not intrinsic to Mormon theology. As highlighted in the discussion about materialistic monism the LDS principle of agency needs to be kept in tension with those counterbalancing principles of its theology which contextualize the conceptualization of agency. One such principle, which I explore in the final section of this chapter, is divine Atonement, whose consequences and significance are deep and all-encompassing. In fact, the overarching supremacy of individual accountability is alleviated by the power of Atonement and by its allied principles of mercy and grace, which play a central sanctifying role in the spiritual progression of the individual. Still, for now my main focus has been to highlight the centrality of moral agency and of its associated concepts of justice and merit in the framework of the Mormon theological tradition.⁵⁸ In turn, this emphasis is resonant of the socio-scientific recognition attached to personal responsibility for emotional experiences, which was highlighted in the previous chapter and which centred on the attention placed over processes of emotional regulation.

Eternal Progression

In order to draw a proper association between accountability and moral agency, and possibly to alleviate the burden of responsibility that comes with individual

⁵⁷ One example of a ‘neo-orthodox’ LDS publication is Millet (2003).

⁵⁸ LDS philosophers Richard Williams and Terry Warner have emphatically advocated ‘agentive theory’ as one foundational aspect of LDS approaches to pastoral counselling and self-help. See Williams (2005), 116-42 and Warner (2001). Also see Judd (2005), 98-115 for an LDS perspective on how agency should be conceptualized in relation to the free-will versus determinism debate.

freedom, Mormon theology does not only affirm agency but also contextualizes it within the full scope of its eternal existence. One manner in which it does so is by emphasizing agency's *purpose* as the primary instrument through which each individual's desire for growth and progression may be achieved. Indeed, moral agency may even be viewed as constitutive of this very desire given the LDS canonical suggestion that the drive and independence which characterize *intelligence* are agentive in themselves. This further underlines the great dynamism of the Mormon universe of existence where individual beings are inherently driven to activity for the purpose of either personal or communal progression. Thus, even the perfect God of Mormonism is not satisfied with eternal rest, but chooses to carry out a work for the advancement of His children, namely to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."⁵⁹ In short, the Mormon journey of progression is truly eternal because it never culminates in a state of complete stasis. Within the LDS perspective eternal bliss is hardly conceivable without some form of advancement.

This individual journey, as already indicated, is characterized by subsequent stages of development corresponding to distinctive forms of embodiment. To be sure, the Mormon 'wheel of existence' is linear rather than circular since it is characterized by the continuation of one's identity and core individual make-up. What changes is the degree of knowledge and progression in relation to God's ideal character as well as each stage's unique form of material body, which is taken through progressively more mature degrees of development. In fact, the path begins with *intelligence*, it continues through the stages of *spirit*, *human*, and *post-mortal spirit*, before culminating in *resurrected being*. Therefore, the human physical body of the present mortal condition does not constitute a beginning of individuality or personality because the foundation of one's own eternal history is laid in the pre-mortal saga of existence. Still, *a veil of forgetfulness* prevents humans from having access to knowledge acquired in previous stages of existence although occasional 'piercings' of the veil are deemed to be possible, particularly in the form of a sense of familiarity experienced in relation to truth or to specific individuals.⁶⁰

Then, this original core of eternal personality, as the main conceptualized structure of the theomorphic nature and potentiality of the human individual, becomes

⁵⁹ Moses 1:39

⁶⁰ In a few words, *déjà-vus* of knowledge, mostly of spiritual matters, and *déjà-vus* of relationships, rather than of experiences, characterize a Mormon theology of "thinning of the veil". See Madsen (1998), 456-65.

an object of ‘discovery’ or more properly, to use Truman Madsen’s expression, ‘recovery’. In fact, notwithstanding the vagueness and uncertainty about its content Mormons find in it strong validation for their spiritual identity, specifically by interpreting it as the main repository of their God-given personal value and embryonic divinity. Hence, the challenge for the LDS faithful is to facilitate the eternal development of this self-existent essence while in a condition of physical mortality, a condition which is attributed in unison with other Christian traditions to *the Fall* of Adam and Eve. Yet, the LDS view presents some unique perspectives on *the Fall*, the most significant of which lies in its emphasis on Adam and Eve’s transgression as *felix culpa*. This is explicitly captured in the following BoM passage:

And now, behold, if Adam had not transgressed he would not have fallen, but he would have remained in the garden of Eden. And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end. And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good, for they knew no sin. But behold, all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things. Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.⁶¹

Thus, although in the short-run the consequences of *the Fall* are to a large degree debilitating, in the long-run they are empowering when viewed from the wider perspective of the LDS saga of eternal progression.⁶²

At the root of this distinction lies the LDS view on the need for ‘opposition’, whose function is at least two-fold. On the one hand, opposition enables the logical attribution of meaning through the conceptualization of opposite pairs; on the other hand, it makes agency possible as it endows opposing directions of behaviour with the kind of attractiveness that generally prevent foregone or necessary choices. The textual basis for this perspective is a BoM statement by Lehi, whose original context appears to be metaphysical rather than experiential; yet, as already hinted, LDS theology naturally tends to conflate the practical with the spiritual. Thus, the scripture states,

For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things. If not so... righteousness could not be brought to pass, neither wickedness, neither holiness nor misery, neither good nor bad. Wherefore, all things must needs be a compound in one; wherefore, if it should be one body it must needs remain as dead... Wherefore, it must needs have been created for a thing of naught; wherefore there would have been no purpose in the end of its creation. Wherefore, this thing must needs destroy the wisdom of God and his eternal purposes... And to bring about his eternal purposes in the end of man, after he had created our first parents, and ...all things which are created, it must needs be that there was an opposition; even the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life; the one being sweet and the other bitter. Wherefore, the Lord God gave unto

⁶¹ 2 Ne. 2:22-25.

⁶² For a theological exposition of LDS perspectives on *the Fall* see Gaskill (2005). Compare to McGrath (2006), 361-67.

man that he should act for himself. Wherefore, man could not act for himself save it should be that he was enticed by the one or the other.⁶³

Furthermore, as a consequence of *the Fall* ‘opposition’ was carried over into mortality in the form of biological limitations or of genetic tendencies in the realm of cognition, emotion or behaviour, which in turn constitute the “mortal overlay” that regularly restricts the individual in his desires and actions.⁶⁴ When added to the inherent environmental limitations that emerge from human social contexts and to our general inability to access pre-mortal knowledge it is clear that opposition is a defining element of the human experience.

Still, Mormonism approaches opposition with optimism since the individual’s struggle for goodness in the context of this resistance functions as a primary instrument which facilitates development of personal character. Hence, the common metaphor that compares personal struggles to overcome opposition to the stress that muscles must undergo in order to grow in size and strength, particularly in a weight lifting setting. Therefore, notwithstanding the balancing forces in the direction of grace and mercy such a picture inherently interlinks growth and progression with personal effort, sacrifice, and work. Within this dynamic picture of progression it is agency that makes movement possible and it is moral agency in a context of both internal and external opposition that characterizes and distinguishes the creature who acts from the thing that is acted upon.⁶⁵ Then, as mutually dependent forces with an increased capability to function in the context of a physically embodied organism vis-à-vis a spiritual one, opposition and agency are at the core of the Mormon justification for the necessity of the human mortal experience.

On the other hand, agency and opposition do not guarantee progression: it is the particular mode of their employment which determines whether development, regression, or stasis will ensue. Without a purposeful and informed direction of thought or action the ability to choose is not a necessary good that the Saints feel comfortable in glorifying a priori. Fortunately, God has provided and continues to provide needed direction to facilitate a correct use of agency which enables individual progression in the face of recurrent opposition. Furthermore, God has also intervened

⁶³ 2 Ne. 2: 11-12, 15-16.

⁶⁴ For a psycho/theological discussion of the ‘mortal overlay’ see Bergin (2002), 29-47.

⁶⁵ Distinctly, some have argued that LDS canonical texts seem to extend agency to the planet earth as such (D&C 77:1; 88:18,25; 130:9). The largest and most well-known argument in support of animistic influences on Joseph Smith’s thinking is Brooke (1994).

through His Son's Atonement to prevent humans' inevitable misuse of agency from functioning as an insurmountable obstacle to their progression. In this context, I aim to briefly describe some of the main forms of divine assistance as I now explore three specific areas which embody 'developmental potentiality' in Mormon theology, i.e. *revelation, repentance, and family relations*. Then, I conclude the chapter with an analysis of what ultimately frames all forms of individual spiritual development, namely the LDS theology of Atonement.

Revelation

In the Mormon perspective there is hardly any significant individual progression that may occur without an accompanying growth in the realm of knowledge. Thus, the developing soul is first and foremost a learning soul, whose knowledge is being expanded and refined through various stages of eternal experience. Indeed, it is this heavy emphasis on knowledge acquisition which has led some to affirm that Mormonism represents "a purely American gnosis."⁶⁶ To be sure, the LDS rhetoric on the importance of knowledge and education is not limited to the metaphysical. In fact, statistics showing the number of Mormons with University degrees confirm that the emphasis is at least as pragmatic as it is soteriological, although these kinds of demarcations are not necessarily compatible with an LDS theological framework which interprets truth as 'one great whole'.⁶⁷ Then, knowledge acquisition is at least as much about a general searching attitude of the developing individual as it is about the assimilation of specific soteriological information. Such extensive scope was highlighted by Joseph Smith himself in his statement that "one of the grand fundamental principles of 'Mormonism' is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may."⁶⁸

At the same time, not all truth possesses equal utility and not all knowledge is 'necessary for salvation', as the Saints would express it. In short, while a search for truth is an imperative characteristic of the developing individual, truthful content may variously be classified in relation to its soteriological functional importance. Thus, Mormons seek for guidance not only in their daily processes of discernment between truth and error but also in the ever-present necessity to prioritize knowledge acquisition

⁶⁶ Bloom (1992), 123.

⁶⁷ See statistics in Duke (1998), 83.

⁶⁸ Smith and Roberts (1970), 5:499.

within a human context of limited time and resources. Furthermore, since the ‘mortal overlay’ deeply affects the brain by limiting its capacities for memory, perception, attention, and other processing abilities, Mormonism’s epistemology clearly extends its reach beyond human reason to the recognition and inclusion of divine revelation. In this context Mormon theology is built on a similar foundation as wider Christianity although the LDS understanding of revelation is also unique in some of its core aspects.⁶⁹

In the first place Mormon theology presents no explicit limitations to the contextual realms within which revelation may operate. It extends from the most ‘religious’ spheres of lesson preparations or other ecclesiastical activities to various items of personal importance that may involve employment, education, or interpersonal relationships. To be sure, individual Saints differ in relation to what they hold to be appropriate for revelatory input and LDS leaders have occasionally counselled members not to trivialize revelation by praying for divine illumination in those contexts where personal preference is mostly non-consequential. Still, the search for revelation, its interpretation, and its meaning-making potential constitute such pervasive elements of the LDS spiritual life to make them function as the very centre of the varieties of Mormon religious experiences. On the other hand, limitations are present in the context of scope or jurisdiction of revelatory messages, which are highly structured according to the responsibilities and specific areas of authority within the LDS hierarchy. Thus, it is possible to speak of ‘institutional’ revelation and of ‘personal’ revelation as coexisting dimensions of a single Mormon theology of revelation. Indeed, this is not a demarcation between two different ‘kinds’ of revelation since the distinction centres on extension of authoritativeness of revelatory statements rather than on modes of reception or on dynamics of ‘spiritual’ interactions.⁷⁰

In fact, Mormon theology affirms that all human beings may receive divine communication by means of spiritual manifestations, which are not an exclusive prerogative of a selected class of mystics. Therefore, access to revelation is potentially universal, although differences in degrees of revelatory intensity, in specificity and in abilities to receive or to accurately interpret divine communication are openly

⁶⁹ An exploration of the Mormon concept of revelation vis-à-vis other Christians perspectives can be found in Hansen (1985), 51-57.

⁷⁰ Of course, the relationship between ‘institutional’ and ‘personal’ revelation may potentially involve conflict. See Compton (1991), 34-41 and Stannard (1991), 49-51.

recognized.⁷¹ One way in which such a wide accessibility is rhetorically strengthened is through an emphasis on the need for each member to make use of the two primary revelatory sources, which are broadly and consistently available: prayer and scripture. Therefore, Mormons seek for divine illumination mainly in the form of spiritual answers to their specific prayers, which petition for guidance and knowledge about a particular state of affairs. Similarly, the Saints approach scripture as sacred texts, which are uniquely instrumental to God's purposes in providing not only general guidance but also very personalized instructions. This process, which leads to the extraction of individualized meaning, is facilitated by the canonical direction to "liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning."⁷²

To be sure, Mormonism leaves room for less ordinary revelatory experiences by highlighting the uniqueness and purpose of single mediated settings of divine communication (patriarchal blessings) or by emphasizing the sacrality of demarcated space, which facilitates the reception of individual illumination (LDS temples).⁷³ At the same time, as Terryl Givens has noted, the BoM insists on depicting revelatory experiences as dialogic, even conversational encounters with a divine reality that literally speaks and responds like ordinary human beings.⁷⁴ Such a radically literal understanding of divine communication was further strengthened by the descriptions of Joseph Smith's own theophanies, including the First Vision and the visitations of the angel Moroni. Therefore, Mormons encounter the same tension in relation to revelation as they do in relation to the wider issue of materialistic monism, namely the balancing of a sacred, spiritual, other-worldly experience with the ordinary, widely accessible, and physical characteristics which similarly contribute to its definition. The force of this tension is particularly evident when one begins to explore the modalities of spiritual communication as they are conceptualized in the LDS theological framework of revelation.⁷⁵

Space will not allow a thorough examination of all the pneumatological dimensions of the Mormon perspective on revelation although in the latter part of this chapter I endeavour to draw the main contours of 'Spirit' as it is understood in the LDS

⁷¹ For the significance of revelation as unifying universal principle of a multi-ethnic international church see Seshachari (1980), 38-46.

⁷² 1 Ne. 19:23.

⁷³ A study that outlines the general content of LDS patriarchal blessings is Bates (1993), 1-29.

⁷⁴ See Givens (2002), 209-39.

⁷⁵ For a relatively systematic description of the various facets and complexities of 'revelation' by one LDS Apostle see Oaks (1982), 20-26.

context. At this point it is central to simply highlight the fact that contemporary Mormonism heavily stresses the cognitive/affective internal nature of spiritual communication while not fully excluding an a priori possibility of visions, revelatory dreams, or other outstanding forms of divine manifestations. Thus, when claiming to have received inspiration or revelation Mormons usually make use of terms like ‘prompting’, ‘feeling’, ‘impression’, ‘sense’, etc. This is not vocabulary that generally implies communication of full propositions; instead, it has reference mostly to confirmatory or refuting intimations about particular courses of action, which usually follow the individual’s preliminary decision to move in a specific direction. Although a phenomenology of LDS religious experiences would indicate that some members claim to receive propositional forms of divine communication (in the form of novel thoughts, for example) I suspect that the great majority of Mormons would commonly attribute revelatory quality to promptings or feelings, which are interpreted as either positive or negative responses to tentative individual deliberations.⁷⁶

Therefore, by emphasizing the need for the petitioning individual’s preliminary work Mormon theology brings moral agency to the forefront of this issue. Indeed, although God’s answers cannot be constricted because they are to occur “in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will” the message of the LDS revelatory framework is one of relative significance of individual desires and of its accompanying efforts in the context of the communicative process.⁷⁷ In this manner, revelation remains ‘dialogic’ and even conversational, although less immediately so than how it is depicted in the BoM. Then, in this context of more ‘filtered’ communication tension-causing opposition emerges perhaps even more prominently from internal rather than external sources. It includes intricate mixtures of motivations, thoughts, feelings, and confusing desires as well as pre-revelatory mental struggles, which are finalized to the evaluation of particularly problematic courses of action. In other words, both in what he says and in what he hears back through long and difficult experience the petitioner must learn how to properly function in a context of revelatory communication.

Yet, revelation does not only provide a locus for its own tension and opposition but it also supplies the means through which wider tension-causing oppositions and

⁷⁶ See, for example, two perspectives on personal experiences of revelation in Maxwell (1996), 80 and Anderson (1992), 34-38.

⁷⁷ D&C 88:68.

uncertainties may be resolved. Hence, one is to grow both in the principle of revelation as he is to grow from the employment of the very same principle in one's life. In so doing the individual is led on a course of increasing knowledge, which may transcend, to a degree, the capacities of the imperfect rational mind. For the Mormon faithful these are not matters of little import since the knowledge acquired through revelation, while helpful and comforting in the here and now, ultimately sheds light on the very nature of God and on the deepest essence of the individual's own character, two aspects which are intricately interrelated in the LDS theomorphic view of anthropology.⁷⁸ To be sure, the process of growth, whether in revelation or in any other matter, is far from being linear and at times it even happens to reverse direction. In the Mormon theological view humans make many mistakes inadvertently but at times we wilfully choose a path that sets us back on our trajectory of eternal development, i.e. the path of sin. Thus, given such human instability lasting growth could only be achieved through a process that would facilitate deeper change in the very tendencies and desires of the individual. Repentance is such a process and it is to its examination in the Mormon theological context that I now turn.

Repentance

It is a firm tenet of LDS theology that the human experience lies at the core of the eternal progression of the individual. At the same time, the mortal condition, which Adam and Eve introduced, is both a step forward and a step downward, at least temporarily, for God's spirit family. In fact, life on earth involves at least two impeding conditions that, if left unconquered, prevent individual souls from returning to live in the presence of their Heavenly Father. BoM prophet Jacob calls these obstacles "that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit."⁷⁹ In other words both the death of the physical body and the human reality of sin, which Jacob calls hell, are potentially destructive. It will be the focus of the last section in this chapter to explore more fully how the LDS conception of Atonement provides a solution to this problem. The present concern is to examine the broad effects of the human response to personal sin on the trajectory of individual progression.

⁷⁸ In his famous King Follett Discourse Joseph Smith claimed that "If men do not comprehend the character of God, they do not comprehend themselves." [Larson (1978), 198].

⁷⁹ 2 Ne. 9:10

Mormons emphasize sin in its actual quantifiable individual manifestations rather than focusing on a general or collective condition which is inherent to the human state. For a tradition so concerned with personal accountability there is expectedly little stress on any theological content which may justify a feeling of helplessness in relation to sin. In fact, the Saints underline knowledge as a presupposed condition for the existence of sin, thus excluding any possibility that young children may sin. In short, the biblical definition of sin which is most attractive to Mormons is James' statement: "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."⁸⁰ Still, given the immanent presence of 'the light of Christ', which endows all human beings with a basic discerning power between good and evil (the core knowledge activated in human encounters with sin), most are faced with the responsibility and the capability of avoiding sin. Therefore, the individual process of repentance is set in motion by an initial recognition of personal responsibility in light of the potential alternative of a non-sinful action, word, or thought. In turn, this *recognition* causes a feeling of *remorse* that is triggered by the love one experiences toward God, truth, others, etc. When possible and appropriate, *restitution* must accompany this internal process, which should then culminate in a renewed desire to live in obedience to God's commandments through a life of *righteousness*.⁸¹

Of course, as is common to the structure of the whole LDS spiritual life, these various expressions of penitence represent only the human side of the full equation, which necessarily includes divine intervention and interaction. In fact, the Atonement plays an indispensable role in the progression and effectiveness of the whole experience of personal repentance. At the root of this significance lies the Atonement's most immediate and recurrent influence in the lives of individuals, namely the facilitating even enabling role that makes the presence of the Holy Spirit a living reality in the hearts of the faithful. Without the Atonement's effects such a spiritual presence would be utterly and permanently rejected at the first occurrence of sin. Instead, through repentance, those obstacles, which are consequential to sin and not necessarily permanent to the human condition, may be removed. Therefore, since it functions to repair a spiritual damage, which unavoidably halts any possibility of significant growth,

⁸⁰ James 4:17

⁸¹ In Mormon circles these progressive steps are sometimes called the four Rs of the repentance process. In the case of the most serious sins 'confession' to a Church bishop should also be included. One recent sermon that explains repentance somewhat systematically is Nelson (2007), 102-05. but the most extensive popular work on the subject in LDS circles is probably Kimball (1969).

repentance plays a restoring role. In fact, as Mormonism repeatedly emphasizes, when the individual is left to his own strength or abilities and devoid of the Spirit of God the path that follows will be one of regression rather than of progression.

Therefore, with the Spirit acting as the enabling presence that comforts, reveals, strengthens, and guides, repentance repairs the human soul not to a static pre-existing condition but to a dynamic progressing state that is central to the purpose of this earthly experience. To be sure, Mormon leaders emphasize that sin is not needed in order for God's Spirit to be manifested; righteousness is the real prerequisite, not sin followed by repentance. However, since some degree of sin is unavoidably real repentance can limit the damage of the diversion, destruction, or enervation that accompanies the various manifestations of sin. Then, since Spirit enables change as it aids the individual to follow on the illuminated path of personal growth, repentance is in a sense necessary for most positive change to occur. Furthermore, repentance potentially facilitates growth not only through the positive consequences intrinsic to the Spirit's 'reinstatement' but also through the negative ones, which are inherent to the spiritual outcomes of sinning. In other words, sensitivity to spiritual loss may provide greater motivation for later efforts aimed at the avoidance of sin.

Finally, notwithstanding the objective of a sinless life, Mormon theology counterbalances the realm of the ideal with the realistic recognition that repentance is a life-long daily endeavour, which no human being will ever be able to transcend. Then, through the permanency of this dimension repentance is conceptualized both as a single repeatable process applicable to specific identifiable sins and as a general attitude of submission and humility before God's grandeur and perfection, which ought to be permanently fixed in the human heart. In both cases the indicator of a true or sufficient repentance will take the form of a renewed presence of the Holy Spirit, which will often endow the individual with an increased ability to abandon sin and to continue in the path of eternal growth with a reduced number of spiritual impediments. One of the main contexts for such individual progression, which LDS theology amply emphasizes, is the family setting. It is to this topic that I now turn as I aim to present a brief survey of its theological significance.

Family Relations

The family is one of the core defining characteristics of all Mormon theological orthodoxy and related orthopraxis. Indeed, it is as central to LDS soteriology as it is to

Mormon conceptualizations of all ideal religious and secular behaviours. Then, it is no surprise that *family* appears prominently and frequently in all forms of LDS rhetoric and expression culminating in the 1995 “The Family: a Proclamation to the World”, which was issued by the central governing body of the Church.⁸² This document is an ideal illustration of the bivalent and pragmatic nature of LDS theology as it highlights both the family’s theological significance within the Mormon saga of eternal progression and its pre-eminence in the context of all possible social organizational structures of mortality.⁸³ Thus, family is central to both the immediacy of the human condition and to the more distant soteriological foundations of a pre-mortal and post-mortal eternity. The necessary interconnection between these two realms of existence is perhaps nowhere else as evident as in the Mormon focus on ‘proxy work’ for the salvation of the dead. In fact, it is primarily the LDS emphasis on eternal family, which drives Mormons to spend considerable time engaged in genealogical research and in the subsequent temple work in behalf of the dead.

At the same time, much of the Mormon path to spiritual development is concerned with the individual. In fact, the first two principles of the Gospel, faith and repentance, emerge in consequence of those personal endeavours, which lie at the core of individual conversion. Moral agency, while functioning within the wider framework of family and community interactions, is certainly a principle reducible to individual accountability. Indeed, most ordinances, such as baptism, confirmation, or ordination, are practices with salvific value focused on the individual. Therefore, the centrality of the family in Mormonism is not incompatible with a concern with the individual because salvation *begins* with the individual and it extends to the unit of the family. It follows that even for those members who are single or in otherwise very difficult and dysfunctional family situations the ultimate ideal of an eternal family of love and harmony is a theological and psychological necessity. In the mortal meanwhile, and in addition to any efforts aimed at strengthening one’s biological family unit, it is the

⁸² The significance of this act is apparent when it is recognized that this proclamation on the family is only the fourth such world proclamation in the whole history of the LDS Church. See text in Hinckley (1995), 102.

⁸³ Parenthetically, the LDS paradigmatic view of family affects both macro and micro levels of social organization. In the first place, Mormons do not make reference to the ‘human family’ in purely metaphorical terms given the literal spiritual family relatedness that characterizes humanity’s eternal nature. Similarly, the Saints commonly speak of their local congregations in terms of ‘ward family’ and address each other with the title of brother or sister. At the same time Mormonism strongly supports the view that any community, nation, and society at large can only be as strong, happy, and stable as are its constitutive family units. Thus, social structures are both a large family and a conglomeration of many families.

responsibility of each individual to be engaged in family-focused behaviour as the understanding of *family* is extended to include the congregational or communal meaning of the term.⁸⁴

Therefore, in the LDS dynamic sequence of spiritual priorities, family stands at the very centre with the individual preceding it and the community following it. In another sense, family is the culmination of spiritual priorities if the meaning of family is expanded to include local, national, or international human communities.

Parenthetically, in this duality of meaning finds expression one of the core paradoxes of Mormon culture, namely the tension between home and larger society, or between the peculiar and the universal. In short, conversion begins indeed with the individual but it culminates in family exaltation, as an LDS leader has recently stressed. Although individuals may still partake of ‘salvation’ without their families such ‘saved’ condition must be understood in the context of the stratified soteriological picture of Mormonism where salvation is inferior to exaltation in glory, capacities, and sociality. In fact, only ‘exalted’ beings may eventually dwell in the presence of their entire family, both spiritual and physical, which includes Heavenly Parents, Jesus Christ, as well as earthly parents, spouses, and children.⁸⁵

To be sure, in defining ‘eternal life’ as the condition of existence in God’s presence with maximum happiness the Mormon perspective is not unique. Yet, in comparison to other Christian theological approaches Mormonism adds a specific emphasis on the presence of family as a core source of such happiness. Furthermore and truly uniquely, Mormon theology makes the daring claim that eternal bliss is somewhat infinitely expandable in degrees which are proportional to the eternal expansion of the family unit. In other words, one’s happiness or glory (the two terms can be used synonymously in this context) will continue to enlarge as a consequence of one’s attainment of eternal posterity, although the exact nature of this spiritual achievement is not exactly demarcated. Thus, what characterizes the Mormon view of eternal life is not only its duration and joyous nature, but also its potential for ‘spiritual’ procreation of ‘eternal lives’. This, in fact, represents the model of existence which is presently experienced by the Father in Heaven, and which is offered as the attainable

⁸⁴ Several LDS authoritative statements clarify that the family is not to function as the sole focus of service and concern for an individual, but as the first and paramount one. For example, Joseph Smith stated that “a man filled with the love of God is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world anxious to bless the whole human race.” [Smith and Smith (1977), 174].

⁸⁵ See Nelson (2008), 7-10.

objective for all His children. Then, the Mormon saga of eternity appears as an enlarging universe of family connection, population, and progression, with its significant associated increase of glorious exaltation.⁸⁶

To some extent the Mormon perception of family in the present tense mirrors this heavenly picture. Indeed, while family circumstances in the mortal condition are often quite removed from the ideal state of future eternities the family is to function *now* as the main ‘laboratory’ for character-based growth and development. In other words, the family should function as the primary school of virtue for mortality in both its supportive and challenging aspects. This means that the individual mostly learns to love and to shape his emotions in the family, but it is also in the family that the person often encounters the opposition which is a necessary ingredient for the spiritual development process. Alas, while in the human condition, some families may function more as a source of opposition than as a source of spiritual nourishment. In these contexts individuals may find special meaning in an expanded conceptualization of family that includes Church and other supporting sources. Still, even in functional families that provide needed love and support, one finds ample opportunities to grow in the emulation of Christ-like attributes like love, patience, and endurance. This growth process is indeed eternal and perhaps frustratingly long but in the Mormon theological unity of the pragmatic present with both past and future of promise the journey is at least as important as the destination itself.

In summary, within the present section I have highlighted three core dimensions of the Mormon principle of eternal progression, namely revelation, repentance, and family relations. Furthermore, alongside materialistic monism and moral agency, I have selected eternal progression as the third principle of Mormon theology of unique significance to the topic of emotion. In fact, I have aimed to highlight a relationship of affinity between two separate but related discourses on emotion, namely the theological and the previously outlined scientific one. Specifically, the intricate fusion of cognitive and affective elements of emotion has its parallel in the LDS conflation of the physical and the spiritual as variously expressed through the overarching principle of materialistic monism. Similarly, contextualized accountability for individual emotions resonates with the Mormon emphasis on moral agency and its accompanying inference of personal responsibility, whether limited or not, in relation to all forms of behaviours

⁸⁶ See Davies (2000), 143-52.

and even thoughts. Finally, emotions' developmental instrumentality, which in turn is materialized in the areas of knowledge acquisition, change, and interpersonal relationships, finds similar expression in the LDS principle of eternal progression through its processes of revelation and repentance and in its primary context of family relations.

Certainly, this kind of cross-disciplinary dialogue could be extended to include more precise and detailed discussions with more focused suggestions in relation to specific dynamics of interaction and convergence. However, the present focused exploration mainly involves a textual analysis of the LDS canon to determine whether these texts' treatment of emotion parallels current broad socio-scientific conclusions on the same topic. Yet, before proceeding with this textual analysis, there is another area of parallelism which requires proper exploration. Unlike materialistic monism, moral agency, and eternal progression this final topic is not a principle which relates to a specific aspect or characteristic of emotion. Instead, it is a larger principle of Mormon theology, which shapes the whole LDS conceptual framework of emotional phenomena in multiple directions of significance: it is Christ's Atonement. No single scientific expression exists in the context of emotion research that parallels the principle of Atonement. Yet, Atonement relates to and incorporates theologically at least three areas of secular concern about emotion, namely emotion regulation, emotional healing, and emotional epistemology.

The Atonement

In LDS and in mainstream Christian theologies there is only one Atonement of universal efficacy and significance, i.e. the Atonement of the Son of God incarnate Jesus Christ. For Mormons, Jesus Christ's Atonement is first and foremost an *event* which took place in a specific place and at a particular time of the world's history. Still, although temporally and spatially situated, its effects and consequences transcend all time and space. Indeed, as the BoM controversially claims, the Atonement transcends time even retroactively by making its benefits felt in the earthly experiences of believers who lived prior to its actual occurrence. In these instances, faith in the promise of the Atonement as an event of future actualization was sufficient to bring about *blessings* which were dependent upon the occurrence of the Atonement as

historical fact.⁸⁷ Less uniquely, Mormon theology also affirms that, following its occurrence, Jesus' Atonement 'reaches out' in efficacy to any point in time and to any location where a spirit child of God may be found to exercise faith in it.⁸⁸

In order to properly understand Mormon scriptural texts on the Atonement, it is important to recall this distinction between the historical event proper and its transcending consequences. In fact, some canonical references focus more directly on one rather than on the other. In the present context my attention is centred more on the theological exploration of the Atonement's effects over humanity, both short-term and long-term, than it is on the examination of the LDS perspective of the event's historical details. To be sure, it is the exact nature of the event which shapes the consequences at stake, but my primary focus involves its 'blessings' since this is the aspect of greatest relevance in relation to the topic of emotion. Furthermore, Mormon and other Christian perspectives on the historical details of the event do not differ significantly except for a unique LDS emphasis on Gethsemane, which others have already examined.⁸⁹ Thus, to the degree that is possible given the complexity of the theme, I aim to explore the benefits that Mormons associate with Christ's sacrificial offer specifically as viewed in terms of presence and nature of *the Spirit*.

Within the context of efficacy and blessings it is possible to distinguish between unique and recurrent consequences of the Atonement. The former are associated with single eschatological events of promise which include resurrection or eternal life. The latter, on the other hand, represent more individualized, specific and recurrent blessings, which usually appear in the present or past tenses. Therefore, the eschatological blessings of the Atonement are well suited to appear in contexts which emphasize the historical event of Christ's sacrifice whereas its recurrent present benefits are usually described in terms of the daily divine interventions which the Saints recognize as also consequential to the Atonement. Thus, the Atonement appears as an ongoing tool to access divine grace as made available by its mediation.

⁸⁷ In this and in later contexts my use of the term 'blessing' does not have reference to the ceremonial practice of laying on of hands by a member of the Priesthood. Instead, I use blessing as a general term to be distinguished from 'Patriarchal blessing' or 'blessing of the sick'. Under this wide umbrella term fall all those benefits, of either spiritual or material nature, which occur in consequence of God's direct or indirect intervention and benevolence in people's lives.

⁸⁸ A further element of distinction in the LDS view of Atonement vis-à-vis other Christian perspectives is the occasional claim that the Atonement has efficacy not only over the inhabitants of this earthly planet but also over other beings of God's family who reside in some other location within the Universe. For an articulate exposition of LDS Christology in juxtaposition to Christian theology see Ostler (2001), 409-85

⁸⁹ Davies (2003), 102-06, 51-56.

Furthermore, as I shortly explain in greater detail, the nature of the divine-human interaction inherent in these occasions is directly shaped by the specific phenomenon that constituted the atoning sacrifice itself. Hence, the Atonement is ‘living’ or ongoing in that it represents the necessary point of connection between the divine and the human realms of existence as it functions both to make the connection possible as well as to shape its very nature.

To explain this ever-presentness of the Atonement in light of the recurrence and immediacy of its benefits it is helpful to begin with a description of its eschatological promises. In line with the pervasive LDS emphasis on agency the Atonement includes both a ‘conditional’ and an ‘unconditional’ blessing. Specifically, within the LDS theological perspective it is the gift of resurrection from death, or *immortality*, which is truly universal and fully unconditional. In fact, although in the short-term necessary to the functioning of the plan, if left unconquered death would represent a universal calamity as it would render permanent the human separation from God. This would truly make the Fall of Adam and Eve catastrophic rather than fortunate. However, Mormons believe that Christ overcame death through His own resurrection for the whole of humanity as explained in the biblical text: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”⁹⁰ For the Saints this means that Jesus’ resurrection from the tomb, which functions as the culmination of the Atonement itself, is both the first resurrection and the starting point of a universal, even inescapable and fully inclusive resurrection.

The theological explanation for the second ‘conditional’ gift of *eternal life* is highly contingent on the particular theory of Atonement which individuals embrace when interpreting its nature. In the case of LDS theology both scriptures and commentaries imply for the most part, although not exclusively, a concept of Atonement as penal substitution. According to this theory Jesus Christ stands in the place of humanity to receive the punishment which justice demands in consequence of our sins. Parenthetically, a unique Mormon twist to this theory is provided by the identification of justice with an eternal principle which God cannot transcend and which is operative at the time of the final judgment. Thus, thanks to His perfect life of obedience and to the sufferings He experienced in our behalf Jesus is able to intercede for His spiritual brothers and sisters as they are subject to the eternal judgment of their

⁹⁰ 1 Cor. 15:22

Heavenly Father. LDS scripture even spells out the gist of Christ's intercessory words for those individuals who would receive eternal life through His Atonement,

Behold the sufferings and death of him who did no sin, in whom thou wast well pleased; behold the blood of thy Son which was shed, the blood of him whom thou gavest that thyself might be glorified; Wherefore, Father, spare these my brethren that believe on my name, that they may come unto me and have everlasting life.⁹¹

Therefore, Jesus allows those individuals who choose to accept His sacrifice to submit to the "plan of mercy" because He has "appeased the demands of justice."⁹² In turn, the 'plan of mercy' first redefines sin in relation to one's knowledge and desires rather than purely in terms of external legal requirements and secondly it allows for the possibility of repentance in those cases where sin has been committed. Still, mercy and justice must coexist in balance because it is only through "faith unto repentance" (the conditional aspect of the 'mercy' blessing) that justice is appeased and that the Atonement can ultimately take effect.⁹³

Then, in light of the prior discussion on the principle of repentance, it is evident that the blessing of *eternal life* provided by the Atonement ought to be understood more widely than in terms of a promise that only materializes at the moment of the final judgment. In fact, LDS theology defines the potential continuous efficacy of the Atonement through two closely related terms, which are constitutive of most divine interventions that characterize human spiritual experiences, i.e. *justification* and *sanctification*. These terms are clearly not original to Mormonism since they appear in the biblical record, but in the context of LDS theology they fit into a general framework of eternal progression where they describe two closely associated elements of the gift of *eternal life* in process of actualization.⁹⁴ Therefore, both justification and sanctification are closely interlinked to the principle of repentance, whose restorative instrumentality and overall facilitative purposes were previously highlighted. Yet, the efficacy of sanctification is not limited to the process of overcoming sin since its

⁹¹ D&C 45:4-5

⁹² Alma 42:15. The Book of Mormon further describes Jesus' Atonement in relation to justice in these terms: "Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice." (Mosiah 15:9)

⁹³ In some BoM passages *mercy* may be seen to function as a synonym for the person of Jesus as the following verse indicates: "And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption." (Alma 34:16). Also see Alma 42:24.

⁹⁴ In the Bible see Rom. 4:25; 5:16,18; 2 Thes. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2. In LDS texts see D&C 20:30-31; Hel. 3:35.

boundaries of influence include virtually all human circumstances and conditions, which are of any consequence for the individual. Thus, as one Mormon authority explained, “the Atonement is not just for sinners” because much more than sin falls under its sanctifying umbrella.⁹⁵

To proceed with order, though, Mormon theology views justification as the process through which an individual is declared righteous through the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. In other words, although the individual is not actually righteous in his *persona* he is held to be so in the context of receiving ‘judgment’ thanks to Jesus’ substitutionary Atonement, which pardons him from his guilt. Thus, whether in the eschatological context or in the recurrent setting of daily repentance, sincere penitent individuals benefit from Jesus’ saving ‘transfer’ of His own righteousness. On their part, they are responsible to come to Jesus in ‘faith unto repentance’ and to fulfil all the requirements of this process inasmuch as they are able. Therefore, in light of the ‘demands of justice’ against humanity this specific manifestation of Christ’s substitutionary Atonement is crucial to God’s children in their desire to reach eternal life. Yet, justification by itself does not change the individual, as it only restores him to a condition of innocence. In the LDS theological framework this is not sufficient to justify the whole plan of salvation because it merely returns humanity to its condition prior to ‘the Fall’ and is still eternally distant from the ultimate apotheosis that God desires for His children. In short, justification fixes one major problem but in isolation it does not cause the eternal progression which constitutes the core purpose of this earthly existence.

On the other hand, sanctification is the very source of this growth. As inferred by the etymology of the term sanctification makes individuals holy as it provides the needed power, knowledge, and comfort, which are constitutive of eternal progression. True, to be operative sanctification requires individual effort and desire but it still remains classified as a gift because its benefits and blessings are judged as far superior to what a single person may be able to obtain in return through his own merit. Like justification, sanctification is a blessing traceable to the efficacy of the Atonement, which pierces the barrier between the mortal and the divine thanks to Jesus’ unblemished mediation. Therefore, it may occur in association with justification as a consequence of the process of repentance but it may also emerge in contexts where the

⁹⁵ Hafen (1990), 7-14.

overcoming of sin is not the core focus of the situation. Thus, it may be manifested in whatever circumstances of connection between the heavenly and the earthly that take place in an individual's life, whether petitioned for or unrequested. In short, sanctification describes the purifying and strengthening effects of the *Holy Spirit* in the lives of those individuals who enjoy His benefits.⁹⁶

Then, it is in the concept of sanctification that Mormon pneumatology and Christology share the most but also where their distinctions are harder to identify. Part of the difficulty lies in the fact that LDS theology has not replaced the Trinitarian theology it has rejected with an articulate and detailed Mormon theology of the Godhead. Thus, for example, in the context of an eternal family where each individual is primarily identified in his relation to the Heavenly Father or to his Saviour brother, the Holy Spirit does not enjoy an explicit identity in this family context. In other words, it is neither known how the Holy Spirit is related to the other members of the Godhead nor how He (as commonly speculated) is related to the rest of the human family. What Mormon theology does affirm unequivocally is that the Holy Ghost is the only being in the Godhead without a body of flesh and bones, who most likely has delayed the process of acquisition of a body to fulfil His unique function of dwelling in the human heart.⁹⁷ By so doing the 'Spirit' comforts, guides, teaches, testifies, and strengthens individuals throughout their lives thanks to Jesus' Atonement, which allows such spiritual presence among humans by bridging the separating gap between divinity and humanity.

Yet, the Mormon canon implies that a much more direct intervention of the personage of Christ is also present in the sanctifying process of individuals. In fact, Jesus' sanctifying role is expressed in terms which underlie its dependency on the dynamics of the Atonement and on what the Atonement has made of Him. Specifically, as well captured by Alma, the rebel-turned-prophet in the BoM, it is the comprehensive empathy that Christ was able to acquire through His intercessory sufferings which empowers Him with a fuller ability to sanctify,

And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and sicknesses of his people...and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people

⁹⁶ A description of the LDS doctrine of justification and sanctification is found in Christofferson (2001), 18-25. Compare with McGrath (2006), 371-79.

⁹⁷ For a comparative examination of the LDS perspective on the trinity see Owen (2005), 59-84. On the Holy Ghost in Mormonism see Davies (2003), 71-73.

according to their infirmities. Now the Spirit knoweth all things; nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh...⁹⁸

In light of this passage Christ's all-encompassing sufferings for the struggles and pains of humanity, which reached well beyond the direct consequences of sin, allowed Him to more fully experience mercy in our behalf. Therefore, it is Jesus who is moved to come to our succour and to pour out His spiritual "tender mercies" and not the personage of the Holy Spirit, who has not carried out this empathic Atonement in our behalf. Yet, the process of receiving divine succour is repeatedly described in LDS scriptures as necessarily materialized in the enabling power of the Spirit, which conveys knowledge, comfort, or energy as needed.⁹⁹

Therefore, while 'Spirit' remains one of the primary root-metaphors for LDS phenomenological explanations of transcendent experiences the Atonement, both as an event with consequences and as the person of the atoning 'Christ', stands in a position of even greater theological and psychological significance. In fact, the Atonement precedes Spirit in sequential causative descriptions of our spiritual connections with the divine and it encompasses Spirit in the identifying accounts of those manifestations that constitute these very connections. Furthermore, almost every other aspect of LDS theology seems ultimately to be retraceable to the event of the Atonement, which emerges as the centre of the Mormon *Plan of Salvation* with ramifications that are as extensive as they are significant. Thus, to take as an example the three previously selected tools or aspects of eternal progression, the Atonement allows, explains and facilitates repentance, revelation, and family relations. In fact, in addition to strengthening the individual in these contexts of experience the Atonement gives efficacy and value to the performed ordinances associated with these principles. In fact, without the 'bridging' effects of the Atonement, both temple ordinances, which bind families eternally, and chapel ordinances, which signify repentance (baptism and sacrament), would be of ephemeral rather than of eternal validity.

Furthermore, even eternal principles like materialistic monism and agency, which are self-existent and not contingent on external factors for their actualization, may function, through the instrumentality of the Atonement, with potentially reduced

⁹⁸ Alma 7:11-13.

⁹⁹ In describing his view of the Mormon theology of Atonement Blake Ostler emphasizes this 'compassionate' aspect and criticizes the penal-substitutionary perspective. See Ostler (2006), 203-81. A similar position is expressed in Potter (1999), 73-86. A perspective which partially builds on Potter's argument while also expanding it is Morgan (2006), 57-81. This is a view I find particularly attractive.

impediments in the human context. Thus, for example, although body and spirit are combined as an inextricable unity of substance without the Atonement's sanctifying power the internal tension between the natural and the spiritual, as described by King Benjamin, would invariably culminate in a triumph of the former over the latter. Similarly, agency would only function as a means that leads to the condemnation of the individual if the Spirit were to cease providing an enticing influence in the direction of what is good and true. Indeed, whether conceptualized as the more diffused and immanent 'light of Christ' or as the more personalized and intensive 'Holy Ghost', LDS theology leaves no equivocation about the fate of the individual who is left to his own strength and discernment: he would invariably become enslaved by the superior power and knowledge of Satan.¹⁰⁰

Consequently, as Mormon leaders repeatedly try to capture in statements like "the Atonement is the very heart of Christ's gospel", "it is the central act in all of human history", "it is the most fundamental doctrine of our faith" and many other similar declarations, the Atonement is historically, theologically, and anthropologically essential to the whole structure of the LDS worldview.¹⁰¹ In this context it should be remembered that within the angel/beehive totality of the Mormon perspective of reality these affirmations are existentially and pragmatically normative at the most basic and practical level. In short, not only do they define the eschatological soteriology of the theological tradition but also, and most immediately, they provide an organizing and motivating framework for the interpretation of the daily intersecting realms of the spiritual and psychological, which for the Saints materialize in both emotional and cognitive spheres. In our present context this means that the spirit of the individual and the Holy Spirit meet in the emotions, a meeting which is made possible by the penal substitution of the Atonement and which by it is being shaped, as I later explain in more detail, particularly through the perfect empathic sorrow Christ embodies as a consequence of the event. Thus, emotions function as a key repository for divine revelation and intervention while also embodying the individual's possible rejections and disputations of these very intercessions.

From a functionalist psychological perspective this centrality translates into the fact that the Atonement, as a more or less personalized image, enables the

¹⁰⁰ For a 'confessional' description of the 'light of Christ' see Packer (2005), 8-14. The topic has not often been addressed academically.

¹⁰¹ See Maxwell (2001), 10-15, and Oaks (1994), 60-67..

‘spiritualizing’ of emotional processes thus underlying the comforting immediacy of divine interventions in daily experiences. In theological terms, the Atonement, or more properly Christ as defined by the experience of the Atonement, comes to the rescue of the ‘divine’ within by opening the connection to the Divine without. In such a broad sense the Atonement is both the means and the end, the force and the source, the connection and the connected divine origin from where to receive light and direction. In more specific relation to the emotions this assistance, or more properly succour, takes place in such key dimensions as enlightenment in discernment, correct development and refinement of both emotional direction and intensity, as well as guidance/intensification of motivation and self-control. Indeed, the Atonement provides the theological lenses through which the LDS faithful comes to process and interpret his emotions as well as to drive emotional regulation and coping.

Yet, while theologically grounded in canonical texts that interlink ‘Spirit’ with emotion the connection between the Atonement and the emotions has never been judged as sufficient to fully explain the whole realm of emotional phenomena. Indeed, since the line of demarcation between spiritually affected and purely naturalistic emotional experiences is expectedly fuzzy much that pertains to their discernment is left to the personal experience and capacity of the individual. On the other hand, in communal settings in particular, public declarations which involve certain paradigms of emotional interpretation often tend to reinforce widely held perspectives on spiritual discernment that may not necessarily represent authoritative canon.¹⁰² The examination of these LDS dynamics would be sociologically and theologically fascinating, but I do not at present have the means, data, or space to engage this question directly. On the other hand, my main concern has been to simply outline the way in which the Atonement constitutes a broad framework of emotional interpretation and regulation.

Within this same context the objective of the first chapters in this analysis has been twofold. In the first place I have attempted to lay the foundations for a direct engagement between the socio-scientific study of emotion and a Mormon theology of emotion by showing the potential fruitfulness for dialogue through a preliminary comparative survey highlighting points of contact. Furthermore, I have aimed at

¹⁰² One example could be the belief expressed in a variety of forms that truth cannot be associated with feelings of discomfort. It follows that anything, which is novel and ‘surprising’ is often too quickly discerned as error because in contrast with the personal pride that already assumes the possession of truth. This is not a Mormon tendency in itself but a wider human predisposition to constantly seek for confirmation of held beliefs.

beginning my own construction of an introductory LDS theology of emotion by borrowing some elements of current emotion research for broad integration with core theological principles of Mormonism. Yet, so far I have limited my constructive interaction to mostly distant associations and broad areas of contact. At this point my task is to engage the topic more directly and to explore in greater detail the content of an LDS theology of emotion vis-à-vis the socio-scientific axioms about emotions previously outlined. To do this I have chosen as my text those unique canonical sources that distinguish Mormonism from its main-stream Christian theological counterparts and it is to them that I now turn.

CHAPTER THREE

The ‘Predicting’ Emotions: Hope and Fear

In order to begin assessing the status of emotion within the Mormon theological framework it is essential to examine those authoritative texts which lie at the root of the LDS theological tradition. Therefore, the main objective of this chapter, and indeed of the rest of this analysis, is to explore in some depth the content of these texts in relation to words and expressions which have reference to emotions. Specifically, in light of the classification that I have chosen to employ, which I outlined at the conclusion of chapter one, I am presently concerned with the Mormon theological framing of those emotions I have termed *predicting*, and more particularly with *hope* and *fear* as their opposing prototypical manifestations. Yet, prior to engaging the emotion content of sacred LDS texts I need to provide a brief introduction on the nature and significance of Mormon scripture since its characteristics certainly appear peculiar when viewed from the perspective of main-stream Christian traditions. In this context my objective is not only to describe the origin and basic make-up of unique LDS scriptural volumes but it is also to situate these texts in the larger picture of a Mormon theological tradition which is grounded in a complex interaction of living and scriptural prophetic authority.

The Mormon Canon

When compared to other Christian traditions Mormonism accepts a canon that is distinctively larger. Yet the difference is not centred on questions of extension of the biblical text proper as displayed, for example, by Catholic and Protestant disagreements over the inclusion or exclusion of the Old Testament ‘apocrypha’ in their Bible. Instead, the uniqueness of the Mormon canonical position lies in the LDS acceptance of scriptural books which are separate from the Bible. In this context the Mormon approval of the more conservative Protestant selection of biblical texts coexists with an

utter denial of the supreme status of the Bible as *sola scriptura*. In fact, in addition to the Bible, the LDS canon includes three sacred books, namely the BoM, the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C), and the Pearl of Great Price (PoGP), which form, as a combined whole, the *canonical works*, the *scriptures*, or the *standard works*.

Mormons are encouraged to study these books of scriptures on a daily basis as individuals and as families. Moreover, the weekly focus of the Church's 'Sunday School' lessons is centred on selected passages from the *standard works* which are regularly repeated according to set calendars of study. Yet, beginning with Church President Ezra T. Benson (1899-1994) prophetic statements of recent years have emphasized the need to give priority to the study of the BoM. Indeed, at the turn of the twenty-first century Church President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910-2007) has renewed a call for the Saints to study this book with urgency and focus.¹ To be sure, in the present setting I am not able to explore all the issues that pertain to the relationship among these books or to examine questions about their relative hierarchy or internal nature. Still, what follows is a brief overview of each text that aims to function as a general background to the detailed analysis of the canonical emotional content which will characterize the rest of this examination.

The Bible

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints uses the *King James Version* (KJV) of the Bible as its official biblical record; hence, all biblical references in the present text are extracted from the KJV. Other versions of the Bible are virtually absent from Mormon houses and from their places of worship, although they are not explicitly condemned.² Furthermore, Mormons make use of the *Joseph Smith Translation* (JST), a revision of the biblical text carried out by the Prophet Joseph Smith, which, for the most part, is found printed in the footnotes and endnotes of the LDS edition of the Bible.³ However, the status of the JST is somewhat ambiguous since, in the first place, it does not replace the KJV as the official authoritative biblical record of the Church. Moreover, its significance and use is closely interlinked to the history of its transmission and to the Church's relations with what is now called the

¹ See Benson (1986), 4-7 and Hinckley (2005), 2-6.

² See Barlow (1989), 18-43.

³ The theological foundation for this work of revision is rooted in the Saints' belief that "the Bible is the word of God as far as it is translated correctly." [Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. (1981a), A of F 8, 60]. For the history and content of the JST see Jackson, et al. (2004).

Community of Christ. In fact, this religious movement, which used to be known as the *Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, has always been the proprietor of the copyright for the JST, which takes the name of *Inspired Version* within the Missouri-based Church.⁴

The Book of Mormon

The BoM is a volume originally published in 1830 in Palmyra, New York, where Mormonism's prophet and founder, Joseph Smith, first announced his theophanies. One of his sacred visions involved an angelic commission to translate an ancient record, which he was able to obtain after some time. As stated in the Introduction of the book,

It is a record of God's dealings with the ancient inhabitants of the Americas...The book was written by many ancient prophets by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. Their words, written on gold plates, were quoted and abridged by a prophet-historian named Mormon. The record gives an account of two great civilizations...The crowning event recorded in the Book of Mormon is the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ among the Nephites soon after his resurrection.⁵

Joseph Smith claimed to have translated this ancient record into English from the language, called 'reformed Egyptian', in which it had been originally engraved. He further explained that the translation was only made possible "by the gift and power of God" and with the aid of instruments he had received for this sacred purpose. The book is presently printed in more than 100 languages and is one of the most distinctive marks of Mormonism and of its missionary efforts.⁶

Since a good portion of this work will be concerned with the analysis of the emotion language within the BoM it is important to explicitly outline the linguistic assumptions which lie at the root of this examination. In fact, the nature of the language of the BoM is a matter of dispute between believers and nonbelievers. Those who do not accept Joseph Smith's explanation mostly view the book as an individual creation from the imagination of its nineteenth-century 'author' rather than as a text with ancient linguistic or historical origin. Believers, on the other hand, support the Prophet's claim of an original ancient source. Still, given the very limited details about the translation process provided both by Smith and by his scribes the nature of the

⁴ At the present time the LDS Church and the Community of Christ share much in their historical roots although they have become increasingly distant in the realm of theology. On the *Inspired Version* see Edwards (1990).

⁵ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (1981*b*), Introduction.

⁶ *Ibid.* The best academic study on the BoM is found in Givens (2002).

translation remains open to speculation even among LDS scholars. Indeed some suggest a prevalence of a ‘loose’ translation/interpretation where others advocate a ‘tight’ translation of the original source text.⁷

In the context of the present analysis the issue is only relevant as it relates to the specific linguistic analysis which is being carried out. Regardless of one’s acceptance or rejection of Joseph Smith’s explanation attempting to retrieve what may have been the original textual source the Prophet used in the ‘translation’ is undoubtedly a useless endeavour. Indeed, the original ancient text is unavailable for examination and no known example of ‘Reformed Egyptian’ has yet been recognized in any other text. Therefore, I can only focus my analysis on the English text as it appears in the current edition of the book. Moreover, since the language of the BoM is often very resonant of the KJV language of the Bible I may make occasional reference to biblical linguistic evidence without necessarily suggesting source dependency. Still, semantic parallels ought to be assumed since they may occasionally contribute to facilitate this whole linguistic examination.

The Doctrine and Covenants

The D&C is a volume mostly authored by Joseph Smith in the context of his exercise of prophetic and leadership capacity as God’s mouthpiece. It contains primarily revelations, letters, items of instruction and organization, accounts of visions, and biblical commentaries as were dictated by the Prophet to his scribes. In limited amount it also includes a few revelations recorded by Smith’s successors as well as two Official Declarations which announced the end of two highly controversial practices, i.e. plural marriage and the denial of Priesthood conferral to men of African descent. When juxtaposed to the BoM it may be seen that the D&C appears to be quite different in content, although its language similarly resembles the literary style of the KJV. In fact, the D&C is not a coherent narrative and with the exception of a few revelations it does not purport to derive from texts of ancient origin. However, it is similarly dear to the Saints as it is understood to provide tangible evidence of the divine intervention which has contributed to validate the Church’s early history.

In addition to providing the organizational structure of the Church the D&C contains several significant theological statements, which lie at the foundation of the

⁷ See Ricks (1993), 201-06 and Skousen (1998), 22-31. Also see Van Wagoner and Walker (1982), 49-68.

Mormon dogma. Furthermore, it should be noted that as the main collector of modern canonized revelations it has been subjected to several changes throughout its various editions. In fact, should future additions be included in the Mormon canon, it is likely that the D&C will function as the repository of such changes.⁸

The Pearl of Great Price

The PoGP is the smallest of the LDS standard works. In fact, for the greatest part of its history, it has not been published individually but it has regularly been included in the same volume as the D&C. At the same time, the textual nature of this collection is even more mixed than the D&C since the PoGP includes both texts that are explicit about their nineteenth century origin and others which purport ancient derivation. The bulk of the book includes some revelations received by the Prophet while in the process of interpreting the Bible, specifically sections which include extensive additions to the biblical text. Furthermore, the book contains Joseph's account of his early religious history, which was written in 1838, as well as the Articles of Faith, or the closest document to what many would identify as a 'Mormon Creed.' This list of 13 articles was written by Mormonism's founder in response to a request of an editor from a Chicago newspaper who desired to publish a summary of the new religion's tenets. Finally, the book of Abraham emerged from what Joseph claimed to have been his translation of some ancient Egyptian papyri, which he had purchased while living in Kirtland, Ohio.⁹

In comparison to the D&C the PoGP is almost exclusively theological, since it does not include organizational or structural information with the exception of a few general statements contained in the Articles of Faith. Finally, prior observations which are relative to the linguistic analysis of the English text in the BoM are also relevant in relation to the Book of Abraham within the PoGP.

Living Prophets and the 'Open' Canon

⁸ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. (1981c).

⁹ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. (1981a). The text of the Book of Abraham has been subject to extensive criticism and several articles have debated its nature and implications. A history of the book may be found in Peterson (1995).

In addition to distinctiveness in scriptural sources Mormon theology also parts from main-stream Christian traditions in matters of canonical fixity. In fact, in light of the LDS conceptualization of *revelation* as the eternal principle of ongoing divine communication, the fluidity of the Mormon canon vis-à-vis classical Christianity's closure of its own biblical canon is hardly surprising. Indeed, the LDS canon remains open in principle to subsequent additions and subtractions of both grammatical and theological nature although the implementation of such changes in practice, especially in the past century, has been quite infrequent. Yet all LDS scriptures have been subjected to minor grammatical editing and the D&C and the PoGP in particular have appeared in their successive editions with some additions and deletions of considerable size.¹⁰ Further changes are likely to take place in the future in line with a theological view which stresses the continuity of revelation through the mouth of a living prophet who is uniquely inspired to respond to the challenges of his own time. This theological expectation is in turn rooted in the canonized tenet that through His prophet God "will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."¹¹

At the same time, as already pinpointed, the great majority of prophetic statements are never canonized in print. In other words, no prophetic declaration is added to the existing edition of Mormon scriptures apart from seldom exceptional 'revelations' which involve major modifications in Church practice or theology. Indeed, the two *official declarations* of the D&C underline significant changes of this nature in sanctioning the end of the historical era of plural marriage and the extension of Priesthood ordinations to blacks of African descent. Thus, notwithstanding its fluidity in principle, Mormon scripture is in actuality highly fixed. Consequently, in their search for cognitive and moral stability Mormons thrive on what they perceive as the firmness of a Gospel which is contained in scriptures that do *not* usually change. Indeed, as history has shown, additions usually precipitate some degree of crisis in some segment of the LDS population, particularly if the measure is understood to be canonically corrective rather than complementary.¹²

¹⁰ For analyses of the changes in subsequent editions of the D&C see Woodford (1974) and Best (1992), 87-112.

¹¹ Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. (1981a), A of F 9, 60.

¹² The issuing of first and second *Manifestos* by prophetic authority, which officially discontinued the celebration of plural marriages within the Church, exemplified such a circumstance of internal struggle. Some members refused to accept the change and as a consequence decided to join various splinter groups, which still exist today as theologically and institutionally separate organizations that are not associated with the LDS Church. See Driggs (1990), 367-89.

That theological change should give rise to difficulties in the minds of some Saints is not surprising in light of the existing relationship between canon and prophetic authority. This link is inherently difficult to demarcate but may better be summarized in terms of mutual justification within a coherent whole rather than as a hierarchically organized order of theological authority. In other words, complementarity rather than innovation and change defines the common contemporary understanding of the relationship between scripture and ‘living’ prophetic revelation in the minds of most Mormons. In fact, to approach the issue with a question on relative priority or hierarchy of authority is bound to leave the inquirer somewhat frustrated and confused since historical statements of different LDS prophets have emphasized the priority of the existing canon on the one hand or the superior authority of revelations by living prophets on the other.¹³ Still, the evidence from the LDS canonical context points in a direction of relative openness to theological change while, at the same time, it also highlights the exceptionality of such innovations which must explicitly appear to be far-reaching in their theological significance. Hence, when focusing on the content of the Mormon canon the previously highlighted theological tension between stability and change is clearly skewed on the side of permanence.

Yet, this core theological paradox is pushed back in the direction of a point of balance when the focus shifts to the realm of exegesis and application. Indeed, if the official canon contains primarily the largely unchangeable theological foundation established by the Prophet Joseph Smith it is the manner in which his living successor interprets and applies that same text to present institutional circumstances which constitutes the dynamic realm of LDS canonical openness. Furthermore, and perhaps even more significantly, it is the amount of attention and emphasis placed upon specific passages of canonical writings which shape the theological picture of Mormonism in its present tense as opposed to its past or potential future tenses. In other words, through General Conferences and Sunday lessons the Saints are primarily exposed to the present theological emphasis of living prophets and apostles as it emerges from their sermons. Moreover, when teachings of past prophets are examined in weekly lessons as required by the present curriculum of the Priesthood and Relief Society, such lessons

¹³ Compare these two statements from past Church presidents: 1. “You cannot accept the books written by the authorities of the Church as standards of doctrine, only in so far as they accord with the revealed word in the standard works...If Joseph Fielding Smith writes something which is out of harmony with the revelations, then every member of the Church is duty bound to reject it.” [Smith (1954), 3:203-04] 2. The living prophet is more vital to us than the standard works...the prophet does not need to say “Thus Saith the Lord” to give us scripture.” [Benson (1981), 1-8].

are organized in print through the guidance of present authorities, who select the words of their predecessors which ought to be examined and discussed. In this manner it is largely possible to avoid the explicit highlighting of theological change which may involve contradictions that could appear problematic. In fact, where past prophetic authorities appear to stand theologically corrected rather than being ‘added upon’ there is an inherent risk that the potential doubt over the prophetic authority of past prophets may spill over to shake the legitimacy of their present counterpart.

Therefore, there is no doubt that Mormonism attempts to negotiate the fine line that exists between the vitality and psychological disturbance which are inherent in the expression of change. In the present setting I am unable to explore in detail the various ways in which the tradition engages these very difficulties but some of its signposts will emerge as I continue to explore the relationship between established canon and prophetic authority. Then, to summarize, Mormon theology emphasizes unity and continuity between canon and living revelation, the latter functioning to develop and contextualize the former by reshaping its applicability in the present milieu. At the same time, although scripture is the repository of core doctrinal foundations, it may be occasionally subjected, through divine guidance and in exceptional circumstances, to modifications and changes as directed by living prophetic authorities. Furthermore, prophets and apostles establish patterns of doctrinal ‘relevancy’ by focusing sermons and lessons on particular Gospel subjects and areas of concern. In turn, these particular patterns of emphasis, given the LDS theological context of dynamic fluidity, may occasionally raise questions about the status of that which is being left out, whether originating in scripture or in prophetic statements from the past. Significantly, it is this realm of content, which remains presently unaddressed by authoritative sources, that gives rise to much of the fuzziness and uncertainty associated with Mormon theology.

To further complicate things, when focusing on past prophetic statements, it was previously highlighted that declarations from individuals in authority may be accompanied by potential questions about the revelatory status of such statements. In other words, prophets and apostles may also speak as regular mortals and thus express in some of their statements a personal opinion that does not necessarily represent an inviolable truth with a ‘revelatory’ stamp of approval. Yet, the faithful is not regularly faced with this problem if he is unaware of or if he naturally overlooks all those statements from the past which are being neglected institutionally. In fact, either by rehearsing or by choosing not to quote selected statements from their predecessors

present leaders appear to further or to diminish the theological life and authority of particular past exegetical discussions by implying what at best is their secondary if not inconsequential nature.

On the other hand, given the regular Church-wide emphasis on personal, family, and congregational study of the standard works, the Saints are inevitably faced with scriptural passages whose content is not presently spoken of with any degree of significance, or which may even appear to contradict present theological directions. Clearly, Mormons approach these questions in a variety of ways, and those who find resolution usually appeal to contextualizing factors, allegorical interpretations, or, when dealing with the biblical text, problems of translation. Yet, some may go further by applying a sort of evolutionary pattern of development to Mormon theology where they identify the main correctives or increasingly precise demarcations of previous theological content not in explicit textual modifications of the canon but implicitly in living prophetic patterns of emphasis and exegesis.¹⁴ Whatever avenues of explanation individual members choose it is evident that Mormons' engagement with scripture is intricately and unavoidably linked with their understanding of the 'uncanonized' declarations of prophetic authorities on the passages or topics which lie within their analytical focus.

Therefore, my choice to focus exclusively on canonical texts and to neglect prophetic statements in my current examination of the LDS theological framework of emotion requires an explanation. To be sure, this limitation would have been significant and potentially disastrous if my objective had been to construct a comprehensive Mormon theology of emotion. However, my objective is less far-reaching since it is limited to an introduction to the topic for which I judge the canonical evidence to be sufficient. Furthermore, in addition to the obvious problem of space limitations and within the specific analytical context with which I am presently concerned, I do not find most statements from Mormon authorities to add significant evidence to the one provided by the LDS canon. In other words, LDS prophets have

¹⁴ Whether this particularly 'loose' approach to LDS canon is consonant with orthodox Mormon theology is debatable. In any case, and in potential support of this view, it is at least apparent that removals of canonical materials as corrective measure to any of Joseph Smith's canonized revelations are quite unlikely in the present institutional context. Notwithstanding the fact there is no Mormon tenet on the infallibility of Joseph Smith or of any other prophet who succeeded him the institution has naturally felt the need to shore its members' faith in its Prophet founder. Thus, any removal of existing canonical revelations could cast a shadow of doubt over the prophetic veracity of Joseph Smith's claims or over any of the claims of its successors. This is where theological change appears as a double-edged sword, which can lead either to growth or to crisis.

largely taken the basic identification of emotions as developmentally instrumental cognitive/affective phenomena for which individuals are accountable as a core assumption of their more specific and focused statements about various emotional/spiritual dynamics. In this setting I cannot provide the evidence to support this conclusion and must therefore leave it for a future endeavour along with any other focused engagement with LDS prophetic statements on emotion. For now I turn to the Mormon canon and specifically to its distinctive scriptures after a few brief considerations about emotions in the biblical text.

Exploring Emotions in the Bible

As previously stated, by including the KJV of the Bible in their *standard work*, Mormons share a canonical foundation with the rest of the Christian world. Indeed, as Philip Barlow has highlighted, the earliest articulations of Mormon theological concerns and justifications were as replete with biblical references, themes, and biblically informed language as were the theologies of most Christian denominations in nineteenth century America.¹⁵ Yet, I have chosen not to include the biblical record within the scope of my present examination for reasons which are both structural and methodological. To be sure, the exclusion should not be understood to infer that the LDS canonical framework attributes negligible theological significance to the biblical record. On the contrary, Mormons make use of the Bible, and particularly of the New Testament, in the various theological settings where emotion is the focus of their scriptural study and discussion. At the same time, Mormons interpret the Bible ‘in light of the Restoration’, i.e. their hermeneutical background is uniquely shaped by those nineteenth-century revelations, which gave rise to Mormonism, particularly as contained in the D&C and in the BoM. Consequently, if limitations of space and the objective of maintaining a distinctive Mormon focus drive an author to an unavoidable selection of texts, primacy will necessarily be given to unique LDS scriptures rather than to the Bible.

Still, it is appropriate to ask, given the Mormon insistence on the fact that the Bible and the BoM ‘go hand in hand’, whether the relegation of the Bible to the background of the present structure could significantly alter the theological picture which is being examined. Indeed, the answer may be positive were it not for the fact

¹⁵ Barlow (1991), 43-46. Barlow’s work is the most comprehensive historical analysis on the relationship between Mormonism and the Bible.

that a thorough examination of the Bible's emotion-related content, with specific reference to its cognitive foundation, is already in existence. The study to which I am referring is Matthew Elliott's solid analysis *Faithful Feelings*, a careful exploration of emotions as they are contained in the biblical text and especially in the New Testament.¹⁶ Certainly, this volume has played a significant role in the development of my present examination since it has provided both an impetus and a model for my own analysis of emotions in Mormonism. Furthermore, notwithstanding the differences between our two studies, which I will shortly outline, I view Elliott's conclusions as complementary and largely equivalent to my arguments. Hence, *Faithful Feelings* may be used as a supporting textual source to my present analysis, which I then 'borrow' and for the most part 'include' in my own canonical LDS theology of emotion. In short, what my study is lacking in relation to the Bible is largely supplied by Elliott's outstanding examination.

To be sure, Elliott is an evangelical Christian and his biblical analysis is certainly not meant to lead to scriptural correlations, and much less to equivalencies with the Mormon tradition. Yet, what primarily emerges from his work is a well-focused exegesis of the biblical text, with which the Saints would find no significant theological reason to argue. Still, in this context of wide agreement there are at least two main differences which distinguish our studies. In the first place, although both works involve theological examinations with psychological foundations Elliott uses a method of linguistic and cultural-historical analysis (or criticism) to examine his texts, which is not present in my study. Instead, as I later explain in greater detail, my approach to Mormon scriptures involves a *formalist* hermeneutical method which limits the analysis to the English text rather than to a wider linguistic background that includes both Hebrew and Greek etymologies of emotion-related words. Indeed, given the particular historical and linguistic nature of the biblical text Elliott's method is appropriate, well-established and even expected for an academic study of this nature. On the other hand, the academic study of unique LDS canonical texts has hardly begun, is based on mixed linguistic and historical evidence, and usually polarizes believers versus non-believers. Therefore, the desire to maintain methodological consistency is another reason for the exclusion of biblical texts from the focus of the present study.

¹⁶ Elliott (2005). See reviews in Johnson (2007), 166-67 and Mclarty (2008), 261-63.

A second difference between *Faithful Feelings* and the present work is found in the distinct ways in which they each emphasize the role of cognition in emotional phenomena. In fact, one of Elliott's main purposes is to demonstrate that the sacred text, and particularly the New Testament, supports an understanding of emotion where cognition holds primacy over sensation. I, instead, depart somewhat from Elliott's view and prefer to make a less remarkable argument in terms of the *necessity* of cognition in emotional processes where such necessity does not unavoidably precede or singly cause its accompanying affective manifestations. What motivates the more limited nature of my perspective is the recognition that the current evidence from the social-scientific study of emotion is more complex than Elliott believes; thus, in my opinion, his strong conclusion about the cognitive primacy of emotions is slightly premature. Still, Elliott generally moves in the right direction and my distinctive emphasis on personal responsibility and developmental instrumentality of emotions further aims to strengthen and to widen his and my argument on the centrality of cognition.

Therefore, although other minor differences in purpose and focus of analysis contribute to make both Elliott's and my contributions unique, it may be apparent why I consider our studies as mostly complementary, at least for my objectives. Then, given its significance for my work and before proceeding with my own analysis of Mormon theology, a brief outline of *Faithful Feelings'* structure is in order. The volume begins with an introductory presentation of Elliott's explicit aim to demonstrate through his study that the authors of the New Testament held a basic understanding of emotions which recognized, however implicitly, their inherent cognitive and in large part positive nature. Consequently, he advocates greater attention to this fact for further theological developments in New Testament studies, which he sees as still excessively tied to non-cognitivist and overall negative perspectives on emotions. He then begins his analysis proper by presenting the debate between cognitivist and non-cognitivist theories of emotions and firmly sides with the cognitivists while providing scientific and philosophical reasons for doing so. Subsequently, his analysis takes a historical step backwards as he sets out to explore the ancient world of the Bible in specific reference to its perspectives on emotions

Elliott's examination is first grounded in a close and focused analysis of Greco-Roman and of Jewish thought about emotional phenomena. He outlines the often conflicting perspectives on the topic which existed in these ancient cultural contexts but

argues that the Hebrew Bible stresses the integration of feeling and thinking. By analysing several Hebrew words the Old Testament uses to identify emotions and by exploring their textual and theological contexts he lays a foundation that functions as a background for his subsequent New Testament examination. For example, he places emphasis on the strongly anthropomorphic view of an emotional God in the Hebrew Bible and explores the meaning of such terms as ‘heart’, or the Hebrew *lēb*, which corresponds to the Greek *kardia*. Following his extensive textual and cultural review he concludes that the Old Testament “has a strong place for healthy emotion in its faith and in the lives of its characters,” particularly when compared to the views espoused by Jewish writers like Philo, Josephus, or the author of 4 Maccabees, who had been strongly influenced by Stoic conceptualizations of emotions. Then, in his transition to the bulk of his analysis he observes that “it is clear that the New Testament takes its lead from the Old Testament.”¹⁷

Subsequently Elliott moves to a careful and extensive examination of the emotion-related content in the New Testament as he focuses on a variety of its emotion-identifying words. He begins by paying particular attention to the contexts and uses of those terms associated with positive emotions such as love, joy, and hope. Then, he proceeds to examine the textual framework of those emotions which are normally judged to be negative, namely jealousy, fear, sorrow, and anger. In the final chapter of his book he summarizes his findings in the following conclusions,

It is clear that the New Testament authors generally write about emotion from a cognitive perspective. This is not to say that there was a well informed theory of emotions behind the writings but it is to say that a cognitive view was assumed. We see this cognitive framework in many areas: 1. Emotion is freely and frequently commanded in the text, 2. In some instances particular emotions for particular reasons are prohibited, 3. People are held responsible for how they feel and judgments are made about a particular emotion in a particular circumstance being right or wrong, 4. Emotions are seen as a genuine indicator of the righteousness or morality of those who profess belief (or if they really believe), 5. Emotions are regularly linked with thinking and beliefs, 6. Emotions in the text have objects, either stated or implied, 7. Emotions are morally neutral and they may be righteous or wicked depending on their object, 8. God has emotions that are felt for good reasons, 9. To change a person’s objectionable emotions the solution offered is often to change thinking, 10. Love is the predominate emotion and often motivates other feelings. We can also see a cognitive emphasis in the unity of meaning between emotions in different contexts.¹⁸

In short, it is only by understanding emotions in light of a cognitive framework that a proper biblical theology of emotions may be constructed.

¹⁷ Elliott (2005), 242.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 237.

As already suggested, an LDS exegetical perspective would largely concur with Elliott's affirmations, although, to my knowledge, no similar emotion-focused examination of the biblical record has ever been conducted in the Mormon theological setting. Still, I aim to provide at least indirect support for this stated conclusion of agreement through larger evidence from other LDS canonical texts and from the general framework of Mormon cosmology and soteriology. In fact, and as I am about to outline, since Mormon theology and its distinct scriptures match the general portrait of emotion drawn by Elliott it is likely at worst and obvious at best that a Mormon understanding of the biblical record would similarly fit within this particular conceptualization of emotional phenomena. Indeed, the objective of the rest of this endeavour is to underline the extent to which Mormon scriptures can be judged to warrant this perspective.

Exploring Emotions in Unique Mormon Scriptures

In conducting my examination of the emotion-related content of the BoM, the D&C, and of the PoGP, I have chosen to structure my analysis in an order which is different from Elliott's. Where his examination sequentially orders positive emotions first and negative emotions then I have decided to make use of a classification which is somewhat more qualitative than evaluative. Indeed, as explained at the conclusion of chapter two, I have distinguished between three 'categories' of emotions within which I have selected two prototypical and usually opposite forms of their manifestation. Then, the *predicting*, the *assessing*, and the *relating* emotions, in this exact order, are the three emotional categories I am about to examine and the pairs of emotions within each of these categories on which I focus my attention are respectively hope/fear, joy/sorrow, and love/hatred.

To be sure, all these categories of emotion describe a particular 'relation' of the subject to the object, whether the latter is a human or an inanimate object. Furthermore, it is also of interest that each 'kind' of emotion is expressed in a usually fixed 'relation' to *time* which varies from one category to the next. For example, the first unit of classification, the predicting emotions of hope and fear, highlights the individual's condition relative to his expectations, i.e. his relation *with* or *about* the more or less imminent *future*. It may also relate to the individual's stand in relation to the *unknown present* as it occurs away from the person's direct experience. Instead, the assessing emotions of joy and sorrow infer a condition in which the individual looks

backwards rather than forwards. This category of emotion expresses the potential manifestations of a relation *with* or *about* the *past* and *with* or *about* the *present* as perceived by the individual. Therefore, although the third spectrum of relating emotions, as manifested in love and hatred, explicitly and visibly highlights the emotional possibilities in the relation *toward* objects, individuals, or groups, all emotions are in some degree ‘relational’. Indeed, it is their *relationality* which makes them humanly significant.¹⁹

Moreover, it appears that my specific order of classification may also be viewed as a hierarchy in the degree of interpersonal relationality, real or perceived, which each ‘kind’ of emotion is expressing. Thus, the predicting emotions function as the least relational of the three selected categories since hope or fear may emerge within the individual in relation to his own expectations and regardless of personal interaction. Then, the assessing emotions follow with a higher degree of relationality whereas the apex of inter-relational emotions is certainly to be found in the relating emotions of love and hatred. In this context, given the significance of relationality for both socio-scientific understanding of emotions and LDS theology I found the focus and fluidity with which I could bring relationality to the forefront to be a significant advantage of this particular classifying model. Furthermore, this manner of classification has the advantage of highlighting the role of cognition. Thus, although love and hatred may ‘feel’ utterly different, my schema underlines a core similarity in their nature since they both involve an intense response to a highly engaging interpersonal exchange. Indeed, what primarily distinguishes the two opposite ends of this particular emotional spectrum is the distinctive content of their cognitive dynamics, which flavours the experienced emotional relation in either a positive or a negative direction.

Finally, I need to highlight a few details in the context of my specific methodology for engaging non-Biblical LDS scriptural texts. As previously indicated, my focus is limited to those terms which are explicitly signifying the six emotional manifestations selected for my examination. In other words, a scriptural verse or pericope is incorporated in my analysis only if it contains one of the emotion terms included in my original classification, one of its obvious synonyms, or one of its

¹⁹ It should be understood that such emotional categorizations are not to be seen as tight phenomenological compartments. In fact, as outlined in chapter two and as will become further evident throughout this work emotional phenomena intersect and interact in complex and unavoidable ways. It follows, for example, that one’s degree of hope will be interconnected to one’s level of joy and happiness, as well as to one’s ability and willingness to extend and express love.

closely related words. This task is facilitated by the existence of an online resource at scriptures.lds.org where, upon entering a specific word or sentence, the user is able to search each canonical work to identify all those verses which contain a particular term. This word-focused approach has the advantages of facilitating the order and precision with which the work can be carried out. At the same time it is an undeniable fact that the emotional content of a text is not always clearly highlighted by emotional vocabulary. Therefore, my analysis is lacking in those contexts where explicit emotion terms are not present within the text and where emotional content is only evinced implicitly.²⁰ Yet, since my objective centres on the development of a representative survey rather than on the exhaustive outlining of all textual evidences of emotions this limitation is not ultimately incapacitating.

In this context a question about the criteria which characterizes the necessary selectivity of my analysis is also likely to emerge. Since it is impossible to explore with detail every single scriptural verse, which contains one of the emotion terms under examination, it is natural to enquire about what motivated my particular selection of the texts that appear in the following pages. I can summarize my response in two terms, namely transparency and relevance. In the first place I have attempted to highlight those scriptural passages which, in their reference to emotion, appear as more explicit than obscure. Moreover, I have chosen to focus on narratives and pericopes which are most commonly quoted and made use of in LDS sermons, lessons, and theological discussions. Of course, some degree of arbitrariness is unavoidable in this context but my examination of the whole canon leads me to conclude that the textual evidence in its totality is overwhelmingly clear. In other words, a different composition of the texts highlighted in this survey could potentially only diminish the scope of the argument rather than succeeding in fully invalidating it. Still, I recognize I am not able to prove to the reader that my scriptural selection is truly representative and not skewed in the direction of my argument; hence, my work invites this kind of evaluation and thus remains subject to the potential criticism of those who would have advocated a different selection.

Finally, all textual and especially canonical analyses involve particular hermeneutical assumptions which need to be explicitly addressed. As already indicated, and as much as it is possible, the present study attempts to bracket out all

²⁰ Elliott uses the parable of the Good Samaritan as a primary example of an emotion-filled narrative which is not expressed in emotion-focused terms. Elliott (2005), 125-127.

those divisive questions which pertain to the origin and nature of Mormon scriptures and which could represent a distraction for the analytical purposes at hand. Thus, I am only concerned with the English text and more specifically with the latest English edition of the LDS scriptures, dating to 1979. In other words, I want to examine the text as it appears today, and in so doing I take a *formalist* approach. By employing this hermeneutical method I want to highlight my concern with the text as a literary construct, and particularly with its embodiment of a particular attitude toward emotion, which is of theological significance for the LDS religious community. It is this attitude that is central for my present purposes and which emerges from the text's own claims, regardless of authorship's attributions to a transcendent deity, a pre-Columbian prophet, or to a nineteenth century American. Therefore, the text's own assumptions are also my own and its 'voice' at face value is sufficient evidence for my examination and arguments.

Hope: the Positive Predicting Experience

The word *hope*, the closely synonymous *looking forward*, and their various grammatical derivatives appear in at least 53 verses of the Mormon canon²¹. Among the emotions selected for my examination hope is undoubtedly the most 'cognitive' of the group since it is commonly perceived, correctly I suppose, to be less intensely 'affective' than other emotions like joy or love. Yet, few if any would question the reality of its affective nature and consequently its classification as a proper emotion. As I analyse hope within LDS scriptural texts it will become apparent that I separate my selected examples of its usage into three groups, which correspond to the three defining characteristics of emotion previously highlighted. In this context I need to underline that although I have judged each selected usage to fit primarily into one of these categories, most uses are good examples of all three. In fact, *cognitive necessity*, *personal responsibility*, and *developmental instrumentality* are intersecting characteristics which should not be viewed as tight compartmental classifications. Still, for the sake of organizational clarity, I have chosen to highlight one descriptive component over another in each scriptural selection that relates to the specific emotion I am examining.

²¹ When identifying the number of words in the 'Mormon canon' I should more properly make reference to the Mormon non-biblical canon because, as stated, the Bible has not been included in this search. Yet to avoid the cumbersome expression 'non-biblical Mormon canon' I use canon in these contexts to refer more specifically to the unique Mormon canon, i.e. the BoM, the D&C, and the PoGP.

A complicating factor in the canonical analysis of hope is found in its close theological and semantic relationship to faith, which makes any attempt to distinguish between the two inherently problematic. In fact, hope and faith seem at times to be used synonymously whereas in other instances it is possible to identify finer distinctions between them, whether of a sequential or of a componential nature. Thus, some passages emphasise the need of hope for the development of faith while many others stress the exact opposite relationship. Furthermore, it is debatable whether hope ought to be considered a constitutive element of faith or whether faith should be understood to represent a particular kind of hope. In any case, others have conducted careful theological examinations of the relationship between these closely related concepts, which I need not presently rehearse.²² Certainly, a fuller exploration of positive predicting emotions would necessarily include an analysis of all the textual appearances of faith. However, given the present limitations, I must restrict my focus to the use of the term *hope* although *faith* unavoidably and regularly appears in some of the same contexts.

Cognitive Necessity

Even when one accounts for the complicating similarities between faith and hope the evidence for the necessity of ‘cognition’ in the Mormon scriptural uses of hope is pervasive and straightforward. In fact, both hope and faith inevitably appear in contexts which underline their cognitive foundation. As a primary example we may look at what is perhaps the most explicit theological discussion of hope in LDS scriptures which Moroni, the last BoM prophet, presents when reporting on his father’s teachings about the relationship between hope, faith, and charity. In one of the most ‘Pauline’ passages within the BoM Mormon initially stresses the dual directionality between faith and hope by first asking rhetorically, “How is it that ye can attain unto faith, save ye shall have hope?” and then by stating that “without faith there cannot be any hope.” Yet, he also approaches the subject with greater clarity as he distinguishes between them in terms of the unique focus or object, which hope and faith respectively involve. Faith is to be focused on an individual, “*in Christ*”, whereas hope expresses itself *for* a future condition, namely “eternal life.”²³ Consequently, hope has a

²² See Bunyan (1968).

²³ Moro. 7:39-42. Eternal life is one of hope’s most commonly identified objects. Moroni writes of eternal life as “a more excellent hope”, whereas in another passage he writes of a more general “hope in

constitutive propositional object, which must have been acquired and retained cognitively by the individual prior to the emergence of the emotion. In other words, there could be no hope in a particular future condition or in any other propositional object had not the conceptualization of that possibility first formed itself within one's cognition.

Furthermore, in a separate section of the book, Moroni highlights faith's primacy in its relationship with hope by emphasizing faith's role in activating the 'rational ground', which justifies one's hope:

But because of the faith of men he has shown himself unto the world, and glorified the name of the Father, and prepared a way that thereby others might be partakers of the heavenly gift, that they might hope for those things which they have not seen. Wherefore, ye may also have hope, and be partakers of the gift, if ye will but have faith.²⁴

In other words, it was the faith of past believers, which contributed to the actualization of the earthly mission of Jesus Christ. In turn, His observable life and Atonement provides a rational ground for the salvific hope of both present and future conditions. Therefore, hope is grounded in evidence, which is sufficiently convincing, for the believer at least, to allow hope to emerge. In the context of the BoM the convincing evidence is gathered to a large extent from the revelations of the prophets about the mission of Christ, which is yet to come. Thus, Nephi, one of the central prophetic figures in the BoM, quotes Isaiah extensively with the expressed purpose of enabling his readers to "have hope" when hearing his Messianic witness. Later, Nephi's younger brother Jacob confirms the significance and effectiveness of all prophetic writings by stating that "having all these witnesses we obtain a hope."²⁵

It is also significant that the contexts in which the BoM usually highlights hope are illustrative of conversion circumstances. In these instances the acquisition of a new hope is usually interlinked with all the new perceptions, knowledge, and commitments, which ground its very causal foundations. For example, the prophet Alma reminds the people of Zarahemla about the spiritual circumstances surrounding their ancestors' conversion at a place called "the waters of Mormon". In this context he asks his audience a question which he himself will answer, "What grounds had they to hope for salvation?" Then, in speaking about his father Alma, who had been the leader of that converted group, he asks rhetorically "did not my father Alma believe in the words

a better world." (Ether 12:32,4. Also see Alma 13:29.) In another example Jacob writes of "a good hope of glory." (Jacob 4:11)

²⁴ Ether 12:8-9. See also Ether 12:4,6.

²⁵ 1 Ne. 19:24, Jacob 4:4-6.

which were delivered by the mouth of Abinadi? And was he not a holy prophet?" In fact, Alma continues, "according to his faith there was a mighty change wrought in his heart." Whether this change followed, culminated in or included the acquisition of a hope for salvation the ground for the Elder Alma's and his followers' newly obtained hope is clearly rooted in their new beliefs.²⁶

On the other hand, some of the strongest evidences for the 'cognitive necessity' of hope within LDS scriptures are found in those passages, which are critical of those hopes that are based on supposedly distorted perceptions. The debate between the non-believer Korihor and the prophet Alma is illustrative in this regard. Reportedly in the year 74 B.C.E. Korihor is preaching to those people who believe in Christ's future coming in these terms, "O ye that are bound down under a foolish and a vain hope, why do ye yoke yourselves with such foolish things? Why do ye look for a Christ?" In the same context Korihor also describes the believers' hope in the remission of their sins as "the effect of a frenzied mind."²⁷ In the debate between Korihor and Alma which ensues the prophet responds to these very questions by providing evidence for the people's hope which is also his own. Thus, he asks,

And now what evidence have ye that there is no God, or that Christ cometh not? I say unto you that ye have none, save it be your word only. But, behold, I have all things as a testimony that these things are true; and ye also have all things as a testimony unto you that they are true.²⁸

As is apparent, a proper justification for hope is intricately dependent on the nature of one's beliefs.

In turn, belief is just as intricately connected with one's desires, as both Alma and Mormon highlight in separate contexts. In underlining the necessity of charity Mormon affirms that a person "cannot have faith and hope, save he shall be meek, and lowly of heart."²⁹ Alma, on the other hand, makes a unique contribution in describing both the nature of faith and the dynamics of its growth in what appears as the most developed treatise on faith within the BoM. In addressing a group of poor people who had been "cast out" of their places of worship because of their poverty Alma first defines faith by stating that "if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen,

²⁶ Alma 5:10-12. The change seems to have followed sequentially the acquisition of belief; yet, as many other texts imply, the 'affective' change also intervenes in the opposite direction to immediately strengthen that initial faith and transforms it into a heavenly hope. Therefore, in a sense, cognition and feeling may be said to coexist in the experience of hope, just like they coexist in the experience of any emotion. Parenthetically, the emphasis in this passage is on the constitutive role of faith for the development of soteriological hope.

²⁷ Alma 30:13,16.

²⁸ Alma 30:40-41.

²⁹ Moro. 7:43.

which are true.” He also prefaces this definition by distinguishing faith from “perfect knowledge”, thus clearly suggesting that faith involves a kind of knowledge, although not a perfect one. The logical conclusion is the following: if faith is both a kind of hope as well as a kind of knowledge, then ‘faithful’ hope, or the hope which involves faith, is itself a kind of knowledge. For Alma then, there is no such thing as a knowledge-free hope.³⁰

Of course, in the LDS canon there are many other supporting examples of the necessary cognitive nature of hope, which explicitly identify both its grounds and its objects.³¹ In this context it is interesting to note that the word ‘hopeful’ never appears in the text, which underlines the fact that LDS scripture does not directly address the more generalized *mood* of hope. I suppose that one reason for this lacuna centres in the recognition that the condition of ‘hopefulness’ is usually constitutive of a state of happiness. Then, given its wider-ranging affective scope, happiness is bound to receive greater textual attention than one of its components, as chapter four will further demonstrate. Still, in connection with my cognitive emphasis, it may be argued that even a mood of hopefulness requires a foundation of particular beliefs and an implied object through which it may be more easily recognized.

Personal Responsibility

Within Mormon scripture personal responsibility is repeatedly associated with the presence or absence of hope. In fact, hope is mentioned alongside faith and charity when God or his prophets specifically command the people to possess these very attributes.³² In any case, even when not specifically identified in those other canonical imperatives which focus exclusively on the need for faith, it is likely that hope should be included as an inherent part of the process of faith, given the significant conceptual affinity highlighted in the previous section.³³ Still, there are a few passages that specifically focus on hope and on the personal responsibility inherent in trying to acquire it or to maintain it. One of these passages appears in one of the most well-

³⁰ Alma 32:21. In an earlier passage Alma further implies that hope is a weaker form of knowledge or that it is not equivalent to proper knowledge when, in speaking about the righteous who had died in battle: “While many thousands of others truly mourn...yet they rejoice and exult in the hope, and even know...that they are raised to dwell at the right hand of God.” (Alma 28:12)

³¹ In other examples Moroni writes “...the hope of his glory and of eternal life rest *in your mind* forever.” (Moro. 9:25) Several other passages focus on distinctive cognitive or perceptive contents of hope (D&C 138:14; 2 Ne. 25:24,27).

³² Alma 7:24, D&C 6:19.

³³ Hel 5:41, Moro. 7:34.

known sections in the BoM which deals with the subject of endurance. Specifically, it is included in the speech given by the prophet Nephi which begins with a focus on the soteriological necessity of baptism. In answering the question of what must follow an individual's submission to this ordinance, what he calls the "entrance at the gate", Nephi states: "Wherefore, ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope..."³⁴ Furthermore, other passages command people to "look forward", usually to the coming of Christ, an act that may be understood in terms of a cognitive attitude, which is both causative and constitutive of its associated hope.³⁵

Several examples of misguided hope are also highlighted in the BoM, such as Sherem's hope to shake Jacob's faith in Christ, or Amalickiah's evil desires and hopes to deceitfully dethrone the Lamanite king.³⁶ In these instances of misguided hope the text is more or less explicit in the condemnation of these individuals, a point based on the implied understanding that such negative developments could have been avoided through mental and spiritual efforts exercised in the right direction. In other words, the principle of agency appears with prominence in relation to the acquisition of hope, although the focus of responsibility ultimately seems to be rooted in the nature of one's desires rather than in the correctness or incorrectness of one's beliefs. In fact, other BoM passages emphasize the issue of availability of truthful information and the associated justice of God when they highlight the reason for some of the Lamanites' unbelief. When the misguided hope or the absence of proper hope is due to the unavailability of correct teachings from both parents and community God issues no personal condemnation.³⁷

Still, in relation to the acquisition of hope the text indicates that individuals are generally responsible for the actions and mental attitudes which will activate it. For example, while living as a missionary among the yet unconverted and mostly wicked Lamanite people Aaron teaches the Lamanite king the manner to obtain the hope of salvation that he desires. He states, "If thou wilt bow down before the God, yea, if thou wilt repent of all thy sins, and will bow down before God, and call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest."³⁸ Clearly, hope appears in this context as a divine gift to be "received". At the same

³⁴ 2 Ne 31:20.

³⁵ Jarom 1:11, Mosiah 18:21.

³⁶ Jacob 7:5, Alma 47:4.

³⁷ Alma 9:16-17.

³⁸ Alma 22:16.

time, in a pattern which repeatedly surfaces within Mormon scriptures, this gift requires the manifestation of a desire for its reception as materialized in proper actions and in correct mental attitudes. In fact, LDS texts stress that hope must be correctly directed, namely that it must be focused on the right objects and propositions. They also emphasize that different kinds of hope need to be properly ordered, a point clearly highlighted by Jacob when he asserts that, prior to the acquisition of riches, one should “have obtained a hope in Christ.”³⁹

Before concluding this section I should briefly recognize that the association of hope/faith to virtue gives rise to some philosophical difficulties, as exemplified by the famous James/Clifford debate on the will/ethics of belief. Placing pre-eminence on cognition and volition, as I have just attempted, does not circumvent the problem but rather highlights particular questions, such as the implied infinite regression between will, as a commitment to believe or to hope, and desires, or the positive/negative propensities which are experienced ‘spontaneously’ in relation to the object at hand. In fact, if on the one hand will shapes desires and on the other hand, at least to some extent, will is an expression of desires, where does the circle begin? Far from being able to provide an exhaustive response in this setting I would suggest at least one possible LDS theological response with two areas of emphases. On the one hand in denying the significance of a first cause Mormonism can shift the ground of responsibility from the origin to the process as it emphasizes the dynamic reciprocal relationship between will and desires rather than the original causes of a fixed beginning. On the other hand, and in line with the Roberts’ theory of intelligences, Mormonism may still be able to recognize *the will* as the primary feature of an independent eternal individuality which is fixed in substance but whose exact nature remains in-process through its constant interactions, whether of a mediating or of a surrendering kind, with malleable desires. Yet, the degree to which these conceptualizations will be satisfactory in their details remains a question for a separate occasion.

Developmental Instrumentality

Mormon scripture also addresses the way in which hope in salvation, resurrection, or forgiveness of sins may be preserved in the difficult context of life’s

³⁹ Jacob 2:17.

daily challenges. Although not explicitly stated, these texts imply that maintaining hope is so obviously desirable that the point has no need of convincing argumentation. In fact, it is certainly widely recognized that hope is functional for the healthy and the happy life, although both religious and popular cultures often do not specifically delineate the reasons that lie behind such an undoubtedly truthful conclusion. Yet, the prophet Mormon underlines the presentness of hope's functionality when he clarifies that "the rest of the Lord", which can be obtained by those "that have obtained a sufficient hope", precedes the time of "rest with him in heaven."⁴⁰ Therefore, the presence of hope is central to the acquisition of some form of serenity (rest), which is not to await the postponed reception of the gift of eternal life. This close relationship between hope, motivation, and well-being is also supported by scientific experiments although the connection would probably be sufficiently self-evident even in their absence.⁴¹

Yet, other aspects of hope's developmental instrumentality are not as obvious. One such example of significance is found in hope's epistemic utility as manifested in both processes of self-discovery and social discovery. In fact, the presence or absence of a particular form of hope often elucidates those cognitive processes which otherwise would remain obscure because lying below the surface of our awareness. Thus, according to the BoM, the recognition of a generalized lack of hope within ourselves teaches us that we need to repent. In fact, Moroni claims that if there is no hope, "ye must needs be in despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity."⁴² Clearly, the implication is that the presence or absence of hope has moral implications, namely that the righteous individual is obviously a hopeful person whereas sustained hopelessness is generally indicative of serious spiritual problems that need our attention. Indeed, as will be seen shortly, Mormon texts do not significantly depart from the biblical message in their emphasis on the necessary association between hopefulness and the Holy Spirit with its accompanying manifestations of comfort and enlightenment which are reserved for the blessed.

Furthermore, the LDS canon stresses that hopes rooted in wicked objectives will be ultimately disappointed, thus highlighting condemnation and need of repentance

⁴⁰ Moro. 7:3.

⁴¹ In 'hope theory' motivation appears as an essential component of hope. See Snyder, et al. (2005), 101-18. For studies on the physiological and psychological benefits of hope see Cheavens, et al. (2005), 119-32.

⁴² Moro. 10:22.

for the holder of the distorted hope. Hence, God states in the D&C that the punishment for the enemies of the Prophet will involve the abrupt end of their misplaced hopes. In fact, “their hope shall be blasted”, and consequently “they may be disappointed also, and their hopes may be cut off.”⁴³ On the other hand, the presence of hope with the right object in focus is *prima facie* evidence that we possess the kinds of beliefs God wants us to possess.⁴⁴ Moreover, a strong hope in God’s promises indicates that we are on a path of spiritual progression. In the LDS canon the clearest example of this kind is found in the account of the converted Lamanites of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, who had developed such hope in the resurrection that “they never did look upon death with any degree of terror”.⁴⁵ The depth of their hope was confirmed by their decision to allow their enemies to kill them rather than risking their own salvation in the process of shedding human blood for self-defense. In turn, this eschatological fear is contextualized in a pre-conversion experience characterized by their commission of many murders. In this particular instance the evidence points to a unity of feeling, cognition, and behaviour, where each is acting in reinforcement and confirmation of the other. Therefore, the manifestation of hope in behaviour, i.e. the willingness to sacrifice one’s life, points to a deeply embedded expectation of resurrection, which in its solidity represents the ideal depth of the salvific hope that emerges from LDS scripture.

Indeed, in order to be truly functional in life hope must necessarily endure beyond occasional or irregular appearances. It is only “firm hope” which will allow us to “have patience, and bear with...afflictions.” Nephi uses different words but expresses the same concept when he invites us to “look forward with steadfastness,” a process which involves “having a perfect brightness of hope.”⁴⁶ In turn, only this kind of hope will lead the individual to the spiritual progression made possible by the process of justification of one’s sins which further activates personal sanctification. In fact, in one description of righteousness within the BoM, true converts are described as “looking forward to that day (Christ’s coming), *thus* retaining a remission of their sins; being filled with great joy because of the resurrection of the dead.” In other words, there is probably no greater obstacle to personal progression than sin, and the endurance of hope is a key factor, which allows the process of forgiveness to occur on a

⁴³ D&C 121:11,14.

⁴⁴ Alma 7:6.

⁴⁵ Alma 27:28.

⁴⁶ Alma 34:41; 2 Ne. 26:8; 31:20.

regular basis.⁴⁷ In this manner the individual is permitted to overcome, at least in some degree, the stifling effect of sin, which otherwise would impede personal progression or the experience of true spiritual development. Yet, as I am about to explore, it is not just any form of hope that will make this process possible, but only that hope which is deeply focused on the Atonement and on its promises.

Hope and the Atonement

Mormon scripture describe the Atonement both as the object of one's hope as well as the foundation for all hope.⁴⁸ In fact, BoM prophet Jacob makes a brief but straightforward statement that captures the hypothetically tragic and universal consequences in the imaginary absence of the event: "if there should be no atonement made all mankind must be lost."⁴⁹ In other words, it is the reality of the Atonement that makes any hope a potential reality and without which any hope for happiness or immortality would necessarily dissipate as an illusionary dream. Then, if all hopes are sustained and given purpose by the reality of the Atonement the specific promises of the Atonement should be found at the very centre of all our hopes. In such a position of prominence a personal hope in those promises made possible by the Atonement, which focus on the possibility of forgiveness and on the reality of the final resurrection, give order to all other wishes and desires as manifested in various forms of hope. Furthermore, this ultimate hope contextualizes all other hopes into a larger eternal perspective of existence centred on Christ's Atonement.

Yet, the LDS canon possibly suggests that there is a more direct way in which the Atonement activates hope. In other words, the Atonement does not only function as hope's direct object for the internal hope-producing cognitions of the individual but it also acts as the external source which directly transmits the emotion 'supernaturally' to its beneficiaries as the instrument that ultimately makes all spiritual 'gifts' possible⁵⁰. These are two separate yet related ways in which the Atonement is spoken of within the

⁴⁷ Alma 4:14.

⁴⁸ The repeated description of faith as the necessary instrument that leads to hope is usually based on the assumption that such faith is focused in the person of Jesus Christ and in the promises of His Atonement. See Moro. 7:41; Alma 25:16.

⁴⁹ Jacob 7:12.

⁵⁰ As already suggested, given the heavy emphasis on personal responsibility, which characterizes Mormon theological perspectives, the term 'gift' should not to be understood in the context of complete absence of effort but rather in association with significant efforts which are yet inevitably incommensurate to the nature of the received 'gift'. For this reason the blessing remains a 'gift' because the inherent inadequacy of the effort excludes the possibility of using 'earning' terminology.

LDS theological context, and, as described in the previous chapter, its second function often appears as largely interchangeable with descriptions of the power of the Holy Spirit. To be sure, no Mormon scripture specifically identifies a spiritual ‘gift of hope’, but undoubtedly the role of the Holy Spirit is in most instances implied if not explicitly recognized when hope is transmitted in forms of divine-human communication. What remains unclear is the extent to which hope emerges in consequence of the spiritual experience or whether it is constitutive of the same.

On the one hand the Mormon canon provides good evidence for the acquisition of hope in consequence of divine communication or intervention. In relation to the attribute of cognitive necessity, which is being highlighted in this work, it is particularly relevant to underline those examples of heavenly manifestations, which involve the conveyance of ‘hope-filled’ information. For example, in one particular instance Joseph Smith listed the heavenly beings with whom he had come into contact throughout his life, and in the same context he highlighted that they were “all declaring their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood; giving line upon line, precept upon precept...confirming our hope!”⁵¹ Then, it appears that the content of the divine message as heard and processed by both the Prophet and his followers was central to the strengthening of their hope.

On the other hand the more common context of response to prayer in the absence of a heavenly vision is somewhat more ambiguous in relation to the exact timing and the manner of acquisition of hope. Although within the present work the examination of the spiritual dynamics of this kind of interventions can only be sketched the existing evidence points to the possibility that the reception of hope as a spiritual gift may take place as a mainly external form of emotional transfer. In psychological terms this translates to a pre-reflective experience of hope which is largely co-occurrent to the spiritual manifestation at stake. The BoM war epistle sent from Helaman, a prominent Nephite commander, to captain Moroni, a fellow military leader (who should not be confused with the last BoM prophet), is indicative of these possible dynamics as the author describes the manner in which fears of defeat and destruction were changed into hope through his and his soldiers’ prayers of faith:

Yea, and it came to pass that the Lord our God did visit us with assurances that he would deliver us; yea, insomuch that he did speak peace to our souls, and did grant unto us great faith, and did cause us that we should hope for our deliverance in him.⁵²

⁵¹ D&C 128:21.

⁵² Alma 58:11.

To be sure, the text is not concerned with analytical descriptions of the spiritual dynamics in the process of God's succouring of His children. Thus, it is entirely possible that the prayerful Helaman and his soldiers consciously interpreted a more general positive sensory response in the specific manner that was just described. In any case, it is clear that the author desires to attribute to God the causation for this possible cognitive restructuring which led him to first experience fear and then hope. From the phenomenological perspective Helaman simply felt an actual power that was transformative of emotion, whether primarily through a potent sensation experience to be subsequently interpreted or through a ready-made cognitive/affective infusion of a specific and contextualized form of hope.

Clearly, a psychological description of spiritual experiences is not one of the main purposes of LDS scripture. Therefore, other passages are similarly inconclusive and not specific in relation to such dynamics. For example, it is sufficient for Moroni to describe the Holy Ghost as the Comforter, which "filleth with hope and perfect love."⁵³ Yet, although the manner of this replenishing act is not detailed in the text this brief exploration of hope has already demonstrated that the Atonement and its associated power of the Holy Ghost play a central role in the LDS theological framework of emotion, whether in terms of motivation, contextualization, production, or regulation. This conclusion will be confirmed by all successive analyses of emotion as they appear in the current examination.

Fear: the Negative Predicting Experience

If the desirability of hope is explicit, as is well captured in the thirteenth article of faith, LDS canonical references stressing both negative function and undesirable manifestations of fear are just as prevalent.⁵⁴ To be sure, fear is not necessarily the exact opposite of hope; in fact, it could rightly be argued that courage represents the antonym of fear or that despair is to be located at the exact opposite of hope. Still, as previously indicated, this is not a concern for the kind of conceptual structure I have chosen to employ within this textual analysis. Furthermore, I am aware that *fear*, particularly in the context of godly fear, is in many cases commonly conceptualized as

⁵³ Moro. 8:26.

⁵⁴ In a statement emphasizing Mormonism's comprehensive aspirations to the good and to the true and in recognized resonance to Philip. 4:8 this article of faith claims that "we hope all things." Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (1981*b*), A of F 13, 61.

reverence or *worship*, rather than as dread. Yet, these contexts are still significant in relation to an analysis of this emotion since I assume that some level of fear is indeed present within an attitude of either reverence or worship, in line with Rudolf Ottos' classic formula that defines the divine as *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*. However, these instances of fear are not the main focus of my examination since it is common for divine fear to be overshadowed by other more prominent attributes and motivations, such as love, and awe.

The word *fear*, its synonym *dread*, or one of their grammatical derivatives appears in 182 verses of the Mormon canon. In many of these passages the authors do not associate any specific moral judgment to the occurrences of fear since their aim is mainly to outline matter-of-factly those attempted intentional predictions which are common to human life in its interpersonal or intergroup relationships.⁵⁵ Still, many other usages of the term are replete with ethical implications, as was also highlighted in the prior analysis on the textual appearances of hope. Furthermore, some passages are more descriptive than others in addressing the reasons, manifestations, and consequences of the various experiences of fear. These more useful examples form the primary focus of my concern as I proceed to examine the *cognitive necessity*, *personal responsibility*, and *developmental instrumentality* in the *fear* content of LDS canonical texts.

Cognitive Necessity

In many instances of its scriptural usages *fear* appears to describe a condition of cognitive negative anticipation of future events. For example, in relation to the disobedient or to the wicked, the Day of Judgment is repeatedly described in terms of the "great and dreadful day of the Lord."⁵⁶ In a more specific illustration within the PoGP, the portion of Enoch's vision, which centres on the time that precedes the second coming of Christ, includes an image of "great tribulations among the wicked...and men's hearts failing them, looking forth with fear for the judgments of the Almighty God."⁵⁷ In this and in other instances, the fearful anticipation of what may or will occur at a later date is clearly triggered by a cognitive perception of a

⁵⁵ Many such uses are found in contexts of battle preparation and engagement in the many chapters dealing with wars within the BoM. See Alma 58:15,29,36; 50:28,32; 44:15; 49:17; 51:11; 56:29; 52:29; Hel. 4:20; 11:32.

⁵⁶ JS-H 1:38, D&C 110:14,16, D&C 128:17, D&C 138:46 and many others.

⁵⁷ Moses 7:66. Other examples include D&C 63:33; 88:91; 45:74; 2 Ne. 12:10,19,21; 2 Ne. 9:46; Jacob 6:13; Alma 40:14.

future dreadful image, whose potential reality is mentally recognized. Yet, the common description of the wicked often involves their failure to admit this very reality; hence, when unspecified, the fear of the Day of Judgment is perhaps better framed as a description of a future emotional condition at the time of the actual judgment. Clearly, both dimensions easily coexist in those instances where the author expresses a hope that people in his audience will be motivated to reform their lives as they contemplate with fearful anticipation the dreadful picture of the future Day of Judgment in all its future manifestations.

In fact, various descriptions of transitions from a disbelieving to a converted condition often involve such a stage of dreadful contemplation. For example, in the middle of their conversion process *Alma the younger* and the *sons of Mosiah* experienced “much anguish of soul because of their iniquities, suffering much and fearing that they should be cast off forever.”⁵⁸ Similarly, the Lamanite king Lamoni, at the very early stages of his conversion, is described as fearing “exceedingly, with fear lest he had done wrong in slaying his servants” notwithstanding the belief that “whatsoever they [the Lamanites] did was right.”⁵⁹ In these examples it is clear that the temporary experience of fear is indicative of a remorseful conscience which, in turn, either sets in motion or contributes to the process of conversion. In the BoM Helaman sets out the common sequence of cognition in many of these circumstances by highlighting the fact that when unbelievers “saw, they believed, and fear came upon them.”⁶⁰ Therefore, fear can fulfil a positive and important spiritual role which will be examined more closely when I highlight fear’s *developmental instrumentality*.

However, it is evident that not all forms of fear are facilitative of repentance. In several instances within the Mormon canon the experience of divine fear is not indicative of a complete conversion process. In these instances fear is rooted in a change of beliefs, which falls short, either in quality or in motivating power, of the necessary transition that leads to faith. Nephi provides an example which illustrates the point that it is only the right kind of fear which is acceptable to God. In quoting Isaiah Nephi states: “Forasmuch as this people draw near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear

⁵⁸ Mosiah 28:4. Also see Alma 36:7,11.

⁵⁹ Alma 18:5. Also see 3 Ne. 3:16,25 where it is the fear triggered by Lachoneus’ words which leads to repentance.

⁶⁰ Hel. 9:5.

towards me is taught by the precepts of men-.⁶¹ Another example is found in Jacob's account of Sherem, a man who had rebelled against God and who was struck down by His power almost to the point of death. In that moment of crisis Sherem laments: "I greatly fear lest my case shall be awful; but I confess unto God."⁶² Yet the text implies that his confession was not sufficient in the eyes of God, thus possibly suggesting that it may have been rooted in superficiality, which was more forced by circumstances than by a real and deep desire to do God's will.⁶³

In fact, for the purpose of qualifying the emotion as either spiritually desirable or undesirable the nature of the motivating volition is as central as the object of the fear. For example, fear clearly does not function as an indicator of contrition when it is merely triggered by unwanted evidence which is contrary to one's beliefs or when it is unaccompanied by a process of sincere repentance. At times even fear which is both unforced by circumstances and focused on the right divine object is illustrated as emerging from unacceptable cognitive foundations because motivated by sinful desires. For example, in recounting a prophecy of the last days the BoM describes many who will preach in this manner, "Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God...God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved." In another context, the absence of the fear of death, which in other instances would be considered an indication of faith, is attributed instead to the "exceeding...anger" of individuals whom the text clearly condemns. In other words, although physiological manifestations of fear may appear as morally indistinguishable, different values and beliefs can give rise to kinds of fear of quite opposite spiritual significance.⁶⁴ Indeed, in manifesting coexisting beliefs and wishes fear may possibly emerge as self-conflicting.⁶⁵

In addition, the central role of cognition in the experience of fear is illustrated by those textual instances in which God invites humans not to be fearful. In these contexts, God provides reasonable foundations, mostly centred in His divine omnipotent power, upon which individuals can construct their emotional regulations of

⁶¹ 2 Ne. 27:25.

⁶² Jacob 7:19.

⁶³ Interestingly accounts of the initial behavioural consequences which follow these unwelcomed turn of events, whether culminating in repentance or not, often involve such stark descriptions as "I fell to the earth and I did hear no more" or "they were immovable because of the fear." (Alma 36:11; Hel. 5:34). Also see Alma 14:26.

⁶⁴ 2 Ne. 28:8; Moro. 9:5. This latter passage can be juxtaposed to a rather opposite description of absence of fear of death: "...they did not fear death; and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers than they did upon their lives." (Alma 56:47) In yet another setting fear of death becomes an opportunity for the manifestation of divine power. See Alma 17:29.

⁶⁵ For an example of conflicting fears see Alma 47:2.

distressing anxieties. In fact, some of the most common motivations provided by the divine with the purpose of abating fear include statements or promises like “I the Lord am with you,” “God will deliver” or, with specific reference to one’s enemies, “they shall not have power,” “they are in mine hands,” and “they are as grass.”⁶⁶ In many instances the assurance clearly does not imply a promise of immediate physical protection; instead, the focus is the acquisition of an eternal perspective, which in turn can allow the individual to find peace in the face of challenges. For example, the Lord gave the following bitter-sweet message to the suffering Saints in Missouri, “fear not even unto death; for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full.”⁶⁷ In the final analysis, given the evidence for the presence of coping mechanisms of cognitive restructuring, for the significance of volition in the emergence of emotion, and for the object-related moral evaluation of the experience of fear I conclude that cognitive necessity clearly underlies the treatment of fear in LDS canonical texts.

Personal Responsibility

The Mormon canon presents extensive evidence that God commands and desires humanity to either *fear* or to *fear not*, which implies recognition of at least a partial degree of human control over emotional phenomena. Divine commands to fear usually specify God Himself as the desired object of the emotion whereas commands not to fear centre in human pressures variously expressed in terms of power, strength, threats, etc. To be sure, the extent to which *godly fear* should be understood as actual fear or more properly as worship and reverence has been a subject of discussion among theologians.⁶⁸ The issue is not explicitly addressed in LDS scripture but the text makes it explicit that the command to fear God, whatever meaning is attributed to the term *fear*, is of universal applicability. In fact, as the D&C reports, when God states “I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me” it is clear that godly fear is not only for the rebellious to experience.⁶⁹ The BoM echoes this conclusion by means of king Mosiah, who teaches that believers should do all things “in the fear of the Lord”, and through Amulek’s teachings, which stress that God’s children should “work out [your] salvation with fear before God.”⁷⁰

⁶⁶ D&C 68:6; 30:11; Alma 61:21; D&C 136:17,30; 124:7.

⁶⁷ D&C 101:36.

⁶⁸ A classic treatise on the topic is found in Bunyan (1967).

⁶⁹ D&C 76:5.

⁷⁰ Mosiah 29:30, Alma 34:37. See also 3 Ne. 24:16; 25:2.

At the same time, when addressed to the rebellious or when expressed comparatively in relation to ‘worldly’ fears, the command to fear God is even more direct and pointed. For example, in numerous instances God affirms the inevitability of His eschatological judgments for those who have chosen not to heed His counsel. One of the many illustrations is the following D&C verse, whose emotional impact is strengthened by the added presence of the verb ‘tremble’, “Wherefore, fear and tremble, O ye people, for what I the Lord have decreed...shall be fulfilled.”⁷¹ Furthermore, God commands fear in comparative terms in those texts which point to the need to fear Him rather than men or nations. Isaiah makes this point explicitly in the BoM section which quotes him extensively, “A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.”⁷² Also captain Moroni, in his angry letter to the highest government official of his time, emphasizes a similar point when he describes his attitude toward what he perceived as a neglectful government that had abandoned him and his men in the middle of a war. Thus, he writes to Pahoran, “I do not fear your power nor authority, but it is my God whom I fear.”⁷³

Although divine commands to fear the Lord are numerous, divine commands not to fear are even greater in number. In these later instances God’s commands to not fear are expressed in forms that range from the rebuke to the tender assurance, whether the object is specifically identified as individuals or nations or as human power in general. For example, and on the one hand, God rebukes Isaiah’s people by asking through His prophet “who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of man, who shall die...and forgettest the Lord thy maker...and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor...And where is the fury of the oppressor?”⁷⁴ On the other hand, God also reassures his followers as He addresses them with tender appellations while encouraging them to “fear not, little flock” or “fear not, little children.”⁷⁵ The theological motivation for this softening of tone may either be indicative of the receptors’ standing as ‘forgiven’ before God, or it may point to divinely recognized limits of personal responsibility in some circumstances over others where the elimination of fear appears to be a highly unlikely human achievement.

⁷¹ D&C 1:7. Also see D&C 133:38; 63:6; 88:104; 2 Ne. 21:2-3; 27:34; 3 Ne. 24:5; Moses 7:1,17; Morm. 9:27; Mosiah 15:26.

⁷² 2 Ne. 18:12-13.

⁷³ Alma 60:28.

⁷⁴ 2 Ne. 8:12-13. See also 2 Ne. 17:4, 28.

⁷⁵ D&C 35:27; 6:34; 50:41.

Perhaps both factors are significant and the prevalence of words of comfort over imperatives is certainly observable in several canonical texts.

Indeed, many of the contexts in which God or a prophet encourages a people to not fear suggest that the audience has already been experiencing fear at the time of the assurance/command. In other words, the directive could have been expressed synonymously as ‘cease to fear’ such as when God encourages the Saints in the immediate aftermath of the Missouri persecutions, “fear not, let your hearts be comforted...let not your hearts be troubled”.⁷⁶ Clearly, this particular context does not imply any condemnation for the fear Church members were experiencing. In contrast, other passages point explicitly to divine anger and condemnation as manifested in this divine rebuke, “But with some I am not well pleased, for they will not open their mouths, but they hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man. Wo unto such, for mine anger is kindled against them.”⁷⁷

Again, the difference in tone is significant and in the final analysis I would like to suggest one theological reason that may explain such contrast in terms that are relevant to this discussion of personal responsibility.⁷⁸ God accepts as a natural response the almost instinctive human reaction of fear in the face of perceived threat. Such a reaction, in addition to being of necessary protective benefit in many instances, is hardly preventable through individual efforts and God’s perfect justice does not require accountability for the fight or flight response which is triggered automatically by sensory perceptions of threat. Yet, these responses can be acted upon *a posteriori* and God seems concerned with whether the individual allows the perception of threat to remain unchallenged or whether the individual will provide his mind with counteracting information that soften or restructure the threatening stimulus. In fact, in the case of God’s condemnation of those members who were afraid to “open their mouths” it appears that their failure to preach was a repeated response to their perceived threat of persecution. In contrast, the Saints in Missouri, who had just experienced the difficulties connected with their expulsion from Jackson County, had not yet fully had the opportunity to ‘respond’ to their emotional condition in a ‘faithful’ manner. Thus, although personal responsibility may be softened or briefly suspended

⁷⁶ D&C 98:1,18.

⁷⁷ D&C 60:2.

⁷⁸ Admittedly the text is not very explicit in this regard; however, I use the overall picture of God’s justice and expectations that emerges from LDS scripture as the background on which to base my suggestion.

in the case of unpreventable threatening stimuli, long-range responsibility in relation to these stimuli is reaffirmed and is rooted in the interaction of one's volition with one's cognitive processing and restructuring.

Developmental Instrumentality

The need for a proactive personal response to fear, which allows it to function as a potential tool for growth and development, underlies fear's developmental instrumentality. In fact, by providing opportunities for the emergence of faith, which is to be chosen as the ideal path of cognitive restructuring, fear acts both as the necessary opposition to faith and as its potential tester and motivator. Needless to say, in numerous LDS canonical instances faith is described as the conqueror of fear. For example, in the BoM the 'people of Alma' begin to fear when they see the approaching of the belligerent Lamanite army. Consequently, their leader Alma comes to their aid in a way which is particularly significant in the context of the present discussion:

Alma went forth and stood among them, and exhorted them that they should not be frightened, but that they should remember the Lord their God and he would deliver them. Therefore, they hushed their fears, and began to cry unto the Lord that he would soften the hearts of the Lamanites, that they would spare them, and their wives, and their children.⁷⁹

Parenthetically, within the BoM itself the verb 'to remember' is used in over 100 verses. In most cases it functions as the proposed ultimate solution for problems related to the common anxieties of human experience as well as for the most recurrent problem highlighted in the BoM narrative, i.e. the sin of pride.⁸⁰ The objects of 'remembering' include God's attributes, His previous actions in history, human dependency on the divine, one's family and nation, or any other thought that may motivate an individual to overcome fear or other undesirable emotions. Then, by providing an immediate moment of crisis that demands full attention fear is instrumental in potentially facilitating the development of those spiritual means which may conquer it, whether expressed as values, beliefs, or memories.

Yet, the possible epistemic value of fear is just as instrumental as is its motivating function. This is clearly evident within Mormon scripture in the specific

⁷⁹ Mosiah 23:27-28. An interesting question that emerges from this passage is whether the *hushing* of their fears should be understood as preceding the prayer or whether it occurred in consequence of the prayer. The text suggests it occurred prior to the prayer and in fact it can be argued that 'fear' may have such a paralyzing effect to block some cognitive processes and verbal expression (if prayer is meant as an articulate expression of thoughts and desires). In that case it would seem that 'remembering' God could have sufficiently calmed their anxieties to allow a prayer to Him to be articulated.

⁸⁰ Most major BoM prophets make repeated use of the word in their sermons. See 2 Ne. 9; 29; Mosiah 4; Alma 36; Moro. 10; etc.

context of spiritual self-evaluation for the purposes of repentance and growth. Thus, in light of the previous reference to God's call to remember Him, it appears that those who repeatedly fail to overcome their fears of persecution are not remembering Him with sufficient frequency or intensity. Therefore, their emotional state provides an indication of the weak condition of their faith, which conscientious believers will endeavour to strengthen through various forms of cognitive and behavioural intervention including divine petitions for greater faith. To be sure, a failure to remember God is even more pronounced in those individuals who feel no fear towards God and His judgments, whether out of ignorance or out of rebellion. Yet, while all these instances pinpoint individual weakness of various kinds they do not necessarily imply divine condemnation of God's fearful children. In fact, God's response to those who fear, as already highlighted, varies in relation to a number of factors which include personal effort and nature of individual desires.

At the same time, those who are portrayed as the heroes in the Mormon canon undoubtedly appear as people of great faith and courage, who revere or fear God while they disregard human threats and persecutions. One of these spiritual models is certainly Nephi, whom the Lord commends for his faithfulness and courage in these terms, "Blessed art thou, Nephi, for...thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine own life, but hast sought my will, and to keep my commandments."⁸¹ A further example, this time involving a group rather than an individual, centres on the figures of the heroic 'young stripling warriors' who fought courageously in battle notwithstanding their military inexperience. Their commander Helaman praises them with words which explicitly associate their courage with their faith, "Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death...yea, they had been taught by their mothers that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them"⁸².

These descriptions are in stark contrast to those other accounts which focus on the disobedient and on the rebellious. For example, prior to the BoM concluding battle, which brings the overwhelmingly superior Lamanite force to face the rebellious and faithless Nephites, Mormon describes his people in the following dreadful terms, "Behold the armies of the Lamanites marching towards them; and with that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked, did they await to receive them."⁸³

⁸¹ Hel. 10:4.

⁸² Alma 56:47.

⁸³ Morm. 6:7.

Yet, perhaps the clearest example of fear as evidence for the wickedness of its experiencer is found in the account of Nephi's inspired prophecy of Seantum's fratricide of Seezoram, the land's chief-judge. The prophet's prediction outlines Seantum's reaction when examiners are sent to examine his cloak. As he is questioned about the blood stains found on his cloak Seantum "shall (he) tremble, and shall look pale, even as if death had come upon him. And then shall ye say: "Because of this fear and this paleness which has come upon your face, behold, we know that thou art guilty. And then shall greater fear come upon him..."⁸⁴ Then, the physiological manifestations of fear function as a mirror into the true thoughts and desires of the individual, thus informing the public about an otherwise hidden truth.

Therefore, fear can unfold to us various aspects of reality in a variety of possible manners. In the first place, it can strengthen our initial perception of a real threat or it can help us to identify the elusive nature of perceived threats as we examine the soundness of the values and beliefs that ground our experience of that particular kind of fear. As emphasized within the LDS canon, fear may specifically give us indications about the state of our faith in God and about the hierarchy of our affections. Furthermore, it can increase our awareness of the basis of our own spiritual motivation as we discover whether fear functions as the necessary factor that moves us to action or whether fear happens to strengthen an already existing motivation to obedience. Then, within the social realm, fear can aid us in the process of identifying the true values and desires of others through the exposure of their deepest selves which is facilitated by the expression of their fears. Moreover, it can fulfil the communicative functions described in a previous chapter and highlighted in the BoM in the context of the Lamanite queen, who, when she "saw the fear of the servants... also began to fear exceedingly."⁸⁵

In the final analysis, Mormon scripture emphasizes the fact that fear is neither necessarily functional nor dysfunctional; it all depends on its objects and motivations. On the one hand, fear may be based on distorted perceptions that remove us from the truth. In fact, God commands us to fear Him and to cease fearing human power because the latter fear is based on an erroneous perception which does not take the full eternal picture into account. On the other hand, divine fear, which is associated with faith in God's power and perfection, may motivate an individual to obedience. In addition to the conversion contexts previously outlined LDS texts suggest in several

⁸⁴ Hel. 9:33-34.

⁸⁵ Alma 22:21.

instances that the one and only manner through which hardened and slothful individuals can be moved in a direction of righteousness is by means of godly fear. Support for this conclusion is clearly apparent in Enos' BoM account where he describes the spiritual condition of his people in the following terms,

And there was nothing save it was exceeding harshness, preaching and prophesying of wars, and contentions, and destructions, and continually reminding them of death, and the duration of eternity, and the judgments and the power of God, and all these things – stirring them up continually to keep them in the fear of the Lord. I say there was nothing short of these things, and exceedingly great plainness of speech, that would keep them from going down speedily to destruction.⁸⁶

The text implies that a constant instillation of divine fear is not the ideal motivating condition to shift individuals in the direction of truth. For example, a more desirable alternative is suggested in both biblical text and in the D&C through Christ's renowned invitation, "if ye love me, keep my commandments."⁸⁷ Yet, Enos' account and other scriptural texts seem to indicate that turning to God through fear is preferable over not turning to God at all.

Godly Fear, Satan, and the Obstacle of Fear

Notwithstanding fear's potential usefulness for God's salvific purposes LDS canonical texts do not claim that God directly causes fear by conferring it onto His human creatures. In other words, unlike hope fear is not a spiritual 'gift' whose reception is made possible by Christ's Atonement. Instead, the Atonement is commonly associated with the removal of fear, or to put it differently, with the acquisition of hope. Still, several Mormon texts portray circumstances where humans experience intense fear when interacting with God. On the positive side these instances include the visitations or visions of glorious heavenly beings, and on the negative one the divine communication of information which provoke serious anxiety and even terror, particularly in relation to the 'Day of Judgement.'⁸⁸ Therefore, while God does affect the cognitive perception of individuals in the direction of fear, either by conveying 'fear-filled' information or by manifesting His benevolent power, the Holy Spirit does not appear to directly 'inject' fear into individuals as instead is possibly suggested by some textual evidence relative to hope. Thus, God cannot be said to

⁸⁶ Enos 1:23. Also see Moro. 9:3-5.

⁸⁷ D&C 124:87.

⁸⁸ References of the first kind include JS-H 1:14,32 and Ether 3:6,8. Several examples have already been provided for the second kind of 'fearful' interaction.

directly ‘cause’ fear, but only to manipulate some perceptual factors which in most cases will lead to fear.⁸⁹

Various theological considerations may lie at the core of this conclusion. In the first place, the motivating power of godly fear ideally functions only in preparation for the more desirable condition of ‘love’ towards one’s Father in Heaven. Therefore, godly fear, when understood as dread of the divine, is neither advantageous nor necessary to the pursuit of personal salvation. Secondly, fear never appears in any description of the divine attributes and certainly it is not included in the accounts which illustrate the emotional experiences of the Incarnate Jesus. In fact, Jesus is repeatedly shown to manifest great respect, obedience, and adoration towards the Father, but not fear in the sense of our common usage. Then, given the common Christian view which attributes to Jesus the role of perfect exemplar in both emotion and behaviour the account of His life supports the need to interpret God’s commands to fear Him in terms of worship, regard, and reverence. In the final analysis, fear does not belong to the divine nature; therefore, any direct transfer of fear from the divine to the human would be self-contradictory. Yet, textual evidence highlights the reality of a God who makes use of the common human experience of fear as an instrument that assists Him in His purposes with His children.

In this context I should add that the fear references within the LDS canon are not limited to passages in which an object is explicitly defined, such as God or specific individuals or groups. In a few instances the object remains unarticulated and the emphasis centres in the general experience of fear rather than in any specific contextualization of the phenomenon. Unsurprisingly, in these illustrations fear is always described negatively since it appears as an obstacle that impedes spiritual communication. Specifically, the term fear is used at times to describe the condition of a hindering inner doubt as it exists both within single individuals and larger groups. For example, by the mouth of Joseph Smith, and following his failed attempt to translate the original BoM plates, Oliver Cowdery received this divine message, “It is not expedient that you should translate now. Behold, it was expedient when you commenced; but you feared, and the time is past, and it is not expedient now.” It is not exactly clear what Oliver had feared or doubted although the negative consequences are

⁸⁹ D&C 10:56 is perhaps an ambiguous exception since, in relation to the wicked, God says “It is they that I will disturb, and cause to tremble and shake to the center.” Still, there is no indication that the verb ‘cause’ should be understood in terms that are exceptionally unique in the wider context of this kind of godly interventions.

explicit. In short, he was prevented from enjoying a significant spiritual experience. Similarly, fear functioned as an obstacle to other blessings for those Church elders who were told: “Ye endeavored to believe that ye should receive the blessing which was offered unto you; but...there were fears in your hearts, and verily this is the reason that ye did not receive.”⁹⁰

What further emphasizes the negative function of fear as an obstacle to human/divine interaction is the role LDS scripture attributes to Satan as provoker of fear. In the relatively few references that associate Satan with the experience of fear the devil certainly functions as the indirect source of the emotion by nature of the cognitive perceptions which are interlinked with his presence. For example, when explaining the reasons for James Covill’s defection from the Mormon cause God declares: “Straightway Satan tempted him; and the fear of persecution and the cares of the world caused him to reject the world.”⁹¹ Significantly, the object of fear is not Satan, but “the cares of the world”, although Lucifer is clearly framed as the instigator and facilitator of the process which involves in all likelihood an escalation of fear. Furthermore, where God is the appropriate object of fear, Satan or an individual by him inspired attempts to persuade people *not* to have godly fear. Thus, BoM Nehor is reported to teach people that “they need not fear nor tremble, but that they might lift up their heads and rejoice; for...all men should have eternal life.”⁹²

At the same time the PoGP recounts an experience of Satan which is unique in its immediacy since it involves his actual visual presence. Still, even in this particular incident the fear that Moses experiences appears to be a consequence of Moses’ perceptual and cognitive processes rather than being a result of a direct satanic intervention on Moses’ emotional sensations. In this narrative Moses is visited by the spiritual personage of Satan, who repeatedly attempts to obtain Moses’ loyalty and obedience although without any success. Following the prophet’s repeated refusals to worship him Satan reacts violently as he “cried with a loud voice, and ranted upon the earth, and commanded, saying: I am the Only Begotten, worship me.” It is only at this point that the text highlights Moses’ experience of fear in these terms, “as he began to fear, he saw the bitterness of hell. Nevertheless, calling upon God, he received

⁹⁰ D&C 9:10-11; 67:3.

⁹¹ D&C 40:2.

⁹² Alma 1:4.

strength.”⁹³ Therefore, Moses’ fear was caused by his perception of Satan’s violent reaction as threatening. Furthermore, the text seems to imply an added sense of escalating intensity by associating the beginning of fear with related threatening mental images, such as “the bitterness of hell.” In turn, the intensity of this fear led Moses to turn to God for assistance. Perhaps, there is no other account in Mormon scripture which is as clear in highlighting the significance of cognitive processes throughout the experience of fear.

Interestingly, another account, which also describes an encounter with the satanic presence, is somewhat more ambiguous in relation to the manifestation of fear. In other words, the text does not clearly exclude an interpretation which involves a direct emotional influence of Lucifer as dispenser of fear. This particular narrative is found in the Joseph Smith History section of the PoGP which was written by the Prophet in 1838. In one of Mormonism’s paradigmatic scenes, the First Vision, Joseph Smith described what followed the beginning of his petition in these words,

I was seized upon by some power which entirely overcame me, and had such an astonishing influence over me as to bind my tongue so that I could not speak. Thick darkness gathered around me, and it seemed to me for a time as if I were doomed to sudden destruction. But, exerting all my powers to call upon God to deliver me out of the power of this enemy which had seized upon me, and at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction – not to an imaginary ruin, but to the power of some actual being from the unseen world, who had such marvelous power as I had never before felt in any being – just at this moment of great alarm, I saw a pillar of light...⁹⁴

Although the Prophet never used the word fear within this account he wrote of “alarm” in a context that strongly implies the experience of fear. Yet, his conceptualization of Satan’s effects on both body and mind are ambiguous enough to leave open the question as to whether fear was experienced as a consequence of the power that came upon him or as its component.

Notwithstanding this latter possibility, the overall evidence from Mormon scriptural texts indicates that neither God nor Satan directly confer or transfer fear into individuals. Instead, fear repeatedly appears as a natural human process which is rooted in cognitive perceptions of threat. Furthermore, particularly when focused on human objects, fear creates mental/spiritual obstacles that impede divine communication. For this reason, God frequently addresses His children about the need to prevent or to replace fear with other attributes. Thus, in addition to the previously described focus on the acquisition of hope, BoM prophet Mormon echoes 1 John 4:18

⁹³ Moses 1:12-22.

⁹⁴ JS-H 1:15-16. Also see Davies (2009), 35-36.

in its core message that love ultimately conquers fear. In fact, Mormon states: “I fear not what man can do; for perfect love casteth out all fear.”⁹⁵ Similarly, God suggests in a D&C revelation that we may prevent at least some of our common fears from emerging through attentive preparation. As a further support to the highly pragmatic nature of Mormonism this revelation states, “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear” is now one of the most quoted verses in LDS circles.⁹⁶

In conclusion, in this chapter I have analysed a few relevant passages of the LDS canon, which focus on content that relates to the predicting emotions of *hope* and *fear*. By highlighting the explicit and implicit textual evidence for the cognitive necessity, personal responsibility, and developmental instrumentality associated with these terms I have aimed to provide support for an implied ‘folk model’ of emotion, which brings these canonical authors to echo modern scholars and scientists in affirming these three basic characteristics that define emotions.⁹⁷ Furthermore, I have examined various interlinks and contingencies that associate the Mormon understanding of Atonement with hope as well as underlining the connection between Satan and fear. In this context I have highlighted the significance of these relationships within the wider framework of LDS theology. Yet, the evidence so far has only focused on one category of emotion; hence, I now move to examine the second spectrum of emotional phenomena, or what I have called the *assessing* emotions.

⁹⁵ Moro. 8:16.

⁹⁶ D&C 38:30.

⁹⁷ I use the term ‘folk model’ rather than ‘cultural model’ because it is applicable more widely to non-western and non-industrialized settings. “Cultural models are presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared by the members of a society.” Quinn and Holland (1987), 4.

CHAPTER FOUR

The ‘Assessing’ Emotions: Joy and Sorrow

This chapter focuses on those emotions, whose main object is centred in relevant aspects of the known present. In other words, in comparison to the predicting emotions of the previous chapter the temporal context of the *assessing* emotions involves greater emphasis on the actual rather than on the potential. In this context, since it is possible for an individual to vividly re-live the memory of past experiences the realm of actuality may also include events from the past, which are re-played cognitively in various possible degrees of awareness. Furthermore, future events which are perceived as certain may also give rise to intense experiences of the two selected prototypical assessing emotions, namely *joy* and *sorrow*. In fact, if the feared or hoped-for event is played out in one’s mind *as if* it were already actualized its perceptual temporal immediacy may transform a predicting emotion towards it into an assessing one. It is in this sense that in my forthcoming analysis I will also address instances of canonical *anticipatory sorrow* as well as what I have termed *anticipatory joy* in relation to future oriented events like the *Judgment* or *Eternal life*.¹

My choice of *assessment* as the highlighted dimension of this category of emotion is driven by the visibility of ‘evaluation’ as the feature which best defines it. In fact, joy and sorrow ultimately emerge from personal judgments about the degree to which an experience is pleasing or painful. At the same time, degrees of ‘certainty’ about the correctness of these evaluations shape the very nature and intensity of these emotions. Thus, the greater the factors which cast doubt on the accuracy of the assessment, the more unlikely or at least more diffused the experiences of joy and

¹ Psychological literature often addresses ‘anticipatory grief’, a concept originally employed by Eric Lindemann to describe the sorrow, which is based on a potential future event, usually a significant personal loss, experienced as real and as presently actualized. See Reynolds and Botha (2006) 15-16.

sorrow will be. Therefore, the more an individual is reasonably sure about the evaluation of present circumstances in relation to personal wishes and goals the more his assessments in the emotion-typical context of change will trigger the emotions of joy and of sorrow. To be sure, as underlined in relation to hope and fear, the selected assessing emotions of joy and sorrow are not necessarily located at the opposite ends of this emotional spectrum where terms like *ecstasy* and *agony* might more properly express the most extreme opposite manifestations of this kind of emotion. Yet, in addition to being commonly used in LDS canonical texts, joy and sorrow are sufficiently close to the opposite ends of this emotional spectrum that no alternative selection seems as viable for my current purposes.

Joy: the Positive Assessing Experience

The word *joy* is found in 161 verses of the Mormon canon. When one considers that *rejoice* appears in 136 verses and *happiness*, *delight*, and *enjoy* combine for another two or three dozen appearances it is clear that the topic has a significant place within the LDS canonical texts. In this context I consider terms like *rejoice*, *delight*, and *enjoy* as largely synonymous of *joy*, whereas the meaning of *happiness* is likely to be more nuanced, given our common understanding of the term. In fact, *happiness* may be distinguished from joy both in relation to its duration and intensity since *happiness* could be identified correctly as a longer lasting mood of lesser intensity than the emotion of *joy*. Yet, I have questioned whether the authors of the Mormon canon held this same view of semantic distinction, particularly in light of the fact that both *joy* and *happiness* appear in association to the adjective *eternal* in separate instances within the text.² Therefore, in my present analysis I have decided to include scriptural examples of *happiness*, because this latter term is to be treated as a potential synonym for the emotion of *joy*.

Cognitive Necessity

The cognitive necessity of joy is evidenced by the great number of its potential sources, which must be perceived and in some cases consciously recognized in order for the emotional manifestation of joy to emerge. In fact, the joyful protagonists of Mormon scripture know the reason at the root of their experience of rejoicing. For

² Each appears only once in the ‘triple combination’ (a term that refers to the BoM, the D&C, and the PoGP as a single textual unit), ‘eternal happiness’ in Alma 3:26 and ‘eternal joy’ in D&C 109:76.

example, in describing the first prophetic dream of his father, Nephi states that his father's "soul did rejoice, and his whole heart was filled, because of the things which he had seen."³ Further instances of joy experienced by Lehi's family are also described in terms presupposing cognitive perceptions. These include, for example, the acquisition of safety for family members in danger or the attainment of food when in a state of near starvation.⁴ Significantly, in this latter instance, the family rejoices prior to the actual consumption of the food, thus indicating that the *meaning* of the food causally precedes its physiological enjoyment.

Yet, what causes many "to rejoice with such exceedingly great joy" is knowledge of truth, whether acquired by means of prophetic preaching or sacred records.⁵ In this context what further underlies the significance of new knowledge is the meaning that it acquires in relation to loving interpersonal relationships. In fact, whether within one's family or within one's community, it is the recognition of a change in the eternal status of a loved one who has accepted salvific knowledge which gives individuals great reason for rejoicing. Usually, the starker the change and the conversion, the more intense will be the description of the subsequent joy. Thus, on the one hand Alma affirms to his faithful son Shiblon, "I trust that I shall have great joy in you, because of your steadiness and your faithfulness unto God; for...I have had great joy in thee already."⁶ On the other hand words turn to jubilation as Ammon is "carried away" in contemplating the change and conversion of blood-thirsty Lamanites into peaceful Christ-believing 'fruits' of his missionary labours. Ammon exults, "my joy is carried away, even unto boasting in my God" with great intensity and passion.⁷ I will return to this particular narrative repeatedly but at this point I simply want to highlight that one of the canonical illustrations of the greatest possible manifestations of joy emerges from a context of reflection over the degree of change experienced by those individuals, whom Ammon had come to love. In other words, Ammon reflects on the negative 'was' and on the positive 'is' and rejoices in his direct witness and contribution to the actualization of that very change.

Still, it is also clear that joy emerges from those contexts that transcend the visible actuality of both past and present reality. In fact, *anticipatory joy* in relation to

³ 1 Ne. 1:15.

⁴ 1 Ne. 5:1,7;16:32.

⁵ Mosiah 5:4; 28:18.

⁶ Alma 38:2-3.

⁷ Alma 26:35. It is of interest that the verse begins with the rhetorical question "Now have we not *reason* to rejoice?"

promises of resurrection or of eternal life lies at the very core of several of the scriptural passages under examination. Nephi summarizes the main focus of the numerous illustrations of this kind when he declares, “we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ.”⁸ In some cases, the perceptual experience of the future joyful event is described in such ‘visionary’ terms that the temporal boundaries between the present and the future are clearly obliterated. This is a typical occurrence in the life of many a prophet as the BoM indicates, “Yea, and behold, Abraham saw of his coming, and was filled with gladness and did rejoice...and almost all of our fathers, even down to this time; yea, they have testified of the coming of Christ, and have looked forward, and have rejoiced in his day which is to come.”⁹

Although in many other instances individuals have not reached such direct perception of future Messianic events, the cognitive actualization of future promises through faith is described as sufficient motivation for the emergence of present practices and commitments. The process of repentance for the remission of sins is perhaps the most recurrent example of a practice of this kind. As one among several pre-Incarnation BoM prophets, who interlinks the present need for repentance to the future coming of Christ king Benjamin states,

And the Lord God hath sent his holy prophets among all the children of men, to declare these things to every kindred, nation, and tongue, that thereby whosoever should believe that Christ should come, the same might receive remission of their sins, and rejoice with exceedingly great joy, even as though he had already come among them.¹⁰

Other examples include Jarom, who declares that prophets had persuaded the people “to look forward unto the Messiah, and believe in him to come as though he already was”, and the prophet Abinadi. His words are particularly indicative of the firm association between prophecy and factual certainty: “And now if Christ had not come into the world, speaking of things to come as though they had already come, there could have been no redemption.”¹¹

These observations could introduce a larger and deeper discussion on issues pertaining to the development of faith and to the psychology of religious belief. However, my present concern is limited to the previously mentioned point that

⁸ 2 Ne. 25:26

⁹ Hel. 8:17,22

¹⁰ Mosiah 3:13. For prophetic warnings against the procrastination of repentance see Alma 13:27; 34:35; Hel. 13:38

¹¹ Jarom 1:11; Mosiah 16:6. Many who believe Joseph Smith to be the sole creator of the BoM narrative would suggest that this use of terminology was necessary in the context of a Christ-oriented theology vis-à-vis the book’s claims of a pre-Christian historical setting. However, within my particular focus, historicity or temporal setting is not problematic in relation to the emergence of emotions.

consistent textual evidence suggests it is the cognitive actualization of the hoped-for event which triggers the immediacy and the intensity of the emotion of joy. This pattern is apparent in relation to all those events, which involve both divine intervention and fulfilment of divine promises in relation to the ultimate triumph of truth and righteousness. Therefore, promises about the *redemption of Zion* are to be included in this framework as well as all Christ-centred events such as the *resurrection* or the attainment of *eternal life*.¹² Consequently, although the Mormon meaning of *Gospel* extends beyond the classical Christian *euangelion*, the LDS canon shares the biblical emphasis on “glad tidings of great joy” when describing the emotional intensity which is inherent to the acquisition of salvific knowledge.¹³

At the same time Mormon canonical texts recognize that it is possible and even common to obtain joy from false or incorrect knowledge. Furthermore, LDS scripture provides evidence of individuals who, when driven by personal pride or evil desires, often experience joy in consequence of others’ difficulties and failures. Yet, the text clearly distinguishes between ‘true’ joy and the joy which emerges from false or evil wishes. As an emotional phenomenon which is neither as long-lasting nor as ‘special’ in quality as the ‘joy’ of the righteous ‘distorted joy’ is a mere imitation of the real emotion. In present theological terminology we would probably describe the difference as a distinction between *joy* and *pleasure*, although the Mormon canon does not attach to pleasure a necessarily negative connotation. The juxtaposition is evident when one first looks at the following example of ‘true’ joy, as promised in the D&C, “If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things – that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal.” On the other hand, when speaking in the BoM about those who are “not built upon my gospel”, Jesus admits that these individuals may indeed experience joy, or pleasure as it were, but adds that “they have joy in their works for a season, and by and by the end cometh.”¹⁴

Indeed, those who oppose the ‘truth’ often do so through arguments which lament the deprivation of joy as a consequence of obedience to God’s commandments. Thus, Laman and Lemuel complain in these terms, “These many years we have

¹² D&C 101:18; Moses 6:59; 2 Ne. 9:18; Morm. 9:14, and several others. Parenthetically, the ‘redemption of Zion’ was at the forefront of concern for Latter-day Saints in the nineteenth century much more than it is for the present generation of Mormons.

¹³ Mosiah 3:3; Alma 13:22; Hel. 16:14; D&C 31:3; 79:1; 128:19.

¹⁴ D&C 42:60; 3 Ne. 27:11.

suffered in the wilderness, which time we might have enjoyed our possessions and the land of our inheritance; yea, and we might have been happy.”¹⁵ Similarly, Nehor is pointing to this kind of joy when he teaches that “all mankind should be saved at the last day, and that they need not fear nor tremble, but (that) they might lift up their heads and rejoice.” Yet, in Mormon’s judgment, this present-oriented form of rejoicing is rooted in selfish pleasures and in conscious disregard of God’s commandments. For some prophets the difference between these two kinds of joys is so stark that they use quite opposite terms to describe the two experiences. For example, Moroni speaks of the temporal and sinful joys of mortality as ‘misery’ when he pointedly asks “why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies – because of the praise of the world?”¹⁶ Of course, whether the emotion is experienced as joy or misery is contingent on individual perceptions, beliefs, and objectives or, in other words, on a variety of individual cognitive processes.

Personal Responsibility

In most instances where joy is misplaced, such as when it emerges from the consummation of evil, the individual’s accountability for the emotional experience is clearly apparent. In fact, although God respects individual agency and thus allows this kind of ‘pleasures’ to subsist in the short term the long-term eternal repercussions for their manifestation are not at all pleasurable. Thus, for all those who have knowingly chosen to rebel against truth the ‘rejoicing’ is only to be temporary. This kind of emotional pattern is exemplified by Laman and Lemuel whose *Schadenfreude* is particularly explicit when their brother Nephi struggles in his attempts to build the ship which God had commanded him to construct. Similarly, when the prophesied signs of Christ’s birth seem to be delayed the unbelievers confront the faithful and “began to rejoice over their brethren, saying: Behold the time is past, and the words of Samuel are not fulfilled; therefore, your joy and your faith concerning this thing hath been in vain.”¹⁷ Yet, as Mormon laments, those who have been instructed in the truth and still delight in “so much abomination” or delight “in everything except that which is good” can only expect an ultimate reversal of their present emotional condition through divine

¹⁵ 1 Ne. 17:21.

¹⁶ Alma 1:4; Morm 8:38.

¹⁷ 1 Ne. 17:19; 3 Ne. 1:6.

promises of “endless damnation” or “eternal misery.”¹⁸ Therefore, what now appears as joy to the rebellious is only misery in disguise if viewed in its proper eternal perspective.

Indeed, one of the Mormon eternal ‘principles’, which is as fixed and unalterable as any other principle, involves the necessary link between desires (with their accompanying behaviours) and emotional conditions. To be sure, this relationship centres on long-lasting emotional states which are perhaps more correctly conceptualized as moods rather than as emotions. Therefore, happiness rather than joy is repeatedly highlighted as the natural earthly and eternal consequence of righteous behaviour and of godly desires. Yet, since LDS canonical contexts are not consistent in their use of ‘joy’ vis-à-vis ‘happiness’ it is possible that happiness should be understood to include single manifestations of joy or perhaps to function as an intensifier of these very joyous manifestations. Whatever the case, and whether in the present tense of mortality or in the future tense of eternity, people’s volition as materialized in their actions is foundational to their ultimate emotional condition. Therefore, according to Mormon scripture, it is not possible to be happy in sin, but only to feel a temporary pleasure, which is experienced as such precisely because sin has caused that masking distortion which further distanced the individual from the real ‘joy’ of the righteous.

Hence, the LDS emphasis on agency, as explicated in the parallel dimensions of freedom of choice and of fixity of consequences, is clearly at the root of many canonical passages on the acquisition of joy. For example, Nephi uses action-oriented words in association with emotion-oriented terms when he states that his people “lived after the manner of happiness”.¹⁹ Alma the Younger similarly expresses this causal bond in even more unalterable terms by teaching his son Corianton that it is not possible to “be restored from sin to happiness. Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness.”²⁰ In fact, as Corianton attempts to excuse his sins in the doctrine of universal resurrection Alma clarifies that the resurrection will involve a diversified “restoration”,

And if their works are evil they shall be restored unto them for evil...raised to endless happiness to inherit the kingdom of God, or to endless misery to inherit the kingdom of the devil, the one on one hand, the other on the other – the one raised to happiness according to his *desires* of

¹⁸ Moro. 9:13,19; Mosiah 16:11; Alma 3:26.

¹⁹ 2 Ne 5:27

²⁰ Alma 41:10

happiness, or good according to his desires of good; and the other to evil according to his desires of evil.²¹

In other words, each individual will be held responsible for the personal wishes and desires in his life. Moreover, Alma emphasizes that sins due to weaknesses and to limitations may not be excused except through the instrumentality of repentance, which is presently available to all people, even to those who may not be aware of it.²² Then, those individuals who follow their consciences and make use of this tool receive further divine assistance for the ongoing process of change and of sanctification of their desires.

Therefore, at least in the eschatological context, what emerges is a degree of personal responsibility which removes any sense of surprise or of uncertainty from the Day of Judgment. In other words, as Moroni expresses it, the judgment involves a fulfilment of one's most prominent wishes and it represents a culmination of personal accountability in relation to one's own destiny and to one's own uncreated independent will.²³ Therefore, it is only natural that 'eternal life' would be a torment for those who have truly and deeply desired to be unaffected by God's presence having knowingly rejected a life patterned in obedience to His commandments. As Moroni rhetorically asks:

Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws? Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell.²⁴

There is, then, a continuity of sorts between one's emotional status in this life and the status in the life which is to follow. Moroni's simple terms capture the extent of this inter-dimensional continuity when he states: "he that is happy shall be happy still; and he that is unhappy shall be unhappy still."²⁵

²¹ Alma 41:4-5

²² As previously emphasized Mormonism teaches that every individual comes to earth endowed with a 'light of Christ' or conscience, which facilitates the process of discernment between good or evil. Therefore, there is a sense in which unbelievers or non-Christians can repent and unknowingly make use of Christ's Atonement, provided they have not previously and willingly rejected it.

²³ Clearly, emphasizing personal accountability does not imply support for a soteriological sufficiency of personal efforts. Indeed, acceptance of the Atonement and use of its accompanying processes of repentance and sanctification are required prerequisites on earth to the extent that knowledge and other contextual limitations allow. Yet, the Atonement may ultimately overcome all obstacles and sins only when decisively accepted.

²⁴ Morm. 9:3-4.

²⁵ Morm. 9:14. This idea has clear affinity with the depiction of heaven and hell found in Lewis (2002).

However, in order to make sense of this continuity it is fundamental to recognize the writer's perspective in relation to the distinctive kinds of 'joy' previously outlined. Thus, Moroni calls unhappiness any emotional phenomenon which falls short of the happiness experienced within an obedient and loving relationship with God. A person may at least *begin* to experience this latter kind of happiness, 'the joy of the Saints' as it is sometimes identified, while in this mortal condition. Yet, for most faithful individuals the complete manifestation of its 'fullness' must await the unfolding of a later stage of existence. In other words, the emotional continuity between mortal life and post-mortem life centres in the endurance of a general desire and direction rather than in the exact repetition of a particular kind of emotional experience with a specific level of intensity. In support of this point God reminds His Saints that "in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full."²⁶

Still, there are a few instances in the Mormon canon where prophets experience a 'fullness of joy', or a taste, as it were, of the future intense joy of eternal life. The BoM prophet/missionary Ammon is a primal example of such deep manifestations of joy, since he describes the emotion as enervating all his physical strength. In relation to personal responsibility it would seem that the rarity of this kind of experience supports a contextual picture of divine bestowal of a 'spiritual gift', which is what makes the experience ultimately possible. At the same time, Ammon's commitment, determination, and love during his ministry among the Lamanites is at least partially attributable to his own desires to serve God and neighbour. Thus, even while recognizing factors which lie beyond our personal control the Mormon canon highlights human responsibility in relation to thinking truth, desiring truth, and doing truth to the best of one's abilities. Inevitably, it is taught, 'joy' or the 'joy of the Saints' will follow these predetermined conditions which centre in personal obedience to divine commands. Moreover, as was already outlined, this condition is enabled by the process of directing our cognitive focus to the right object, an action which is the core and the logical foundation of the command to "lift up your head and rejoice" as expressed by both God and by His prophets.²⁷

²⁶ D&C 101:36

²⁷ This imperative is found in Mosiah 7:19 and Alma 8:15. It is also interesting to notice how the D&C commands focus on a lifting of the "heart" rather than head as found in 2 Ne. 9:52; D&C 31:3; 42:69; 25:13; and 27:15. Several other commands to rejoice are expressed in a variety of terms in D&C 76:1; 98:1; 100:12; 127:3; 128:22; 97:21; 19:39

Developmental Instrumentality

The examination thus far has built a firm foundation for my analysis of the developmental instrumentality of joy. Then, if we begin with a closer look at the most intense and special kind of joy described in LDS scripture it is apparent that the ‘joy of the Saints’ functions first of all as a witness of God’s power for both experiencer and observer. In this manner it is potentially a significant tool for the spiritual conversion of any present observer while it also provides great comfort and confidence to the individual who experiences the joy. In fact, being able to feel the ‘joy of the Saints’ confirms one’s positive status in the sight of the divine as Mormon explains in his editorial comments on Ammon’s account of his intense joy: “Now was not this exceeding joy? Behold, this is joy which none receiveth save it be the truly penitent and humble seeker of happiness.”²⁸ In other words true joy necessarily points backwards to the antecedent choices of the righteous individual and in this way it affirms a strong positive evaluation of that person’s spiritual stature.

Furthermore, desires to experience such great joy can motivate individuals to follow the path of righteous choices, which is repeatedly described as a necessary though not sufficient condition for the emergence of this kind of emotional manifestation. BoM King Benjamin specifically outlines the cognitive and behavioural trajectory which leads to enduring joy when he introduces his renowned teachings on the need to succour the poor. In this context the necessary dependence of joy on the divine gift of ‘remission of sins’ is of particular significance,

As ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God, or if ye have known of his goodness and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceedingly great joy in your souls, even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness...and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel. And behold, I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins.²⁹

In other words, joy’s causal cycle involves the acquisition of experiential knowledge of God and of His perfect attributes which must be accompanied by an attitude of humility towards Him. In turn, this attitudinal disposition is a prerequisite for the reception of forgiveness of one’s sins which is the ultimate source of such an ‘exceeding joy.’

²⁸ Alma 27:18. In this or in any other canonical text no suggestion is given that true joy and ‘pleasures’ may be confused by those individuals who are blessed with the company of the Holy Ghost. The difference, although not articulated in detail, is assumed to be self-evident in the eyes of the person who has developed sufficient spiritual experience.

²⁹ Mosiah 4:11-12

Benjamin further suggests that when the individual receives forgiveness and then experiences the consequent joy he obtains additional empirical knowledge of the very source and attributes of this joyous forgiveness. In fact, in the same verse he continues: “And ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true.” Therefore, coming back full circle to the beginning of the process, Benjamin stresses that the significance of this causal link is better expressed in regular repetitions rather than in occasional manifestations. In fact, in order to retain joy as a defining characteristic of one’s emotional life it is necessary to experience a continuous remission of one’s sins which is only possible if a concept of stark inequality between personal attributes and the attributes of the Father in Heaven is maintained in vivid remembrance through one’s cognitive focus. In this sense, then, repentance is more about a cognitive/affective attitude than it is about particular acts of contrition.

To grasp more fully the theological implications of this cycle of joy I need to highlight a logical connection in Benjamin’s words which other BoM writers articulate in greater detail. If this kind of joy emerges as a consequence of forgiveness of sins then sin appears to function paradoxically as a necessity for the actualization of joy. As previously discussed, this is exactly the point Lehi makes in his excursus on the necessity of comprehensive opposition, although he certainly does not mean to imply justification or encouragement of sin.³⁰ In fact, in light of his larger focus within the same textual context his statement should also be read, perhaps even primarily, in terms of necessity of opposite potentialities. Indeed, I previously underlined that it would be difficult to speak of agentive choices involving personal accountability in the absence of alternatives from which one may choose. Yet, in order to provide agency with the opposition it needs it is not necessary for an alternative to ever be actualized since its existence within the realm of potentiality would be logically sufficient for the experience of choice.

At the same time, in order to develop the capacity to experience a particular emotion, individuals need to encounter, at least at some point in time, the actualized opposite of that very same emotion. In fact, Lehi pinpoints that joy is only identifiable and capable of being experienced in a context where sorrow (its opposite) has already become part of one’s emotional repertoire. This argument is in line with socio-

³⁰ 2 Ne 2:10-11,13.

scientific and philosophical perspectives which place ‘change’ at the defining core of emotional phenomena. Thus, in these contexts, joy is understood to derive primarily from the interruption of sorrowful experiences rather than from neutral pre-existing conditions. Lehi, then, makes use of this line of reasoning to explain *the Fall* of Adam and Eve as a *felix culpa* by implying that *the Fall* made joy a potential reality as it introduced sorrowful conditions on this earth.³¹ Therefore, since life ‘naturally’ provides sufficient experiences of suffering it is not needful to seek or to consciously choose sorrow in our daily reality in order to be able to experience joy.

Yet, there is one kind of sorrow that needs to be consciously chosen when potentially it could be avoided; it is the sorrow that emerges from the recognition of one’s sinfulness. When accepted, this is the universal experience of Paul’s ‘godly sorrow’, which is facilitative of humility, repentance and consequently of the ensuing experience of joy.³² In fact, notwithstanding human best efforts to the contrary, even those individuals who diligently seek to follow God in all their thoughts and deeds are likely to always experience a distance between their own desires or actions and His perfect will and character. Therefore, if used to describe one’s failure to perfectly match God’s will despite sustained personal efforts, sin appears to be unavoidable. On the other hand, if its definition implies an attitude of conscious and wilful rebellion against God’s commandments sin clearly falls within the realm of personal control and responsibility. Yet, all are responsible for their chosen responses to the experience of sorrow, whether its source is the human tendency to sin or the unavoidable pains of life, such as death, disease, and disappointments. Then, it is this response which plays the supreme role in relation to the individual’s potential to experience joy since reacting to life’s sorrows with anger and rebellion against God will create further distance from the divine (thus diminishing one’s joy) whereas responding with humility will have the exact opposite effect.

Thus, it is evident that both joy and sorrow are developmentally instrumental in humans’ earthly path of spiritual progression. Yet, if joy’s dependency on sorrow is rooted in an eternal principle of necessary opposition one is left puzzled in relation to the meaning of ‘eternal joy’ in the Mormon context. In fact, it logically follows that either the joy experienced in the eternities is not the same kind of emotional phenomenon as our present reality or ‘eternal life’ is not after all devoid of all sorts of

³¹ 2 Ne. 2:23,25.

³² 2 Cor. 7:9-11.

sorrows and pains as usually supposed. In possible support of the first possibility the LDS canon provides several illustrations of the uniqueness of ‘eternal life’, which will include sources of joy presently unavailable, such as ‘the communion and presence of God’ and a body characterized by ‘eternal glory’. Whatever their exact significance it may be argued that these conditions will be so powerful that they will profoundly change the very dynamics of joy or of any other emotion. Yet, within Mormonism’s overall framework, which stresses both embryonic human theomorphism as well as the essential continuity of being, stark structural changes in the nature of eternal emotions do not appear to be theologically likely. In fact, ‘eternal life’ is normally described in terms of a ‘fullness of joy’, a distinction in degree rather than in kind, as highlighted by the D&C in the context of the unique Mormon view that once resurrected “spirit and body” are “never again to be divided,” and as “inseparably connected, (they) receive a fullness of joy.”³³

Therefore, explaining ‘eternal joy’ in relation to the coexisting actuality or potentiality of sorrow is in my opinion an alternative explanation of greater theological fruitfulness. In the first place, given the various ‘joyful’ descriptions of eternal life, the actuality of sorrow may only endure in existence through the experiential memory of earthly sorrow. In other words, having left behind all direct experience of sorrow through divinely mediated conquest resurrected humans may still retain the developmental experience of sorrow in the depth of their spiritual consciousness. In turn, such memory could function as facilitative of the ongoing experience of joy. Yet, sorrow may also continue to exist eternally as an ongoing possibility which is fully transmutable into actuality under specific circumstances. I suggest that a potential realm for its emergence involves those dynamics of loving family relationships which characterize the Mormon view of the afterlife. Specifically, if ‘eternal joy’ is inherently relational and if exalted individuals acquire a spiritual offspring which at some point is sent to experience a life of good and evil as humans presently do, then it is likely that these same agentive children would act in such ways as to cause both joy and sorrow in their eternal parents.

In any case examining what specific canonical texts possibly imply about this issue is probably more useful than engaging in speculative theology. In this context the best source of indirect evidence is probably found in those accounts of intense joy,

³³ D&C 138:17; 93:33.

which approximate the eternal experience of ‘fullness of joy’. In most of these instances the experience of joy emerges as highly relational since it is deeply embedded in emotions of love and affection towards other individuals. A primary example of this pattern is Ammon’s previously mentioned expression of intense joy, which is not triggered primarily by his conquest of personal sin through repentance. In fact, Ammon’s deep rejoicings emerge in the context of the sorrow and joy which he has experienced as a consequence of the loving relationships he has formed with the Lamanite people. Therefore, the source of his joy centres in the recognition and participation in the conversion process of thousands of Lamanites as juxtaposed to the sorrow he had previously experienced when witnessing the same people’s attachment to sin and their slavery from it.

Yet, this is not the only example of Ammon’s experience of intense joy. The fact that Ammon should undergo such remarkable experiences more often than other individuals is perhaps meant to convey not only his extraordinary righteousness but also his possession of a unique gift and spiritual sensitivity that enable these very manifestations. For an example which suggests this possibility one may look at the instance involving the fall to the ground of both Lamanite king and queen who lose consciousness when they receive a conviction of the coming of Christ and of His role as Redeemer. Having observed the scene Ammon reacts in this manner,

Now Ammon seeing the Spirit of the Lord poured out according to his prayers upon the Lamanites, his brethren, who had been the cause of so much mourning among the Nephites, or among all the people of God because of their iniquities and their traditions, he fell upon his knees, and began to pour out his soul in prayer and thanksgiving to God for what he had done for his brethren; and he was also overpowered with joy; and thus they all three had sunk to the earth.³⁴

Thus, the intensity of Ammon’s joy derives both from his recognition of the Lamanites’ utter change in transforming a rebellious attitude into sincere discipleship and from his contemplation of God’s necessary role, which involved the conferral of His sanctifying spirit in this process of conversion. What is not explicitly expressed in this quotation, although it is sufficiently implied by the larger context, is the significant role played by love in the emergence of such intense emotion. It is Ammon’s great love for both God and Lamanites which intensifies and possibly activates his joy.

Another textual example is perhaps more explicit in this regard, at least in relation to Ammon’s love for his Creator. In this instance, fearing that Ammon’s

³⁴ Alma 19:14

expression of joy constitutes prideful boasting, Ammon's brother Aaron reproves him for his 'excessive' rejoicings. Ammon's response clarifies the object of his glorification through the following doxology,

I do not boast in my own strength, nor in my own wisdom; but behold, my joy is full, yea, my heart is brim with joy, and I will rejoice in my God. Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak...but I will boast of my God...behold, many mighty miracles we have wrought in this land, for which we will praise his name forever...Therefore, let us glory, yea, we will glory in the Lord; yea, we will rejoice for our joy is full; yea, we will praise our God forever. Behold, who can glory too much in the Lord? Yea, who can say too much of his great power, and of his mercy, and of his long-suffering towards the children of men?³⁵

Ammon's explanation clearly underlines the necessity of love for God in juxtaposition to what may appear, at least to his brother, as love for self. Furthermore, after these words of divine glorification his joy seems to escalate as he continues to reflect upon the great love and faith of the newly converted Lamanites. It is then this intricate bond of God, missionary, and new disciple, perceived both in terms of single purpose and unity of feelings, which leads Ammon to affirm "I cannot say the smallest part which I feel."³⁶

To be sure, Ammon's participation in God's miracle of Lamanite conversion is a significant and probably necessary factor for his ability to rejoice in this manner. Thus, his perception of self as an active means who has led many Lamanites onto the path of conversion is certainly a catalyst to his experience of joy. In fact, the significance of 'personal involvement' for the emergence of intense jubilation is implicit in the final example of Ammon's remarkable joy. In this instance Ammon encounters his old companion in both trouble and conversion, namely Alma the Younger. Ammon's joy in meeting Alma is such that it again results in physical exhaustion, which causes him to fall to the earth once more. Interestingly, the account also indicates that "the joy of Alma in meeting his brethren was truly great, and also the joy of Aaron, of Omner, and Himni; but behold their joy was not that to exceed their strength."³⁷ In any case, Ammon's joy and the joy of all those present at the time of the meeting are inherently interlinked to the shared history and friendship which characterized their relationship. Furthermore, the joy is intensified by the recognized unity of purpose and feelings with God and towards God, which creates a triangle of unity and love similar to the one experienced in the previously mentioned instance of Lamanite conversion.

³⁵ Alma 26:10-11,16.

³⁶ Alma 26:16.

³⁷ Alma 27:19.

At the conclusion of this excursus on Ammon's manifestations of joy it is natural to wonder whether such intense experiences appear to be normative within a Mormon theology of emotion. Although I suppose that the majority of Saints would wish to have an intense joyous experience of this sort I do not find any canonical evidence in this direction. In fact, in the context of the encounter just outlined Alma and Ammon's difference of joyous intensity is not accompanied by an associated evaluation of separate levels of righteousness; on the contrary, textual evidence is repeatedly and consistently pointing toward their equality in righteousness, commitment, and devotion. Therefore, within the wider context of the BoM text and in light of the cumulative evidence from Mormon theology these highly charged emotional experiences should be interpreted as individual manifestations of unique spiritual gifts which are mostly expressed in those individuals who are both sufficiently worthy and especially predisposed to receive them. At the same time these descriptions are meant to be illustrative of the potential joyousness of emotional manifestations when properly founded on faith, love, and interaction with the divine. Indeed, although only occasional throughout mortality, a 'fullness of joy' will embody the very existence of those who will receive the eternal blessing of the presence of God.³⁸

In conclusion, both the presence and the absence of joy may be indicative of significant spiritual dynamics, pointing to patterns of forgiveness of sins, humility, and obedience, or to opposite patterns of disobedience and pride. Yet, lack of joy or actual sorrow may simply emerge as a consequence of mortal testing. Therefore, extracting self-evaluations from manifestations of joy is often inherently problematic. Perhaps, then, joy is developmentally instrumental at its most when it functions as an achievable emotional goal which partially motivates faithful actions or when it emerges with the memory of experiential joyous moments of spiritual enlightenment. Indeed, these memories are to be treasured and retrieved, particularly at those times when life's experiences are darkest and most difficult, in which contexts they may act as sources of hope and as motivators for endurance.

³⁸ See 3 Ne. 28:10. Mormon scripture echoes Paul's description of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:1-11) and further develops the discussion in both BoM and D&C (see Moro 10 and D&C 46). From a non-Mormon perspective the accounts of Ammon's joy are usually placed within the historical 'revivalist' context of Joseph Smith's time and location. For a thorough treatment on the topic of emotions within revivalist movements in the nineteenth century see Taves (1999).

Joy and the Spirit

As previously highlighted the Atonement lies at the causative core of the Saints' hope. Similarly, it is also the ground of their joy since it enables the joyous process of forgiveness of sins, which ultimately leads to the gift of eternal life. At the same time, within the LDS canon the Atonement repeatedly functions as the very object of anticipatory, visionary, and reflective joy. In other words, the Atonement is both reason for and source of joy especially when individuals contemplate and wish to activate its far-reaching emotional consequences. In fact, as the means by which believers renew the divine presence in their lives (as actualized in the personal influence of the Holy Ghost), the Atonement acts as provider of joy whenever it enables the Spirit's influence to return to a repentant individual following the forgiveness of his sins. Hence, it is no surprise that God should repeatedly associate joy with the positive effects of repentance, as when He affirms, in reference to Joseph Smith, that "his days of rejoicing are come unto the remission of his sins". Similarly, to the Saints who had completed the Kirtland temple He promised, "your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me; therefore lift up your heads and rejoice."³⁹

Furthermore, the great majority of canonical descriptions of divine-human interactions are characterized by emotional exchanges of thoughts, words, or images, which focus on the event and on the effects of the Atonement. Many of these instances involve a distinct divine or angelic message that centres on Christ's redeeming mission and power. As a consequence of these communications individuals experience not only a 'joyous' anticipation of the possibility of forgiveness but also a jubilant awareness of a remission of sins already actualized. Whether the messenger is a human prophet empowered by God's 'Spirit' or whether a supernatural being is commissioned for this purpose the nucleus of the news generally involves 'the great tidings of great joy' of which some examples have already been given. Visions also add to the perceptual foundation of this redemptive 'joy' as exemplified by Emer, who "saw the Son of Righteousness, and did rejoice and glory in his day" or by Enoch, who had a vision of "the day of the righteous, the hour of their redemption, and received a fullness of joy."⁴⁰ Then, it is clear that a belief in Christ's mission and in the personal consequences of that same mission lies firmly at the centre of the Saints' joy, as further

³⁹ D&C 21:8; 110:5.

⁴⁰ Ether 9:22; Moses 7:67.

suggested by Giddonah's question to Korihor, the anti-Christ, "Why do ye teach this people that there shall be no Christ to interrupt their rejoicings?"⁴¹

In this context of divine or divinely assisted manifestations and communications it is of interest to notice that *light* appears as a prominent motif within LDS canonical texts. In fact, in addition to fulfilling its physical function of visibly manifesting divine glory, as exemplified by Joseph Smith's First Vision, the word 'light' is often used to describe the content and the 'cognitive' effects of various spiritual messages. For example, in recounting Ammon's reaction to the concerns of the Lamanite queen in behalf of her comatose husband Mormon writes,

He knew that Lamoni was under the power of God; he knew that the dark veil of unbelief was being cast away from his mind, and the light which did light up his mind, which was the light of the glory of God, which was a marvelous light of his goodness – yea, this light had infused such joy into his soul, the cloud of darkness having been misspelled, and that the light of everlasting life was lit up in his soul, yea, he knew that this had overcome his natural frame, and he was carried away in God.⁴²

Among the various symbolic functions of the six distinct uses of 'light' within this single scriptural verse one meaning appears as especially visible: 'light' characterizes a new knowledge or perception. In other words, the illuminating effects of spiritual light begin firmly in cognition and, as I infer from the text, only subsequently spread from the mind to the rest of one's being.

To be sure, this should not be viewed as an exclusively rational process which centres on issues of logical or empirical validity. Indeed, the conversion process is invariably described as an emotional experience of often poignant consequences in feelings. Yet, the centrality of emotionally-significant information and beliefs in accounts of 'enlightening' conversions has great relevance in the context of the 'cognitive necessity' of emotions. Alma's account of his own conversion further illustrates such a cognitive base, which is both causative and constitutive of the very 'light' of spiritual conversion. In describing the moment of 'deliverance' from the torment of sin Alma recalls:

I *remembered* also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world. Now, as my *mind* caught hold upon this *thought*, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death. And now, behold, when I *thought* this, I could *remember* my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the *memory* of my sins no more. And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!⁴³

⁴¹ Alma 30:22. The highly emotional context in many of these instances is often expressed in outward physical manifestations involving 'shouts', 'singing', 'weeping', and 'clasping of hands.'

⁴² Alma 19:6.

⁴³ Alma 36:17-20.

Then, it is evident in this context that *remembering* and *thinking* lie at the very foundation of the whole process of change as presently described.

Yet, clearly it is not only the content of the information which is significant, but also the source and the mode of its communication. In fact, by providing evidence for its truth the Spirit functions as the instrument which is needed to make the information efficacious. Thus, Alma receives the ‘light’ that captures his conversion as a consequence of the forgiveness of his sins, which he receives following his sincere repentant petition. In other words, while being forgiven Alma knows experientially as well as cognitively that the promises of the Atonement are real by the instrumentality of the cleansing spiritual manifestations of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, it is ultimately the Spirit, which “giveth light”. Indeed, it is a light which involves both cognitive and affective manifestations as exemplified in God’s promise to Hyrum Smith that “I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy.”⁴⁴

Still, it is difficult to identify explicit textual support for a view of the Holy Spirit which is holistic in its effects, or both cognitive and affective. Indeed, scriptures are generally more concerned with affirming such interventions than they are with detailing their specific dynamics. Therefore, interpreting the acquisition of spiritual ‘joy’ as described in the Mormon canon by clearly demarcating psycho-biological categories of experience would necessarily involve some unjustified extrapolations. On the other hand, whether specific passages ground ‘spiritual’ joy primarily in cognitive enlightenment or in affective elation, what is significant in the present analysis is the spirit’s *framing* function in relation to the emergence, intensification, and regulation of emotional phenomena. In short, there is no true joy in Mormonism, as opposed to mere pleasure, which is not necessarily and intricately associated with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Within this pneumatological context proximate causes and forms of manifestation appear in a variety of settings and linguistic expressions, but the common denominator is invariably the influence of the Spirit.

To look more closely at some of these instances one may note that joy often emerges from the Spirit’s direct conferral of positive information which otherwise would have remained unknown. For example, when Alma speaks to the people of

⁴⁴ D&C 11:13. Also see 2 Ne. 31:3 and D&C 84:46.

Gideon he makes an allusion to a revelation about the people of Zarahemla, whom he had previously visited,

I have come having great hopes...that I should find that ye were not in the awful dilemma that our brethren were in at Zarahemla. But blessed be the name of God, that he hath given unto me the exceedingly great joy of knowing that they are established again in the way of his righteousness.⁴⁵

Furthermore, as Alma continues to deliver his message he indicates quite matter-of-factly that he has just received a second spiritual revelation, which this time concerns his present audience:

And now my beloved brethren, do you believe these things?...I know that ye believe them; and the way that I know that ye believe them is by the manifestation of the Spirit which is in me. And now because your faith is strong concerning that, yea, concerning the things which I have spoken, great is my joy.⁴⁶

In both instances, whether in propositional or more likely in intuitive form Alma receives knowledge from the Spirit, which knowledge functions in turn as a source of personal joy.

Other examples place greater emphasis on the sensation element of spiritual intervention. In fact, many passages which underline the interconnection between ‘joy’ and ‘forgiveness of sins’ affirm that the negative affect previously associated with personal sins has now been transformed into a general positive emotion. In other words, although the forgiven sins have not been extinguished from memory through faith in Christ’s redeeming mission the guilt associated with them has been replaced by joy. Indeed, the change is so drastic and miraculous that Enos cannot refrain from asking God in bewilderment, “how is it done?”⁴⁷ Similarly, in his inspiring speech King Benjamin highlights the fact that his audience has had such a powerful experience even in the midst of his sermon. Thus, he reminds them,

Even at this time, ye have been calling on his name, and begging for a remission of your sins. And has he suffered that ye have begged in vain? Nay; he has poured out his Spirit upon you, and has caused that your hearts should be filled with joy, and has caused that your mouths should be stopped that ye could not find utterance, so exceedingly great was your joy.⁴⁸

Furthermore, when recounting his conversion Alma also underlines the change of affective quality in the memory of his sins by stressing that “he was harrowed up by the memory of his sins no more.” Lamoni’s father, a Lamanite king, similarly understood

⁴⁵ Alma 7:3-4.

⁴⁶ Alma 7:17.

⁴⁷ Enos 1:7.

⁴⁸ Mosiah 4:20.

the dramatic and miraculous emotional consequences inherent in the presence of this ‘Spirit’ as evidenced by his question to Aaron, the missionary,

What shall I do that I may be born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit, that I may be filled with joy, that I may not be cast off at the last day? Behold, said he, I will give up all that I possess, yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy.⁴⁹

Undoubtedly the sensory force of the godly joy experienced or desired has significantly impressed the individuals in these passages.

At the same time many other LDS texts associated with divine spiritual interventions do not clearly articulate either cognitive or affective expressions of the resultant joy. For example, while commenting on Alma’s mission among the Zoramites Mormon affirms: “The Lord...gave them strength, that they should suffer no manner of afflictions, save it were swallowed up in the joy of Christ.”⁵⁰ In a later BoM section the brothers Nephi and Lehi are miraculously delivered from prison while standing “as if in the midst of a flaming fire, yet it did harm them not, neither did it take hold upon the walls of the prison; and they were filled with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory.”⁵¹ Sacred ceremonies and ordinances are also occasions of joyous spiritual manifestations. In fact, when Alma and Helam are baptized in the waters of Mormon “they arose and came forth out of the water rejoicing, being filled with the Spirit.”⁵² Yet, what is common to all these instances is a lack of specificity both in relation to the emergence and to the modalities of expression of such joy.

Perhaps, the previously highlighted element of ‘love’ may be useful in inferring the wider spiritual context of at least some of these more ambiguous passages. Specifically, if love is included in the emotional picture being addressed, then joy often appears as a more clearly motivated phenomenon. One example is found in the BoM account of Jesus’ post-resurrection visit among the surviving descendants of Lehi. In one instance Jesus kneels to pray in behalf of those who are present but the words of His prayer are not reported because considered too ‘great and marvelous’ to be uttered and comprehended. Yet, the description of what follows opens a window of understanding in this context of ineffability,

No one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father...so great was the joy of the multitude that they were overcome. And it came to pass

⁴⁹ Alma 22:15.

⁵⁰ Alma 31:38. Also see Alma 33:23.

⁵¹ Hel. 5:44.

⁵² Mosiah 18:14. Also see the account of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery’s baptisms in JS-H 1:73. In the D&C see sec. 132:56 and 124:88.

that Jesus spake unto them, and bade them arise. And they arose from the earth, and he said unto them: Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full. And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayer unto the Father for them. And when he had done this he wept again.⁵³

In this context it appears that the mutual love between Jesus and those present at the scene is causally necessary as well as constitutive of their experience of ‘joy’.

Significantly, the people’s joy is linked with their recognition of Jesus’ love for them, as expressed by His prayer in their behalf. Similarly, Jesus’ affirmation that His “joy is full”, which twice culminates in weeping, follows His expression of love through blessings and prayers in behalf of both children and adults.

True, the specific context of Jesus’ presence is sufficiently extraordinary that one may not see the need to generalize this love-joy interaction to other contexts. In fact, it is possible to infer from this passage that Jesus’ corporeal presence may uniquely have emanated the love that was absorbed and experienced by those in His presence. Still, both Paul in the New Testament and King Benjamin in the BoM explicitly associate the Holy Spirit with the presence of both love and joy.⁵⁴ Indeed, Mormon explains the popularity and success of King Benjamin among his people both in terms of his teaching of the truth and in terms of the love for his people, which he had expressed through his personal service. Then, it was by embodying the content of his teachings that Benjamin “taught them to keep the commandments of God, that they might rejoice and be filled with love towards God and all men.”⁵⁵ Furthermore, almost every LDS canonical text, which appears in a ‘missionary’ context, suggests an inseparable connection between ‘love’ and ‘joy’. In fact, it is difficult to understand the common expression “joy in the fruit of your labors” independently of the ‘love’ that a missionary feels for that very fruit.⁵⁶

There is probably no better example than Alma’s doxology to provide a final illustration of this interaction. In reflecting upon the ‘fruits’ of his spiritual labours and in describing his deepest wishes and desires to fulfil God’s purposes more fully Alma exults,

This is my glory, that perhaps I may be an instrument in the hands of God to bring some soul to repentance; and this is my joy. And behold, when I see many of my brethren truly penitent, and coming to the Lord their God, then is my soul filled with joy; then do I remember what the Lord has done for me, yea, even that he hath heard my prayer...and hath given me much success, in

⁵³ 3 Ne. 17:17-22.

⁵⁴ Gal. 5:22; Mosiah 4:11-12.

⁵⁵ Mosiah 2:4.

⁵⁶ D&C 6:31.

the which my joy is full. But I do not joy in my own success alone, but my joy is more full because of the success of my brethren, who have been up to the land of Nephi...Now, when I think of the success of these my brethren my soul is carried away, even to the separation of it from the body, as it were, so great is my joy.⁵⁷

It may be observed that Alma points at different causes for his joy, some are self-referential and some are not. In the first place he recognizes that his personal involvement as facilitator of conversions has contributed to bring to the surface life memories of great joy. Indeed, witnessing the conversion process of repentant individuals has reminded him of his own conversion and of God's ongoing mercy in his behalf. Furthermore, he also indicates explicitly that both his own people's repentance and the success of the sons of Mosiah in their mission among the Lamanites have given him significant reasons to rejoice. Therefore, the firm bond of love and friendship between Alma and Mosiah's sons is undoubtedly motivating and constitutive of the joy which Alma feels for his friends' missionary successes. Moreover, the joy he expresses for the fruits of his own labours, which have emerged throughout his ecclesiastical service among the people, seems to be similarly rooted in love as specifically manifested in his desires and in his actions for the people's spiritual well-being which in turn had motivated his ministry among them.

Other canonical settings also illustrate the unity of love and joy, sometimes also including faith as a third component of the experience. Significantly, in all these instances the Spirit is the fundamental vehicle and intensifier of emotional phenomena, thus giving a uniquely 'spiritual' dimension to the expression of these emotions in the text. Yet, it is not just the positive but also the negative assessing experiences which can function as vehicles of spiritual manifestations as I am about to explore.

Sorrow: the Negative Assessing Experience

The word *sorrow* appears in 83 verses of the Mormon canon whereas the terms *pain*, *suffering*, and their grammatical derivatives combine for another 172 verses. Yet, in order to be more representative of the theme's actual prominence this latter figure should be reduced to at least its half. In fact, and in the first place, since *pain* and *suffering* often appear together as a sorrow-expressing literary couplet a considerable overlap between verses that quote *pain* and verses that quote *suffering* must be accounted for. Furthermore, since LDS scriptures are mostly written in the language of the KJV Bible the verb *to suffer* is recurrently used as a synonym for the modern

⁵⁷ Alma 29:9-10,13-14,16.

English terms *to allow* or *to permit*, which is not a relevant meaning in the present analysis. Finally, not all uses of the words *pain* and *suffering* have primary reference to experiences of *sadness* since in some instances their main focus involves descriptions of physical privations and diseases. Yet, it is interesting that *sadness* never appears in Mormon canonical texts, although the adjective *sad* occasionally emerges in contexts where it only qualifies concepts or objects rather than individuals.⁵⁸

These preliminary considerations highlight the fact that it is more problematic to identify exact synonyms for *sorrow* than it is for *joy*. In fact, the English language seems to distinguish finely between various kinds and degrees of sorrow much more than it does between different kinds of joy. In this broad linguistic context my analysis is aimed primarily at outlining a representative sample of the term *sorrow* when used in a context of *sadness* or *unhappiness*. Indeed, although the same qualifications mentioned in connection with *happiness* are relevant in this setting, *unhappiness* falls within the range of my present focus. Therefore, given the canonical use of *misery* as an antonym to happiness I also include *misery* among the terms that need to be examined. At the conclusion of this analysis it will emerge that *sorrow* and *suffering* are prominent LDS canonical themes which frequently appear in Christological, eschatological, and ethical contexts that are of key significance for Mormon theology.

Cognitive Necessity

Although LDS scriptures identify various reasons for the experience of sorrow some causative patterns emerge from the text as especially visible. Certainly, the most frequent of these causal associations involves *sin*. In fact, sin is usually identified as the ultimate source of *sorrow* in this mortal existence as well as being recognized as the cause of all potential suffering which will inevitably follow it in the eternities. In some scriptural contexts the general condition of humanity is described as sinful whereas many other texts expressly identify sin as disobedience to a specific divine commandment. An example of this latter case, which also highlights sin's association with sorrow, is found in God's reproof to James Covill, "thou hast seen great sorrow, for thou hast rejected me many times because of pride and the cares of the world."⁵⁹ Indeed, as two of the human sins, which are most recurrent in the LDS canon, both 'pride' and the 'cares of the world' illustrate the centrality of cognition in the present

⁵⁸ See 3 Ne. 13:16; Morm. 8:3; D&C 121:39.

⁵⁹ D&C 39:9.

Mormon understanding of sin. Therefore, given the LDS ‘principle’ of the inextricable link between sin and sorrow, however the latter is to be defined, both sin and sorrow involve a necessary cognitive element in their manifestation.

Specifically, ‘pride’ and ‘the cares of the world’ exemplify the problem of misdirected affections since they originate in a failure to heed the ‘two great commandments’ upon which all other commandments are based.⁶⁰ In fact, in 1989 a Mormon prophet defined pride as “enmity toward God and enmity toward our fellowmen”. Furthermore, the expression ‘the cares of the world’ has clear reference to misplaced cares or affections that are exerted over temporal concerns above and beyond the attention and care, which should be placed on divine commandments. In this context, it is theologically significant that Mormonism has recently emphasized the centrality and prevalence of the ‘universal sin’ of pride in association with its renewed stress over the BoM, whose paramount theme centres in the ‘pride cycle’.⁶¹ Indeed, the necessary link between pride and its consequential sorrow in both mortal and post-mortal conditions of life is one of the most explicit moral ‘principles’ highlighted by the BoM. In other words, the causal bond between pride and sorrow is not only recurrent but is also foundational to the core message of the whole BoM narrative.

Mormon scripture also provides ample confirming evidence to the fact that the difference between a joyful and a sorrowful emotional state often centres in the realm of a specific motivating knowledge. For example, Mormon laments the condition of his people about to be exterminated while he contemplates the visual evidence, which indicates that “the day of grace was passed with them, both temporally and spiritually.” In this context it is not surprising that he would add, “my sorrow did return unto me again.”⁶² Others only experience sorrow tangentially and mainly while envisioning its potentiality or the sorrow they would have undergone had they not received the salvific knowledge contained in BoM Messianic prophecies. Thus, King Benjamin reminds his sons that “were it not for these plates, which contain these records and these commandments, we must have suffered in ignorance, even at this present time, not knowing the mysteries of God.”⁶³ In the opposite direction, Lehi’s parting words to his rebellious sons embody his wish for a transition from the sorrow he actually feels to a

⁶⁰ Matt. 22:36.

⁶¹ See Benson (1989) 4-6; Lewis (1952), 109-110. A brief summary of the ‘pride-cycle’ is found in Peterson (2001), 35.

⁶² Morm. 2:15.

⁶³ Mosiah 1:3.

potential joy, which could only be realized were he to witness a positive change in their obedience. In this context he wishes “that my soul might have joy in you, and that my heart might leave this world with gladness because of you, that I might not be brought down with grief and sorrow to the grave.”⁶⁴

Significantly, Mormon texts also associate volition with emotional emergence, particularly while focusing on the relationship between desired and actual outcomes. In other words, the failed expectation of specific positive events normally triggers the disappointment which is identified as sorrow. Such a disappointment is often associated with a diminished motivation to pursue a particular course, i.e. with a feeling of giving up the desired objective. There is perhaps no better place where this pattern is clearly outlined as in the account of Nephi’s return to Jerusalem to obtain the ‘brass plates’ from Laban. As he and his brothers begin to face what appear to be insurmountable obstacles for the successful fulfilment of their mission Nephi states that “we began to be exceedingly sorrowful, and my brethren were about to return unto my father in the wilderness.”⁶⁵ Nephi’s and his brothers’ divergent reactions to their sorrow is illustrative of this emotion’s coexisting potentiality for either progression or regression, as will be examined in the section on developmental instrumentality. What is presently relevant is the fact that their experience of sorrow appears to be rooted in the failure of their expectations.

Finally, one especially interesting context that highlights cognitive causal factors in the experience of sorrow is found in the recurrent passages which describe conflicting emotional reactions upon reflection over particular circumstances. One such instance focuses on the emotional aftermath of a massive gathering of people during king Mosiah’s reign. The purpose for the gathering is to listen to the reading of the written accounts which describe the adventures of Zeniff, Alma, and their respective peoples. The self-conflicting nature of the gathered people’s reaction is evident in the following text,

When Mosiah had made an end of reading the records, his people who tarried in the land were struck with wonder and amazement. For they knew not what to *think*; for when they beheld those that had been delivered out of bondage they were filled with exceedingly great joy. And again, when they *thought* of their brethren who had been slain by the Lamanites they were filled with sorrow, and even shed many tears of sorrow. And again, when they *thought* of the immediate goodness of God, and his power in delivering Alma and his brethren out of the hands of the Lamanites and of bondage, they did raise their voices and give thanks to God. And again,

⁶⁴ 2 Ne. 1:21.

⁶⁵ 1 Ne. 3:14.

when they *thought* upon the Lamanites, who were their brethren, of their sinful and polluted state, they were filled with pain and anguish for the welfare of their souls.⁶⁶

Clearly, the post-reflective emotions described in this passage alternate so much and so quickly between joy and sorrow because people's conscious reflective content is rapidly shifting as the focus of attention changes from one situation to another. Therefore, in this as in the previous examples from LDS texts, the cognitive necessity of sorrow is plainly and convincingly demonstrated.

Personal Responsibility

The issue becomes more complex when addressing the personal responsibility associated with sorrow. Thus, an initial clarification is needed in order to place the topic within its appropriate exegetical boundaries. LDS canonical texts repeatedly suggest that sorrow is both avoidable and unavoidable. In other words, the causal factors which lead to sorrow are in some circumstances deemed to lie within our personal capacity for control whereas in other cases its causal factors are recognized to lie outside our ability to prevent or to manipulate events. Therefore, the discussion and emphasis in the context of one kind of sorrow, the preventable one, is quite different from the setting and language which usually characterizes the other kind, namely the inevitable one. In this latter instance, as was previously seen, greater emphasis is placed on one's response to sorrow rather than on the causes of its emergence. It follows that the canonical picture of personal responsibility in relation to sorrow is multi-faceted and mostly confusing if this preliminary factor is not taken into proper account.

I have already introduced the causal link between sin and sorrow indicating that it is one of the key recurrent causal associations within Mormon scripture. In this context sorrow is generally correlated to an eternal perspective of existence since the invariable consequences of disobedience are usually not fully experienced in this life. In fact, the most immediate consequences of sin in the present human condition are often perceived to be attractive, although they are never recognized as true joy by the believers who see in them only poor imitations as manifested by "pleasure", "gain", or "praises of men".⁶⁷ Furthermore, these kinds of enjoyments are held to be of short duration as underlined by their inability to establish an enduring mood of happiness. In

⁶⁶ Mosiah 25:7-11. Also see Alma 28:14; 46:25; Mosiah 28:18.

⁶⁷ Morm. 8:38.

fact, in the present-oriented words of Samuel the Lamanite, sin and happiness are necessarily incompatible. To the rebellious Nephites he explains it in these terms: “ye have sought all the days of your lives for that which ye could not obtain; and ye have sought for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head.”⁶⁸ Thus, Mormon texts stress that sorrow is a necessary accompaniment to sin both in the eschatological perspective and in the realm of present mortality where sin prevents the individual from experiencing ‘the joy of the Saints’. Then, in comparison to this joy its poor pleasurable substitute is nothing but sorrow, notwithstanding the unbelievers’ claim to the contrary.

Undoubtedly, personal responsibility in avoiding sin to the best of one’s ability is a regular assumption if not an explicit affirmation of many a Mormon scripture. Consequently, the accompanying responsibility for the experience of sin-driven sorrow can hardly be escaped. Yet, given that the post-fall “natural man is an enemy to God” the Mormon canon also assumes that the inherent attraction of sin leads all individuals to succumb in some degree.⁶⁹ In these instances, even when sin is not avoided, personal responsibility endures in relation to the chosen reaction to the experience of sin, beginning with its recognition. The key question then is whether the emerging sorrow will be avoided and obscured or whether it will be accepted and employed to develop the necessary humility which is central to the process of repentance. Therefore, it can be seen that in different forms personal responsibility extends from the causes and motivations of sorrow to the reactions and responses which follow it. Even when sorrow emerges in circumstances primarily related to others’ choices the individual remains responsible to manage such sorrow in the manner which is deemed appropriate. Then, my current task is to explore the way in which LDS texts express this very process of response.

To begin this discussion it is useful to remember the Pauline distinction between “godly sorrow” and “the sorrow of the world”.⁷⁰ Although in slightly different terms Mormon texts echo this theme as they distinguish between the kind of sorrow which leads to repentance and the “sorrowing of the damned.” For example, Mormon laments the condition of his people with these words,

⁶⁸ Hel. 13:38.

⁶⁹ Mosiah 3:19. The previously mentioned ‘universal sin’ of pride is one example of sin that can hardly be fully escaped.

⁷⁰ 2 Cor. 7:8-11.

Their sorrowing was not unto repentance, because of the goodness of God; but it was rather the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin. And they did not come unto Jesus with broken hearts and contrite spirits, but they did curse God, and wish to die. Nevertheless they would struggle with the sword for their lives.⁷¹

What had deepened Mormon's disappointment in this instance was his realization that sorrow had not been treated as an opportunity for repentance as he had hoped. In fact, Mormon had started to "rejoice...knowing the mercies and the long-suffering of Lord, therefore, supposing that he would be merciful unto them that they would again become a righteous people."⁷² Yet, the people's choice to reject repentance strengthens rather than suspends the negative consequences of their sins, thus increasing the burden of their personal responsibility.

On the other hand, LDS canonical texts provide evidences of individuals who use sorrow as their stepping stone to the *metanoeo* which leads to conversion. In most instances such sorrow is manifested in the form of 'guilt' which emerges from the recognition that a sin has been committed where it could have been avoided. The emotion is further intensified by the perception that being a disobedient child manifests ingratitude toward a loving Heavenly Father who sends blessings to His children to facilitate their progression and joy. One clear example of this positive response is found in the BoM account of Zeezrom, whose "soul began to be harrowed up under a consciousness of his own guilt; yea, he began to be encircled about by the pains of hell." Significantly, the depth of his conversion and repentance is immediately manifested in his willingness to confess and in his endeavour to reverse all previously committed evil when he takes an unpopular stand in behalf of Alma and Amulek. Thus, "he began to cry unto the people, saying: Behold, I am guilty, and these men are spotless before God. And he began to plead for them from that time forth."⁷³

However, not all passages of scripture classify people's reactions to sorrow in black and white terms. In some instances the complexities of volition are such that godly and worldly sorrow appear more as two opposite tendencies extending on a spectrum of motivation than they do as mutually exclusive categories of emotional experience. In fact, even very devout individuals occasionally fluctuate between more and less 'godly' occurrences of sorrow, as illustrated by Lehi, the patriarch of both Nephite and Lamanites civilizations. Within the BoM record this prophet is shown to

⁷¹ Morm. 2:13-14. Also see Ether 8:7.

⁷² Morm. 2:12.

⁷³ Alma 14:6,7. Also see 1 Ne. 7:20.

experience one single moment of weakness when he murmurs “against the Lord” (to be understood in current terms as ‘complaining’) while finding himself almost at the point of starvation. Since his sorrow is manifested “against” God it is clear that this experience lies closer to the ‘wordly’ than to the ‘godly’ side of the emotion. In this context the apparent mitigating circumstance of impending starvation for his whole family is not offered as justification.

Yet, through the example and inspiring words of his son Nephi, Lehi humbles himself and subsequently receives a revelatory voice through which “he was truly chastened because of his murmuring against the Lord, insomuch that he was brought down into the depths of sorrow.”⁷⁴ It is important to remember that at the time of this chastening the physiological pain triggered by fatigue and lack of food has not subsided because the relevant circumstances have not yet changed. Only later will Lehi’s family be able to find the necessary food which will allow them to obtain strength and to survive. Still, this verse highlights a transition in Lehi’s attitude because his physiological sorrow, which first motivated complaining, does not function here as an obstacle to his interaction with God. In fact, even while compounded by ‘guilt’ it possibly facilitates the humility that makes this very interaction possible. Therefore, at the core of this change lies a shifting focus, a different choice, and a wider perspective that deeply affects the eventual emotional outcome in this prophet’s life.

It is also significant to notice that Lehi’s original sorrow is not caused by an act of disobedience on his part; on the contrary, Lehi is suffering hunger in the desert because he obeyed God’s command to depart from Jerusalem. Yet, Lehi retains responsibility for how he chooses to respond to these trying circumstances. In fact, Mormon texts highlight that humans should react to ‘undeserved’ sorrow by focusing their attention and affections on God in prayer. As stated in the D&C: “If thou art sorrowful, call on the Lord thy God with supplication, that your souls may be joyful.”⁷⁵ Still, the replacement of sorrow with joy will not always match God’s inscrutable will, or at least His timing. This is particularly the case when the sorrow is caused by the unfortunate or evil choices of other individuals whose agency God will usually respect. Then, in these difficult circumstances, the faithful should humbly accept God’s decision not to remove the source of sorrow while continuing to search for His assistance by petitioning for strength, knowledge, or other empowering blessings. As I

⁷⁴ 1 Ne. 16:19-25.

⁷⁵ D&C 136:29.

am about to explore, this is one of the most prominent aspects of sorrow's developmental instrumentality.

Developmental Instrumentality

The dynamic nature of sorrow is consistently evident within the developmental context of LDS canonical texts. In other words, sorrow is the vehicle which inevitably pushes individuals, either forward or backward, in their path of spiritual progression. Thus, it can either motivate people to repent and to humble themselves before God or it can lead them to harden their hearts against Him and to abandon the path of discipleship. In fact, some interpret sorrow as evidence of their own sinfulness and need for redemption whereas others understand it to be an indication of the absence of God and of the uselessness of His supposed commandments. Therefore, whether the information is correct or incorrect, sorrow usually performs a communicative function subsequent to which individuals are motivated to act and to believe in certain manners. Clearly, according to LDS scriptures, not all human reactions to sorrow are developmentally instrumental although single inappropriate reactions do not necessarily cause permanent spiritual damage. At the same time, Mormon texts highlight that inappropriate reactive 'patterns' to sorrow may represent a great danger for one's spiritual well-being.

As already pinpointed, and in unison with all Christianity, Mormon theology affirms the inevitability of some of life's sorrows; yet, a theology of 'the Fall' as *felix culpa* gives the LDS perspective unique patterns of emphasis in this context. Indeed, in the first place the PoGP echoes Genesis in stating, "Unto the woman, I, the Lord God, said: I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception. In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children... And unto Adam, I, the Lord God, said: ...in sorrow shalt thou eat of it [the ground] all the days of thy life."⁷⁶ Therefore, Mormons accept sorrow as one of the consequences of 'the Fall' even speaking, as Alma does, of mortal experience as "this vale of sorrow."⁷⁷ However, when addressing post-Eden sorrow the Mormon emphasis is generally on 'opportunity' rather than on 'punishment.' Thus, while on the one hand sorrow is inherent in the process of biological decay and death, on the other it is a necessary ingredient for spiritual growth and progression. The BoM highlights

⁷⁶ Moses 4:22-23.

⁷⁷ Alma 37:45.

these very aspects beginning with Nephi's comments on sorrow's physiological effects over his parents,

My parents... they were brought down, yea, even upon their sickbeds. Because of their grief and much sorrow, and the iniquity of my brethren, they were brought near even to be carried out of this time to meet their God; yea, their grey hairs were about to be brought down to lie low in the dust; yea, even they were near to be cast with sorrow into a watery grave.⁷⁸

Then, only a few pages removed, Lehi is reported to have taught that "Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy." Indeed, in relation to the Fall he adds that "all things have been done in the wisdom of him who knoweth all things."⁷⁹

Therefore, it is in God's wisdom that experiential sorrow should polarize individuals who choose their response as either patient submissiveness or murmuring rebellion. Yet, the two categories are not fixed and crossovers are possible since sorrow can humble the rebellious to the point of repentance. One primary example of this pattern of lasting transformation is the conversion of Alma the Younger.⁸⁰ Instead, on the negative side of the equation are Laman and Lemuel, whose occasional moments of humility do not facilitate a lasting spiritual conversion. Eventually, having repeatedly rejected sorrowful privations and difficulties as a means to spiritual progression the BoM highlights their increasing rebellion, which culminates in their desire to murder both their father and their brother Nephi.⁸¹ Therefore, while Alma's and Zeezrom's humble response to their initial sorrowful guilt overshadows the evil nature of their earlier choices Laman and Lemuel do not share in the same victory as they progressively move in the direction of permanent rebellion.

To be sure, as seen in the case of Lehi, some degree of puzzlement over the evidence that bad things happen to good people will continue to affect firm believers as it will doubters. Mormons have not been immune to this difficulty and the historical context of social conflict in which the movement emerged has probably exacerbated the issue. The response LDS theology provides to the key question of 'undeserved' sorrow involves a tension between two different directions of explanation. In the first place, and in unison with other Christian traditions, Mormon texts reduce the temporal extension of sorrow to this life while enlarging the perspective of existence to eternity. In this manner, suffering circumstances are framed as limited and temporal because the

⁷⁸ 1 Ne. 18:17-18.

⁷⁹ 2 Ne 9:24-25.

⁸⁰ Alma 36.

⁸¹ 1 Ne. 16:37.

individual casts his attention on the infinite and joyous after-life. Thus, in a passage which is resonant of Johannine theology, God reassures His Saints by promising:

And all they who suffer persecution for my name, and endure in faith, though they are called to lay down their lives for my sake yet shall they partake of all this glory. Wherefore, fear not even unto death; for in this world your joy is not full, but in me your joy is full.⁸²

In other words, endurance is facilitated by the promise of a future lasting condition of happiness.

The second direction of explanation recasts sorrow and suffering in terms that are not only opposite to joy, but also inherently necessary to the actualization of joy. This is a unique manner to respond to the drive for meaning, which characterizes the common experience of human beings. Indeed, as Viktor Frankl argued, it is the identification of satisfactory meaning in the context of even the most excruciating suffering, which provides an effective path to psychological survival.⁸³ In the Mormon context the meaning of sorrow emerges from its inclusion as a necessary factor for the achievement of joy, not only in the delayed milieu of the eternities but also in the very present condition of mortality. Certainly, the philosophical foundations for the ‘opposition in all things’ previously highlighted provide the most explicit evidence for this line of reasoning. Additionally, several canonical instances make reference to the sorrow, which precedes and is juxtaposed to subsequent interrelated joy, thus potentially suggesting causative necessity of the former for the latter. In one example Nephi states that “notwithstanding we had suffered many afflictions and much difficulty, yea, even so much that we cannot write them all, we were exceedingly rejoiced when we came to the seashore.”⁸⁴ Similarly, in concluding the account of the sons of Mosiah’s mission among the Lamanites, Mormon writes of “their journeying in the land of Nephi, their sufferings in the land, their sorrows, and their afflictions, and their incomprehensible joy.”⁸⁵ To these may be added the many conversion accounts which involve transitions from deep sorrow to profound joy.

Yet, notwithstanding its necessary association to joy and its potential facilitative role for the emergence of humility the negative implications of suffering can be spiritually ‘dangerous’. In fact, if not transformed by faith sorrow may turn into despair as pinpointed by Moroni in the remark, “if ye have no hope ye must needs be in

⁸² D&C 101:35.

⁸³ Frankl (1985).

⁸⁴ 1 Ne 17:6.

⁸⁵ Alma 28:8.

despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity.”⁸⁶ Thus, only faith can prevent the individual from abandoning himself to the sorrow, which leads to utter hopelessness. For example, in his 1838 description of his first theophany Joseph Smith focused on the timing of the occurrence which took place “at the very moment when I was ready to sink into despair and abandon myself to destruction.”⁸⁷ Indeed, at the time of crisis he had continued to pray in faith for deliverance from the “enemy” and the “thick darkness” which were enveloping him. In a separate context, when commenting on Alma’s emotional condition, Mormon suggests one reason for the great danger of mental capitulation to sorrow. In his account Alma, “having seen the afflictions of the humble followers of God, and the persecutions which were heaped upon them by the remainder of his people, and seeing all their inequality, began to be very sorrowful; nevertheless the Spirit of the Lord did not fail him.”⁸⁸

Therefore, if the Spirit of the Lord is fully absent, and its comforting and strengthening influences do not assist the suffering individual, sorrow may escalate in a negative trajectory culminating in self-destruction. Yet, this condition of utter spiritual abandonment is usually present only in those circumstances of unrelenting rebellion as typified in the spiritual condition of Mormon’s people at the time of preparation for their final battle. Mormon describes the scene in these terms,

The Spirit of the Lord hath already ceased to strive with their fathers; and they are without Christ and God in the world; and they are driven about as chaff before the wind...by Satan...And in this part of the land they are also seeking to put down all power and authority which cometh from God; and they are denying the Holy Ghost.⁸⁹

The text underlines the fact that the Spirit was not assisting this people because they had repeatedly and permanently rejected it; in other words, “the day of grace was passed”.⁹⁰ Still, since such circumstances of full rebellion are rare, as other LDS texts indicate, the assistance of the strengthening power of divinity is in some degree always present in all those individuals who have not fully extinguished the ‘light of Christ’ within them.

Finally, to return to sorrow’s instrumentality in the process of spiritual progression I should highlight two of its specific functions, which emerge from several Mormon canonical accounts. In the first place, sorrow can *remind* people of their

⁸⁶ Moro. 10:22.

⁸⁷ JS-H 1:15-16.

⁸⁸ Alma 4:15.

⁸⁹ Morm 5:16, 18; Moro 8:28.

⁹⁰ Morm. 2:15.

identity in specific relation to their Father in Heaven. For example, the BoM observes that “many of them, after having suffered much loss and so many afflictions, began to be stirred up in remembrance of the words which Aaron and his brethren had preached to them...therefore they began...to believe in the Lord.”⁹¹ Furthermore, sorrow may remind faithful individuals of the great suffering sacrifice of Jesus Christ, although the general tendency in the moment of pain is to centre one’s attention on the personal sorrow which is being experienced. This was Joseph Smith’s experience in Liberty Jail when he poured out his feelings in prayer by crying to heaven: “O Lord, how long...?” and possibly also implying why?⁹² Yet, God’s response, though comforting in tone, shifts the focus in comparative mode to Christ’s Atonement, “Know thou, my son, that all these things shall give thee experience, and shall be for thy good. The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?”⁹³

Secondly, sorrow may acquire a *sanctifying* function, particularly when associated with the direct effects of persecution, as commonly experienced by prophets like Nephi, Abinadi, Ammon, Alma, and Joseph Smith.⁹⁴ True, in some instances the willingness to suffer persecution already indicates that the prophet has depth of faith and great love of truth. Thus, in preparing for martyrdom Abinadi bravely affirms that “I will suffer even until death, and I will not recall my words” of testimony. Similarly, the people of Ammon are killed while refusing to defend themselves in order to follow their commitment to bury “their weapons of war for peace.”⁹⁵ Yet, in other passages suffering also appears as a further *sanctifying* tool which deepens and solidifies the existing faith and humility of individuals. Therefore, it is not coincidental that those believers who are suffering persecution in the book of Helaman are described as increasing in faith, humility and purity,

This was a great evil, which did cause the more humble part of the people to suffer great persecutions, and to wade through much affliction. Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God.⁹⁶

These faithful individuals respond to suffering with patience and trust in God while probably understanding that ‘the shame of the world’ is a necessary feature of the path

⁹¹ Alma 25:6

⁹² D&C 121:3; 109:31,49,76

⁹³ D&C 122:7-8

⁹⁴ See 2 Ne 1:24; Mosiah 7:16; 17:15; Alma 4:13; JS-H 1:23, 27.

⁹⁵ Mosiah 17:10; Alma 24:19

⁹⁶ Hel. 3:34-35

of discipleship. In fact, Jacob conveys this sense of inevitability when wishing, “We would to God that...all men would believe in Christ, and view his death, and suffer his cross and bear the shame of the world.”⁹⁷

Indeed, God realizes that sorrow often functions as the only purifying instrument which leads stubborn individuals unto repentance as He affirms, “And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer.”⁹⁸ Yet, some trials and afflictions fall upon whole populations without distinction between righteous or unrighteous. In fact, Jacob describes the emotional condition of his people, including himself and all the other righteous, in these sombre words,

The time passed away with us, and also our lives passed away like as it were unto us a dream, we being a lonesome and a solemn people, wanderers, cast out from Jerusalem, born in tribulation, in a wilderness, and hated of our brethren, which caused wars and contentions; wherefore, we did mourn out our days.⁹⁹

Once again, the difference lies in patterns of response, whether involving humility and faith to further sanctification or pride and disbelief to hardened rebellion. Then, sorrow’s developmental instrumentality hinges on this very distinction.

Sorrow and the Atonement

Given the centrality of the Atonement for the process of understanding sorrow and for the development of its associated coping responses any LDS theological discussion of this emotion must include a careful exploration of sorrow’s connection with Christ’s sacrifice. Yet, since sorrow’s interaction with the Atonement considerably overlaps with the interactive patterns of the *relating* emotions I will postpone some aspects of the present discussion to the next chapter. For now, I may only outline the most prominent of the numerous ramifications of this relationship. The following roles of the Atonement are especially relevant: *remover* of human sorrow, *preventer* of it, *strength source* for the human sufferer, and *model* of ideal human responses to some kinds of sorrow, thus facilitating a degree of its *acceptance*. Furthermore, human experiences of sorrow may aid the individual in *understanding* the Atonement, particularly through the experience of *empathic sorrow*, and consequently

⁹⁷ Jacob 1:8.

⁹⁸ D&C 105:6.

⁹⁹ Jacob 7:26.

to feel a deeper connection with Jesus while coming to understand and to experience a deeper form of Christ-like love.

In the first place, according to the penal-substitution view of the Atonement, Mormons stress that the atoning Jesus is the bearer of guilt for the sins of humankind. At the same time, since He “suffered temptations, but gave no heed unto them” Christ is able to impute to us the purity and innocence of His life, while taking upon Himself the sorrow of our guilt.¹⁰⁰ Still, in line with the LDS emphasis on the eternal principle of agency Christ’s redeeming gift requires an uncoerced accepting response which is to be embodied in the personal offer of a repenting heart. Indeed, since repentance itself is a gift made possible by the atoning sacrifice it is not surprising that Mormon texts often set Jesus’ sacrifice in direct relationship with repentance. The D&C illustrates it in these terms, “The Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.”¹⁰¹ In other words, the Atonement does not suspend individuals’ responsibility to avoid sin and to repent. Instead, somewhat ironically, in order to avoid the ultimate sorrow, which is the enduring guilt of sin, humans are called to experience a different kind of sorrow, namely the deep sorrow of sincere repentance. Yet, this sorrow is godly, sanctifying, instrumentally salvific, and only temporary.

Conversion and repentance stories in the Mormon canon perfectly illustrate this role of the Atonement. For example, in speaking to his son Shiblon Alma highlights the deep emotional transformation which had emerged during his own conversion, “I was three days and three nights in the most bitter pain and anguish of soul; and never, until I did cry out unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, did I receive a remission of my sins. But behold, I did cry unto him and I did find peace to my soul.”¹⁰² Specifically, in this and in other accounts of his conversion, Alma highlights the role of ‘faith’ as the central factor that activates the Atonement’s power to heal spiritually. Similarly, in his ‘psalm’ within the fourth chapter of his second book, Nephi describes his own emotional transformation beginning with a reflection over the anger he feels against his brothers while lamenting “O wretched man that I am!” but culminating in joyful exultations and expressions of divine love. The point of emotional transition centres on remembrance of personal experiences in which Nephi recognizes God’s power in the

¹⁰⁰ D&C 20:22.

¹⁰¹ D&C 18:11.

¹⁰² Alma 38:8.

form of love, protection, support, and powerful spiritual visitations. The end-result of this recollection and refocusing is a changed emotional status,

O then, if I have seen so great things, if the Lord in his condescension unto the children of men hath visited men in so much mercy, why should my heart weep and my soul linger in the valley of sorrow, and my flesh waste away, and my strength slacken, because of mine afflictions?...Awake my soul! No longer droop in sin. Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul.¹⁰³

Therefore, mere recollection of specific blessings made possible by the Atonement contributes to remove the present experience of sorrow in the recognition of personal weakness.¹⁰⁴

In addition to removing both present and eternal guilt by means of forgiveness of sins the Atonement removes or reduces the ‘guiltless’ sorrow which is associated with death, weakness, loss, disease, or with the hurtful consequences of others’ agency. In the first place, as common to other theistic religions, Mormonism highlights the fact that the suffering associated with the death of a loved one can be removed or at least softened by a recognition and celebration of the departed’s faithfulness and present state of blessedness. Thus, in speaking of those Nephites who had lost their lives in battle against the Lamanites Helaman affirms: “Nevertheless, we may console ourselves in this point, that they have died in the cause of their country and of their God, yea, and they are happy.”¹⁰⁵ Similarly, Mormon states in one of his editorials that “there were many who died with old age; and those who died in the faith of Christ are happy in him, as we must needs suppose.”¹⁰⁶ Indeed, post-death or post-resurrection promises of removal of sorrow in association with the salvific promises of the Atonement are quite numerous in LDS texts.¹⁰⁷

Therefore, one of the primary means to reduce sorrow involves various forms of cognitive restructuring, including the forward-looking focus just mentioned, which is not only applicable to circumstances of death, but also to conditions of disease, loss, or other suffering. Yet, even a faith in the eventual termination of all troubling experiences is not usually sufficient to abate significant levels of sorrow. Other forms

¹⁰³ 2 Ne 4:26,28. This text has some affinity to Romans 8.

¹⁰⁴ To be sure, the text does not clarify whether the transition is merely a result of Nephi’s change in cognitive attention or whether the ‘Spirit’ directly intervenes to facilitate the process of remembering, thus intensifying Nephi’s joy. Furthermore, in the whole chapter Nephi never mentions the Atonement by name. Yet, whether Nephi recognizes the Atonement as the ultimate cause and whether the Spirit’s influence is by him identified in the LDS theological view the Atonement underlies *all* human-divine interactions, including those recollected by Nephi.

¹⁰⁵ Alma 56:11.

¹⁰⁶ Alma 46:41.

¹⁰⁷ See Alma 40:12; 2 Ne. 24:3; D&C 101:29 to mention only a few.

of cognitive restructuring include comparative reappraisals of one's suffering in relation to Jesus' or other individuals', recognition that losses and deprivations may only appear to be such when in reality they constitute blessings in disguise, or, as described earlier, an attitude that reshapes sorrow into a developmental tool which facilitates spiritual growth. In some of these instances the Atonement appears explicitly within the new realm of focus (as in the Liberty Jail prayer) whereas in other cases it functions indirectly as the organizing principle that sustains 'the great plan of happiness', which in turn brings comfort because it enlarges one's spiritual perspective.

The truly distinctive Mormon element in the view of the Atonement as reducer of personal suffering centres in Christ's experience of *empathic sorrow*. Indeed, as previously outlined, Mormonism claims that Christ's atoning experience was all inclusive of all forms of suffering and pain, whether related or unrelated to sin. Therefore, Mormons understand Jesus as the perfect empathizer who fully comprehends and knows from personal experience every single kind of painful manifestation associated with human life. Consequently, when the Saints petition God for comfort and alleviation of pain they may sense that Jesus is able to share their burden and to participate in their sorrow. This is indeed a form of cognitive intervention, although theologically it is more than an internal unassisted process. In fact, Jesus' empathy is intricately connected with the influence and blessings of the Holy Spirit, which provides comfort, knowledge, and perspective as an external intensifying source of 'light' and joy. Then, as the ultimate cause of the Spirit's sanctifying presence and as the moment in time which embodies divine compassion through empathic sorrow the Atonement reoccurs, as it were, by means of repeated acts of Jesus' participation in human sorrow, which are 'activated' by prayers of faith.

It is only in light of this theological background that one may begin to understand the Mormon usage of the term Atonement as a large coping umbrella under which appear to fall all negative aspects of the human experience. Furthermore, the 'principle' of materialistic monism previously describes strengthens such comprehensiveness inasmuch as it reframes pains, afflictions, sicknesses, and infirmities as human circumstances which affect the whole soul, both body and spirit. In other words, people are spiritually hindered by the effects of 'the Fall' as manifested by the sicknesses and infirmities of the body as well as by the struggles and pains associated with the daily dynamics of social interactions. In turn, these hindrances are manifested in the greater resistance to the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit through

those psychological or physiological dynamics which represent inherent obstacles to spiritual manifestations. Yet, in the individual who is able to exert faith in its power the effects of the Atonement are such that they may transcend, at least to some degree, these intrinsic obstacles. In other words, wherever distance and separation from God is highlighted and enlarged by forces such as sin, faulty sociality, or decaying physiology the Atonement may act as a counter-force which reduces that distance by means of the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

Still, the Atonement will not always eliminate sorrow or even reduce it, but often it will ‘strengthen’ the individual so that he may face his challenges with greater hope and capacity. Indeed, prophets recognize that trials and their associated sorrows often play a significant role as catalysts in the growth of Christ-like attributes. Therefore, within the eternal scheme of God’s plan of progression it is not always appropriate to petition for the removal of a source of suffering. Alma manifests this perspective when he prays for strength during his mission among the Zoramites,

Oh Lord, wilt thou give me strength, that I may bear with mine infirmities. For I am infirm, and such wickedness among this people doth pain my soul. O Lord, my heart is exceedingly sorrowful; wilt thou comfort my soul in Christ. O Lord, wilt thou grant unto me that I may have strength, that I may suffer with patience these afflictions, which shall come upon me, because of the iniquity of this people.¹⁰⁸

In another context and at an earlier time God had responded to Alma’s specific petitions for freedom from Lamanite oppression by endowing him with strength rather than by causing his deliverance from bondage. In that instance, “the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.”¹⁰⁹ The source of sorrow was not removed, but an internal change was facilitated that diminished the impact of the sorrow-causing circumstances.

Clearly, all the sorrow suffered by the righteous because of their persecutors’ actions is preventable inasmuch as the persecutors choose to follow Christ’s teachings in avoiding sin. Therefore, the Atonement is a *preventer* of sorrow in the degree to which it facilitates this very choice. In fact, the power of the Spirit, whose presence is made possible by Jesus’ sacrifice, can strengthen individuals in their commitment and in their capacity to be obedient to divine teachings. On the other hand, rejection of the

¹⁰⁸ Alma 31:30-31.

¹⁰⁹ Mosiah 24:15.

Atonement through unwillingness to obey or repent ultimately implies a rejection of both His ‘substitutory sorrow’ and of the presence of the Holy Spirit. An ideal illustration of this pattern in the context of disobedience is provided by a passage of the D&C, which probably represents the most vivid and personal description of Jesus’ atoning sufferings within Mormon sacred literature. Yet, this account does not only provide indications on the nature of the Atonement as an historical event but it also underlines the relationship that exists between human sorrow driven by disobedience and the Atonement as an ongoing process.

This specific section of the D&C is addressed to one of the three witnesses of the BoM, i.e. Martin Harris, and it begins with a revelatory statement which denies the literal unlimited duration of the scriptural expression “eternal punishment”. Then, perhaps to ensure that this assertion does not function as a justification for sinning, the divine voice adds:

Therefore I command you to repent – repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore – how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not. For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit.¹¹⁰

In this instance an emphasis on Atonement as ‘substitution’ is quite evident given that its function as preventer of ‘sorrow’ is enabled by the process of repentance which inherently signifies individual acceptance of Christ’s substitutory suffering. At the same time, there is a paradox in the framing of Jesus (the revelator) as both dispenser of punishment and as the ultimate receiver of punishment in the event of the Atonement.

As previously seen, Mormon theology approaches this paradox by understanding the “must” in this passage as a true ontological necessity. In other words, within a universe of fixed and uncreated ‘principles’ there is no alternative for the individual who rejects Jesus’ empowering and liberating sacrifice: he must suffer. In this context God respects the agency of the rebellious and cannot allow “mercy to rob justice”, otherwise He “would cease to be God”.¹¹¹ Whether this latter statement is understood as a merely logical or as a fully actual possibility the necessity for a total acceptance of the Atonement is explicitly stressed along with the dire consequences

¹¹⁰ D&C 19:15-18.

¹¹¹ Alma 42:25.

intrinsic in the failure to repent.¹¹² Yet, as the rest of this passage underlines, this is not a judgment or an experience of negative consequences which is relegated to the eschaton, “Wherefore, I command you again to repent, lest I humble you with my almighty power; and that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments of which I have spoken, of which in the least degree you have tasted at the time I withdrew my Spirit.”¹¹³ In other words, God affirms that Martin has already begun to suffer the consequences of his rebellion. Should he fail to repent the full force and extent of these consequences will be manifested at a later post-mortem stage, but a ‘taste’ was already savoured when the Holy Spirit withdrew from his presence.

Then, within this verse one finds at least three inferences, which are of theological significance within a Mormon context of sorrow and Atonement. In the first place, spiritual withdrawal causes sufferings, and secondly Christ Himself experienced such spiritual withdrawal during His Atonement. Finally, by failing to accept the Atonement through repentance humans experience a “degree” of such spiritual loneliness, whereas those who accept it enjoy the Atonement’s substitutory function and thus need not suffer similar spiritual privations. Therefore, rejecting the Atonement involves the associated forfeiting of its benefits and blessings, namely the guiding, strengthening, and comforting presence of the Holy Spirit. Whether in the present of daily life or in the future of eternity it is isolation from God and from His Spirit that lies at the core of this self-inflicted punishment.¹¹⁴ At the same time, the passage neither claims that every instance of human estrangement from the Spirit is a consequence of sin nor that the issue of spiritual assistance can be easily settled in terms of dichotomous presence and absence.¹¹⁵ What is theologically and pastorally significant in this context is the association of loneliness with both Atonement and sin. Thus, on the one hand and by means of Jesus’ empathic sorrow as experienced in the loneliness of the Atonement Mormons can tap into a Christological resource to cope

¹¹² Thus, God’s harsh rhetoric of infliction of punishment does not necessarily imply a desire but only a necessity. The manner of harsh expression probably relates more to the audience than it does to the speaker, as it is meant to cause a psychological effect described by the same D&C section in these terms: “It is more express than other scriptures, that it might work upon the hearts of the children of men.” (D&C 19:7). This passage refers more directly to the scriptural term *eternal damnation* but it would seem equally applicable to those expressions, which intensify God’s anger and desire to punish.

¹¹³ D&C 19:20

¹¹⁴ A related but perhaps slightly different question has to do with the degree to which this separation needs to be consciously perceived as debilitating in order to truly cause suffering. In other words, a key question relates to whether ‘awareness’ ought to be treated as necessary or not. My interpretation of LDS texts would suggest that ‘awareness’ is *not* necessary in a Mormon view of suffering since anything that falls short of the ideal fullness of joy usually qualifies as ‘sorrow’, whether one is aware of it or not.

¹¹⁵ Where D&C 19:20 uses the qualifier ‘degree’ D&C 71:1 mentions a ‘portion of the Spirit’.

with their spiritual loneliness. On the other hand, Mormons realize that their loneliness, unlike Jesus', is in many cases caused by sin, for which they will be motivated to seek forgiveness.¹¹⁶

Therefore, the Atonement is the ever-present resource for the proper contextualization of suffering which is just as significant to the process of acceptance of suffering as it is to the struggle in overcoming it. In fact, there are sorrows and sufferings which the Atonement does not claim to be able to remove or to prevent, particularly in the context of the mortal realm but also in the future reality of our eternal existence, as I examine more closely in the next section on 'love'. Certainly, Jesus never promises the potential absence of all present sorrows and He does not perform deceiving illusionary transformations of reality like Satan, who imitates joy with sorrow and who confuses evil with good. In so doing, as Lehi claims, since Satan "had fallen from heaven, and had become miserable forever, he sought also the misery of all mankind."¹¹⁷ Therefore, the saying that 'misery loves company' is certainly applicable in the context of the Mormon devil, whose personal sorrow he desires to spread as widely as possible. Then, in Satan's case there is no sorrow associated with humility and love extending outward but only sorrow from pride and love directed inward as he "seeketh to destroy the souls of men."¹¹⁸

In conclusion, in this chapter I have analysed a few relevant passages of the LDS canon, which focus on content relating to the *assessing* emotions as represented by *joy* and *sorrow*. By highlighting the explicit and implicit textual evidence for the cognitive necessity, personal responsibility, and developmental instrumentality associated with these terms I have aimed to provide support for an implied 'folk model' of emotion, which brings these canonical authors to echo modern scholars and scientists in affirming the three basic characteristics that define emotions. Furthermore, I have examined various links and contingencies that associate the Mormon understanding of Atonement with both joy and sorrow and have highlighted the significance of such interaction within the LDS theological framework. In order to conclude my examination one more category of emotion remains to be analysed; hence, I now proceed to explore the third spectrum of emotional phenomena, or what I have identified as the *relating* emotions.

¹¹⁶ An LDS apostle recently spoke of Jesus' loneliness with such pastoral perspective in mind. See Holland (2009), 86-88.

¹¹⁷ 2 Ne. 2:18.

¹¹⁸ Hel 8:28.

CHAPTER FIVE

The ‘Relating’ Emotions: Love and Hate

To conclude my textual analysis of emotion terms within the LDS canon I have chosen to focus on a category of emotional phenomena which I have labelled *relating*. True, all emotions are *relating* in the sense that they are rooted to some degree in relationships with people or objects external to the individual experiencer. Yet, some emotions do not require a grammatical direct object in order to be conceptualized whereas others appear to be almost meaningless in the absence of such an object. For example, it is conceivable to speak of joy and of hope in terms which are exclusively focused on the individual subject as experiencer whereas any discussion of love is by necessity extended to at least imply some direct object, however diffused or generalized. In fact, even when the object is equivalent to the subject love must be spoken of in reflexive rather than in objectless terms. Therefore, I have decided to highlight *relation* as the preeminent characteristic of this kind of emotion with particular reference to *human relationships* as the main form of relation with which they are concerned.

The prototypical manifestation of this category of emotion centres unsurprisingly on the *love-hate* dichotomy. In fact, *love* and *hate* represent perfect candidates for this selection given their common usage and their location on the very opposite ends of this particular emotional spectrum. Furthermore, in comparison with verbs such as *like* or *dislike*, *love* and *hate* have usual reference to grammatical objects which interact; thus, human beings and their dynamic exchanges lie at the centre of these emotional experiences. True, people often affirm their love or hate for a particular inanimate object but whether these expressions are understood as hyperboles, Freudian projections, or accurate descriptions, it is at least debatable that a healthy

human being may truly love or hate an inanimate object as such. Indeed, the intensity of love or hate generally necessitates a responsive object which is capable of pleasing or hurting the individual. Therefore, dual directionality functions prominently to emphasize *relationship* as the defining characteristic of the prototypical manifestations of this category of phenomena.

Finally, the temporal context of these emotions may extend to include both the actual and the potential. In fact, as seen in relation to the *assessing* emotions, individual perceptions may form imagined or predicted *relationships* which in turn could activate feelings of love or hatred. Yet, assuming that most people usually possess a general grasp over reality, love and hate are more likely to emerge in temporal contexts rooted in the present or in the past, whether correctly or incorrectly perceived. Then, as my textual analysis indicates, if individuals contemplate a future experience of love or hatred they usually do so as they temporally extend their present emotional condition to the future rather than by ‘creating’ a cognitive image of a novel relationship which uniquely triggers their love or hatred. To be sure, this is no simple area of exploration given the particular role played by *temporal endurance* in the definition of many a human relationship, which to some degree highlights the realm of the potential in the emergence of either love or hate. However, this is not an issue with which I am presently concerned.

Love: the Positive Relating Experience

The word *love* is found in 106 verses of the Mormon canon. *Affection* appears in one instance and *delight* in 23 other verses thus combining for a total of 130 inclusions within what Mormons call the ‘triple combination’. I have decided to incorporate *affection* and *delight* in this analysis because the contexts in which they appear suggest a meaning that is synonymous with love. While other terms, like *worship*, *treasure*, *respect*, and *reverence*, are at times closely associated with at least some aspect of love they generally lack the comprehensive array of attitudes and feelings which love is understood to include. Furthermore, and uniquely among the ‘positive’ emotions, scriptural instances of love are not limited to human subjects since canonical texts often describe divine love and highlight God’s affirmation of love towards humanity. Instead, divine hope and divine joy are rarely, if at all, mentioned in LDS scriptural writings. Significantly, as the textual examination will underline, Mormon texts do not suggest that divine love represents a different ‘kind’ of emotion to

be distinguished in kind from human love. Instead, divine love embodies the apex of purity, intensity, and expansion of what humans experience in a yet smaller and imperfect form. As such, divine love functions both as the ideal and as the source for the love that humanity is able to enjoy.

Cognitive Necessity

Love is characterized both by specific objects and by its motivating reasons. In other words, people generally know whom they love and why they love them, although identifying and articulating the exact motivations for one's love may appear particularly difficult in some cases. Specifically, instances of romantic attraction where love is expressed primarily as *eros* are likely to be subject to complicating and confusing obfuscations of motivations. In these contexts, as many artistic expressions aim to remind us, the irrational, the unpredictable, and the inexplicable attached to these phenomena never cease to fascinate a world that is often obsessed with the mysterious and the dangerous. Yet, the focus of both biblical and uniquely LDS scriptural texts is love as *agape* and not love in its erotic dimension. Indeed, *eros* or any other passion, i.e. anger, may function as an obstacle to *agape* if not controlled and accompanied by selfless love. This is probably what Alma the Younger means when he reminds his son Shiblon: "Bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love."¹ In other words, *eros* is not necessarily to be extirpated, but the emotion to cultivate is the more rational and spiritually driven *agape* without which *eros* ceases to be love and begins to function as anti-love.

To be sure, Mormons generally do not distinguish between various kinds of love in ways explicitly based on Greek nomenclature. However, they regularly and repeatedly use the KJV translation of *agape* as *charity* when speaking about the love which is worthy of aspiration and which is embodied in its fullness in the personages of the Godhead. Thus, Moroni echoes Paul when he affirms that "charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever." Furthermore, in an earlier passage, he explains that the preposition 'of' should be understood both as a possessive referring to the love experienced by Christ and as a qualifier for the kind of love that all God's children must ultimately possess in order "to inherit that place which" Christ has prepared for

¹ Alma 38:12.

them.² Therefore, when studying the topic of love in canonical texts the Saints seek for understanding about the way in which such an ideal may be achieved while also looking for indications on how its obstructing imitations may be avoided. In other words, as will be amply demonstrated, love in Mormon scriptures is all but an irrational and uncontrollable phenomenon.

In the first place, the cognitive necessity of love is evident in the varying possible objects of love which often underlie separate patterns of knowledge content and of desires. In this context parental teaching and other forms of knowledge acquisition represent a key antecedent to the emergence and specific focalization of both emotions of love and hatred. Thus, king Benjamin encourages his people to teach their children “to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another.” On the other hand, in reference to the Lamanites he was fighting in war, captain Moroni affirms that “it is the tradition of their fathers that has caused their hatred.”³ Therefore, one’s beliefs about ‘the other’ and about the latter’s responsibility in carrying out particular actions usually determine the response towards that same individual. In this context, Zeniff roots the Lamanites’ hatred towards the Nephites in the belief of being repeatedly “wronged” by the Nephites. Similarly, the desire of the converted sons of Mosiah to preach the Gospel to the blood-thirsty Lamanites is driven by a love which is kindled by their illuminated perspective on the nature of the eternities as “they could not bear that any human soul should perish; yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment did cause them to quake and tremble.”⁴

In other words, love has reasons, both when expressed by individual humans and by God Himself. Mormon canonical texts provide numerous examples of motivated divine love of which only some may be highlighted here. For example, Nephi states that God “loveth those who will have him to be their God” and God Himself is quoted stating that He shows mercy to “thousands of them who love me and keep my commandments.”⁵ The D&C is even more specific with its often individualized revelations as God says that He loves Hyrum Smith “because of the integrity of his heart, and because he loveth that which is right before me.” The Lord also states in the same revelation that he loves George Miller “for the love he has to my

² Moro. 7:47; Ether 12:33-34; 1 Cor. 13.

³ Mosiah 4:14-15; Alma 60:32.

⁴ Mosiah 10:12-13; Mosiah 28:2-3.

⁵ 1 Ne. 17:40; Mosiah 13:14.

testimony” and Isaac Galland “for the work he hath done.”⁶ Whether these statements should be considered sufficient evidence to justify a theological conclusion that God’s love is conditional appears to be a question that requires more space for a detailed examination than is presently available. In this context, much clearly hinges on the specific interpretation that is attached to the adjectives used in scriptures to define divine love, namely “pure”, “perfect”, “redeeming”, “great”, and “wonderful”.⁷

What is sure is that LDS canonical texts do not describe God’s love as only a response to acceptable human actions. Nephi, for example, stresses that the one thing he truly knows among the many of which he is ignorant is that God “loveth his children.” In another BoM passage, which reports Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount during His ministry in the Americas, the well-known reference to “the fowls of the air” and “the lilies of the field” underlies God’s love for all His creatures, and especially for His children.⁸ Such a lack of explicit condition for the actualization of divine love is particularly evident in the many passages which describe Christ’s motivations for His incarnation and atoning sacrifice. Thus, the D&C echoes John 3:16 in affirming that Christ “loved the world that he gave his own life.”⁹ Similarly, a later section echoes Isaiah in its emphasis on Jesus’ “goodness” and “loving kindness”, which “saved them; and in his love, and in his pity, he redeemed them, and bore them, and carried them all the days of old.”¹⁰ In this context there is no explicit limitation to His love and to the extent of His redeeming goodness and kindness.

Yet, God’s love is still grounded in reasons, which centre on the existence of a Creator/Father and creature/child relationship that kindles His love. Then, in the context of this relationship, blessings are “held in reserve for them that love him” since God “delight(s) to honor those who serve” Him and His people He “delight(s) to bless with the greatest of blessings.”¹¹ This added dimension of divine love is clearly contingent on human willingness to continue on earth the relationship with God characterized by love and obedience which existed in the pre-mortal sphere. Therefore, God recognizes that a *fullness* of His love may only be experienced in the context of a reciprocal relationship where love is exchanged between the human and the divine. To be sure, the exchange need not and cannot be equal in intensity since God’s love is

⁶ D&C 124:15,17,20,78.

⁷ Moro. 7:47; 8:16,26; Alma 5:9,26; D&C 138:3.

⁸ 1 Ne. 11:17; 3 Ne. 13:26-32.

⁹ D&C 34:3.

¹⁰ D&C 133:52-53. Also see 1 Ne. 19:9 and Ether 12:33-34.

¹¹ D&C 138:52; 76:5; and D&C 41:1.

bound to always surpass its human counterpart. Still, LDS scriptures emphasize that divine love, just like imperfect human love, is limited in its expressions by the receiving objects of such love, who may respond either through openness or closure to its manifestations.

It follows that reciprocity in willingness if not in expression is one of the most significant reasons that motivates the extension of love toward another individual. The Mormon canon clearly outlines this pattern not only in relation to divine love but also in the context of love between individuals. Specifically, it is of interest to note that in more than one instance the subject-ruler relationship in the monarchic political context of the BoM is described in terms of this exchange. For example, Jacob explains that the people loved his brother Nephi “exceedingly, he having been a great protector for them, having wielded the sword of Laban in their defence, and having labored in all his days for their welfare“. Similarly, king Mosiah’s subjects loved him because “he had not exacted riches of them, neither had he delighted in the shedding of blood; but he had established peace in the land, and he had granted unto his people that they should be delivered from all manner of bondage; therefore they did esteem him, yea, exceedingly, beyond measure.”¹² In other words, since Nephi and Mosiah had demonstrated by their service their love for their people that same love was returned by their appreciative subjects without any hesitation.

In summary, love involves cognition inasmuch as it requires specific objects and motivating reasons for its manifestations. Generally speaking, both objects and reasons lie on the surface of one’s realm of awareness where the reciprocity embodied in established patterns of relationship functions as one of the most important motivating factors for the continuous existence of the emotion. Moreover, various perceptions as affected by knowledge, experience, and desires significantly affect both direction and intensity of human loving manifestations. On the other hand, God’s love is clearly not distorted by incorrect knowledge, limited experience or fallen desires. Still, in order to achieve its full actualization, divine love necessitates a receiving agent who possesses at least a reciprocating attitude. Otherwise, as I am about to explore, the accountable individual manifests by his actions his will to reject God’s love as well as its accompanying blessings.

¹² Jacob 1:10, Mosiah 29:40.

Personal Responsibility

Human agents are indeed free to respond to God according to their own wishes and desires but, as in all instances of human obedience or disobedience, they will necessarily reap the positive or negative consequences of their decisions. This eternal principle is also clearly applicable to the emotion of love. In fact, with both God and one's neighbour as its objects, love appears as the paramount *commandment* within the biblical record. Unique LDS scriptures echo this same message in both dimensions.¹³ In this context it is of interest to wonder about the reasons for God's requirement that love should be manifested towards Him when, in light of our common understanding of a perfect character and personality, such request could appear as needlessly self-centred. Yet, it should be remembered that the verb *command* need not be understood as synonymous with *demand* in the context of a loving God who respects agency and desires the progression of His spirit children. Then, as already highlighted, at least one reason for this commandment lies in the significant spiritual benefits which follow its observance. In other words, although in the LDS theological framework God desires to be loved by His creatures, such love is never selfishly retained, but is returned 'one hundred fold' as a blessing to its human sender.

Mormon canonical texts repeatedly highlight that this very blessing centres in the personalized experience of God's love. In short, love functions, as it were, like the energy of an electric circuit, which is only able to flow if the willing individual allows it to continue in the direction of its ever-giving divine source. Those who enjoy this experience in scriptural texts struggle to express it with words and most commonly use metaphors in attempting to convey an understanding of what it involves. Thus, Jacob speaks of divine love as something to "feast upon" and King Benjamin maintains the imagery of a banquet as the verb he chooses to describe its experience is to "taste".¹⁴ Another prominent and reappearing imagery is the physical embrace which Lehi employs when he writes about being "encircled about eternally in the arms of his love". In a later BoM passage he is echoed by Ammon, who describes the blessed state of the Lamanites he had helped to convert as "encircled about by the matchless bounty of his love".¹⁵

¹³ See Matt 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27; D&C 20:19; 59:5-6; 88:123; Alma 23:15; Moro. 10:32. For a more specific family or community setting for such commandments see D&C 42:22, 45; 25:14.

¹⁴ Jacob 3:2; Mosiah 4:11.

¹⁵ 2 Ne. 1:15; Alma 26:15.

Nephi also paints a metaphorical picture of this kind of experience when he highlights divine love as a favourite theme in much of his writings. For example, he describes being filled with God's love in terms which are intense and enervating, i.e. "even to the consuming of my flesh".¹⁶ Furthermore, as he outlines the angelic exegetical commentary of his father's dream, which Nephi reports to have received, he associates at least two of the dream's symbolic images to divine love, namely the central image of the tree of life full of "most sweet" and luminous fruit as well as the "fountain of living waters".¹⁷ Then, God's love appears as the "most desirable above all things" and its acceptance or rejection prefigures the clear separation between the righteous and the wicked which characterizes the whole BoM narrative.¹⁸ In this context, the choice to partake or not to partake is to be accounted for personally, notwithstanding social pressures, persuasions in different directions, and all kinds of associated difficulties. In fact, a common denominator in the various descriptions of the personal experiences of divine love centres in the preceding manifestations of humility, repentance, conversion, or faithful search for God's will as exemplified by the spiritual lives of these individuals.¹⁹

Obviously, the other side of the equation, namely the failure to receive and to return love, is bound to involve negative and spiritually damaging consequences. For example, the Lord warns the Saints of the need to obey Him (obedience is a common manifestation of love towards God) as He declares that "if you keep not my commandments, the love of the Father shall not continue with you, therefore you shall walk in darkness."²⁰ The BoM presents an even starker picture as the rebellious and unbelieving Nephites who face annihilation by the hand of a larger and stronger Lamanite army are described in the following terms, "They have lost their love, one towards another; and they thirst after blood and revenge continually." This is quite a contrasting image to the picture displayed in earlier pages of the BoM where "there was

¹⁶ 2 Ne. 4:21.

¹⁷ 1 Ne. 8:11; 11:25.

¹⁸ 1 Ne. 11:22. Also see 1 Ne. 8:17-18.

¹⁹ In addition to the scriptural passages already outlined other sermons and accounts within the BoM emphasize God's love. Prominent examples include King Benjamin's sermon (Mosiah 2-6), the conversion of Alma the Younger (Mosiah 27, Alma 37), the conversion of the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehis (Alma 23-24), and the visit of Christ among the surviving believers in America (3 Nephi 11, 17).

²⁰ D&C 95:12.

no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.”²¹

Yet, in most cases, the problem God addresses in His revelations is not His children’s complete absence of love. Instead, condemnation is uttered either in connection with the wickedness of some of His children, as manifested in the objects of their love, or with the misplaced priority of their affections. Hence, in the first instance, Cain and some of his descendants are singled out for loving “Satan more than God.” Jarom also speaks of the Lamanites’ love for “murder” and the D&C makes reference to individuals “who love to have others suffer” and to some who “love darkness rather than light.”²² However, in the second instance, objects of human love are not problematic for their inherent and absolute wickedness but only for their pre-eminence over other more important spiritual pursuits. For example, God condemns those who “loved the vain things of the world...riches and honor” or those whose “love of glory” leads them in directing their energies on the accumulation of “money...substance...and fine apparel”.²³ The implication is that these pursuits leave no room for love of God and neighbour since all resources are engaged in self-centred objectives whose importance and ensuing satisfaction is only temporal.

In this context of appropriate priority of affections it is interesting to recognize that in most of these instances divine condemnation falls short of being categorical and final. In other words, although God holds people accountable for the objects on which they place their love, He also admits of changes, restructurings, and conversions. There is no need to recount again the several descriptions of repentance in LDS scriptures that embody these very changes. Perhaps, a significant indicator that a ‘repentance clause’ accompanies God’s condemnations is the use of the verb *chasten* in connection with divine reproof of His children. In fact, in the D&C the Lord states the following, “Whom I love I also chasten that their sins may be forgiven, for with the chastisement I prepare a way for their deliverance in all things out of temptation, and I have loved you.”²⁴ In short, God desires for His condemnations to be suspended and replaced by promised blessings in consequence of His children’s chosen acts of repentance.

Furthermore, in issuing His judgments, God accounts for those factors which significantly impair the agency of individuals. For example, an interesting passage

²¹ Moro 9:5. 4 Ne. 1:15.

²² Moses 5:13,18,28; Jarom 1:6; D&C 121:13; 10:21; 29:45.

²³ Alma 1:16; 60:32; Morm. 8:37.

²⁴ D&C 95:1. Also see Hel. 15:3.

quotes Jacob's response to the prideful and adulterous among his people who hate the Lamanites for their filthiness and savagery. In affirming that God will ultimately be merciful to the Lamanites Jacob asks rhetorically,

Behold, their husbands love their wives, and their wives love their husbands; and their husbands and their wives love their children; and their unbelief and their hatred towards you is because of the iniquity of their fathers; wherefore, how much better are you than they, in the sight of your great Creator?²⁵

In other words, the Lamanites have not made the same mistake as the Nephites in failing to place family among the highest objects of their love. Then, the strength of their family love and the apparent inescapability from the influence of their erroneous traditions, at least at this particular moment in the BoM narrative, soften God's judgments for the hatred and unbelief which characterize their daily existence.

Still, in the case of most individuals, the human experience does not involve conditions which completely cause the removal of agency from their lives.²⁶ Thus, with very few exceptions, God commands people to love both Him and their spiritual brothers and sisters because He holds them responsible and capable of such emotional manifestations and actions. This is not to say that he expects such love to be as perfect as His or to be continuous and equally distributed. Yet, within the limits of human abilities God desires an effort in the direction of love, which in turn He promises to sanctify and to intensify by the power of His Spirit. In such a manner, love becomes an instrument that both facilitates and underlines the spiritual progression of the individual as I am about to explain in the following section.

Developmental Instrumentality

As already hinted, it is a prominent message of LDS canonical texts that human abilities to experience and to extend love necessarily depend on divine love for fuelling and sustenance. In other words, humans can love God and their neighbour only in the degree to which they are infused with the divine love which they have chosen to welcome and to receive as manifested by their willingness to be humble and to obey their God. It is then a full cycle that originates in God's loving kindness but whose continuation and intensification is closely interlinked with existing patterns of human/divine exchange. What this means is that love functions as a general indicator

²⁵ Jacob 3:7.

²⁶ The case of some mentally ill individuals is likely to represent an exception although it is probable that only the severest and most impairing illnesses should be included in this group.

of the condition of any particular human/divine relationship and, to be sure, of the condition of relationships among humans as well. Furthermore, it acts as a sort of currency or asset in these same relationships which in turn motivates actions, sacrifices, and all sorts of giving and seeking behaviours.²⁷ In short, love is a key motivator and teacher; as such, it is the primary instrument for the spiritual and emotional development of the individual.

To begin, the presence of love motivates individuals to act in a manner which may be contrary to the self-centred ‘fallen’ tendencies of the ‘natural man’. These sacrifices, in turn, generally embody and indicate significant advances on the individual’s path of eternal development. For example, in joyously contemplating the fruits of his missionary labours, Ammon writes about the previously murderous Lamanites who, following their conversion, would rather suffer death than kill another human being. In this context, love is both a motivator of their actions and an indicator of the sincerity and fullness of their conversion.

Now behold, we can look forth and see the fruits of our labors...and we can witness of their sincerity, because of their love towards their brethren and also towards us. For behold, they had rather sacrifice their lives than even to take the life of their enemy...because of their love towards their brethren. And now behold I say unto you, has there been so great love in all the land? Behold, I say unto you, Nay, there has not...But behold how many of these have laid down their lives; and we know that they have gone to their God, because of their love and of their hatred of sin.²⁸

Their actions had shown the intensity of their love for both God and fellowmen, which in turn guaranteed their eternal salvation and progression.

While the sacrifice of one’s life to preserve another is an exceptional manifestation of love Mormon canonical texts also outline its more common expressions which are invariably associated with conditions of peace and righteousness. For example, following the demise of the wicked Sherem, Jacob notes that “peace and the love of God was restored again among the people; and they searched the scriptures.” Similarly, in the ‘beautiful’ and ‘blessed’ days at the idyllic waters of Mormon, the people had followed their leader Alma when he had taught them to have “their hearts knit together in unity and love one towards another.”²⁹ As a whole, the keeping of the commandments and the experience of love are so inextricably bound to each other that a first cause can hardly be identified. In fact, on the one hand, obedience opens the door to being “filled with love towards God and all men”, as king

²⁷ For an historical analysis of emotion as currency in a specific cultural milieu see Corrigan (2002).

²⁸ Alma 26:31-34.

²⁹ Jacob 7:23; Mosiah 18:21.

Benjamin teaches, while on the other hand, love logically precedes and motivates obedience in Jesus' biblical statement which He directs at William Smith, "If ye love me keep my commandments."³⁰

Therefore, love and righteousness are mutually motivating, particularly in the context of the Holy Spirit's influence which I address more closely in the next section. Still, although much in LDS scripture centres on the love and on the relationship between the human and the divine, the motivating power of love is also manifested in its inter-human expressions. Perhaps, the most prominent example of this kind is found in the encounter of Ammon, accompanied by the newly converted Lamoni, with Lamoni's father, namely the supreme king of the Lamanite people. In the scuffle which ensues between them Ammon emerges victorious having the power to take or to spare the life of the Lamanite king. Yet, in a situation where all kinds of self-aggrandizing requests would have been granted to Ammon by the powerless king Ammon only asks for that which will benefit his friend Lamoni and his fellow missionary brothers. The king's reaction to these requests is described in these terms, "And when he saw that Ammon had no desire to destroy him, and when he also saw the great love he had for his son Lamoni, he was astonished exceedingly." Thus, the door for the preaching of the Gospel to him was opened, the king asked Ammon to "come unto me, in my kingdom; for I shall greatly desire to see thee", and he "was desirous to learn" more about the words he had heard Ammon speak.³¹

Love's teaching capacity is also greatly significant in the LDS theological context. In the first place, it provides individuals with an open window onto God's character and nature like few other emotional experiences could do. In fact, King Benjamin succinctly supports this conclusion when he equates "the knowledge of the glory of God" with knowing "of his goodness" and tasting "of his love." Similarly, Moroni recognizes God as the ultimate source of love by stating that "every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God."³² More sombrely, Mormon recalls his failed attempts to steer his people towards God in his sad recognition "I had loved them, according to the love of God which was in me."³³ In other words, since human love is of the same kind as divine love, although reduced in intensity and scope, feeling such love endows the individual with the ability

³⁰ Mosiah 2:4; D&C 124:87.

³¹ Alma 20. Quotations from verses 26 and 27.

³² Mosiah 4:11; Moro. 7:13.

³³ Morm. 3:12.

to begin to understand how God must feel as a Father of eternal spiritual children. Indeed, as I examine shortly, empathy of this kind functions prominently at the foundation of all salvific work, whether in its exclusive divine manifestations or in its humanly assisted performances like, for example, Mormonism's work in behalf of the dead.

Furthermore, given LDS scriptures' necessary interdependence between love and righteousness the lack of the one generally indicates the absence of the other. Specifically, unrighteousness or iniquity informs the honest observer either about the mistaken focus of one's love or ultimately about the deeper selfish motivations of one's actions. For example, some verses in the Mormon canon echo the New Testament in depicting the worrisome condition of a world in great need of repentance when, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold".³⁴ In this context, the individual who becomes aware of his own lack of love is given the alternative to turn to God and change or to continue in his path of dangerous spiritual decay. At the same time, when such an absence of love is witnessed in the behaviour of others actions may be taken to facilitate personal protection or to warn the individual of the dangers inherent in such a path of disobedience.

Yet, evil motivations are not always immediately exposed by the outward actions which accompany them, particularly when performed by others. When failing to receive reinforcements and supplies during a time of war Captain Moroni accuses Pahoran to be governing for "the love of glory and the vain things of the world". However, Pahoran is innocent and although Moroni is correct about the presence of iniquity within the government he is ultimately mistaken about Pahoran's intentions. In another example, Amalickiah, one of the greatest deceivers in the whole narrative, claims to share the people's love for their king, whom he secretly had murdered, in order to achieve his selfish objectives.³⁵ Therefore, since intentions could easily be misjudged in light of visible evidence the D&C warns Priesthood holders about the need to exercise their power with "love unfeigned", and when called to reprove, to show "afterwards an increase of love" in order to remove the possible perception of an antecedent prideful motivation.³⁶ In short, 'apparent' love and 'apparent' neglect do not necessarily open a window into one's heart although they often do.

³⁴ JS-M 1:10,30; D&C 45-27.

³⁵ Alma 60:32; 47:27-28.

³⁶ D&C 121:41,43.

In summary, although observable love is not a fault-proof indicator of one's spiritual condition, the presence of sincere love towards God and neighbour points in the direction of a healthy spiritual relationship with the divine. Its absence, on the other hand, teaches about the need for change and restructuring of priorities. In turn, both the desire to experience such love and its reception from external human and divine sources can motivate this very process of change as embodied in individual desires to perform acts of obedience to divine commandments and service-oriented behaviour. This cycle, as I am about to explore, is only possible in association with the influence of the Holy Ghost, which is activated not only in circumstances of initial conversion but also in the context of maintenance of divine love in one's heart. In fact, it is now my goal to explore how Mormon theology suggests that love can be retained in one's life given our 'natural' tendency to lose it in the process of self-driven objects and pursuits. The short answer is again found in the Atonement.

Love and the Atonement

In the LDS theological framework, as in other Christian expressions, the greatest example of love is undoubtedly Christ's sacrifice for humankind. In fact, the Atonement stands at the apex of all existing and even of all potential loving manifestations given its defining characteristics of empathic sorrow, sacrifice of one's life, and self-limitation of divine power, a combination of attributes the BoM identifies as *condescension*.³⁷ At the same time, since its specific context is unmatched and unique it does not function as an exact model that humans can or need to experience in their lives. Yet, the love as a principle which the Atonement manifests functions as the ideal example of what human beings who claim to walk in Jesus' footsteps attempt to emulate. Indeed, when speaking and teaching about the Atonement Mormons do not neglect to stress that the event was motivated, endured, and completed only because of Christ's love. Thus, the true disciples of a Christ-centred Mormonism also follow Jesus in similarly conducting a life of love to the degree that is humanly possible.

At the same time the Atonement is much more than a model for love; it is indeed its ultimate source. As the process/event which allows the Spirit to influence and to change individuals the Atonement is the real source of all the divine love which flows in the direction of humanity. In fact, *love* is probably the one word which is most

³⁷ 1 Ne. 11:16,26; 2 Ne. 4:26; 9:53.

closely associated with the presence of the Holy Ghost in Mormon scripture. For example, Mormon writes about the “visitation of the Holy Ghost, which Comforter filleth with hope and perfect love” and Alma adds that being “led by the Holy Spirit” a person becomes “humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering.”³⁸ In short, whether seen as the actual source of love or as the vehicle of the same (as when spoken of in terms synonymous with Spirit) Jesus’ love for the whole of humanity becomes individualized and personalized in the experience of the Holy Ghost.

Still, as previously mentioned, full spiritual manifestations of divine love are generally contingent on the individual’s prior expression of some love towards his maker. In this context Mormon underlines the fact that one should “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son.” Then, in a poignant sentence which quickly moves from a very demanding to a more merciful and inclusive tone the D&C adds that all the gifts of the Spirit “are given for the benefit of those who love me and keep all my commandments, and him that seeketh so to do”.³⁹ In another section God stresses that He “bestows” the power of the Holy Spirit “on those who love him, and purify themselves before him” since “sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” is only available for “those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength.”⁴⁰ Indeed, growing in the capacity to experience and to express love, namely to internalize, and embody it as a permanent attribute of one’s character, lies at the very heart of the LDS understanding of sanctification.

Therefore, Mormon texts often stress the need for sanctification in terms of maintenance and intensification of divine love in one’s heart. For example, Alma describes the effects of being “led by the Holy Spirit” in the well-known threefold theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, which involve “having the love of God always in your heart”. In an earlier passage he again brings the reader’s attention to this need for continuity as he pointedly asks “if ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?”⁴¹ King Benjamin similarly places the accent on permanence when explaining that through humility and prayer “ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of

³⁸ Moro. 8:26; Alma 13:28.

³⁹ Moro. 7:48; D&C 46:9.

⁴⁰ D&C 76:116; 20:31.

⁴¹ Alma 13:29; 5:26; 1 Cor. 13.

God, and always retain a remission of your sins”. Significantly, in this verse are found all the most noteworthy effects of the presence of the Spirit which are described as joy, love, forgiveness of sins, and in its unquoted conclusion, growth in knowledge.⁴²

Then, as already seen in the context of joy, it is apparent that Mormon scriptures do not distinguish between divine or human kinds of love. Whenever individuals experience real love for each other the ultimate source of this emotion is attributed to the Spirit, i.e. to the divine. This is particularly the case for human adults who, according to King Benjamin, live by default in a fallen condition characterized by the self-centred carnal pursuits of the ‘natural man’, which may be overcome only by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. Yet, King Benjamin also implies that some of the effects of the fall are not immediately apparent at birth since children are described in terms which highlight their desirable characteristics. In fact, “putting off the natural man” signifies for him, among other things, becoming “as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love”.⁴³ Hence, Benjamin suggests that humans at birth possess an inherent capacity for love, however embryonic and innocent, but that the subsequent acquisition of knowledge and the associated temptations of Satan can make real love in a sense unnatural. In the most extreme cases of rebellion this loss can even culminate in a complete inability to love.⁴⁴

Therefore, humans naturally struggle to preserve deep love as their permanent attribute just as they find it difficult to make the influence of the Holy Spirit their constant intensive reality. Still, Mormon scriptures affirm that it is possible to retain such love and several prophets outline the key spiritual ingredient which actualizes this objective. As already mentioned, King Benjamin highlights humble prayer as central to this process and Mormon echoes him in stating that “love endureth by diligence unto prayer”. Jacob puts it in more cognitive terms as he also underlines the need for prayers of faith in his words to the “pure in heart” among his people,

Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause...O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever.⁴⁵

In this context, however “firmness of mind” is interpreted, no exegesis can neglect some reference to firmness of faith in God’s promises and in His love, as manifested by

⁴² Mosiah 4:12.

⁴³ Mosiah 3:19.

⁴⁴ See Moses 7:33; Moro. 9:5.

⁴⁵ Jacob 3:1-2.

the expression of heart-felt prayers addressed to Him. To confirm this reading Jacob also associates firmness with truth, namely God's truth, when he states that the righteous "love the truth and are not shaken."⁴⁶

In whole, the enabling role of the Atonement is such that the exchange of love between the human and the divine, while unequal, is fully efficacious and sanctifying for the individual. At the same time, the other side of the coin paints a picture of rejection of the Atonement associated with the refrain of divine love and with the experience of loneliness and sorrow. The D&C is particularly stern in its admonition as demonstrated by the following passages, which appear in the introductory revelation and in its appendix. First, God affirms that "the rebellious shall be pierced with much sorrow" and later He confirms this promise by stating, "And this shall ye have of my hand – ye shall lie down in sorrow."⁴⁷ A more immediate and specific prophecy of doom is reserved for the early American persecutors of Mormonism and murderers of his Prophet. Thus, as Brigham Young is leading the Saints to their new promised land God promises that "now cometh the day of their calamity, even the days of sorrow, like a woman that is taken in travail; and their sorrow shall be great unless they speedily repent, yea, very speedily."⁴⁸ The BoM adds other forebodings, and in this context it is important to note the adjective *their* as the indicator of responsibility in statements such as the following, "I will visit thy brethren according as I have said; and their transgressions will I bring down with sorrow upon their own heads."⁴⁹

What now remains to be examined is the relationship between love and the *assessing* emotions of joy and sorrow. As already suggested in the previous chapter the Mormon theological picture involves more than a simple explanation which claims that love is necessarily accompanied by joy and that no love (or hate) invariably leads to sorrow. Although these connections are both firm and frequent in LDS scriptures, both in their present and in their eschatological contexts, it is also possible to identify circumstances in the Mormon canon where a particular kind of sorrow, intense sorrow, accompanies love in both its divine and human manifestations. This type of sorrow is associated with the righteousness rather than with the disobedience of its experiencer although it is also connected with the rebellion of some external agent to whom the

⁴⁶ 2 Ne. 9:40.

⁴⁷ D&C 1:3; 133:70.

⁴⁸ D&C 136:35.

⁴⁹ Enos 1:10.

suffering individual is bound by a feeling of love. Hence, this is what I have called *empathic sorrow*.

In both present and previous chapters I have highlighted the fact that *empathic sorrow* stands at the foundation of the Mormon understanding of Christ's Atonement and consequently of all conceptualizations of ideal or perfect love. Furthermore, as I am about to outline, such a connection is not presented within the LDS canon as an exceptional phenomenon which is only relevant and necessary in the context of the Atonement; instead, it is an eternal principle from which neither God nor the human individual aspiring to love is able to escape. To be sure, one of the ways in which the Atonement is indeed unique lies in its capacity to transform such *empathic sorrow* into salvific *substitutory sorrow*. In fact, although humans, and specifically Mormons, can act as substitutes for the deceased in the physical performance of salvific ordinances like baptism they cannot extend their proxy endeavours to such realms as repentance. Still, *empathic sorrow* per se lies within the capacity of all those individuals, whether human or divine, whose great love is manifested in an existential context which is firmly rooted in the principle of agency. Therefore, if such sorrow is a necessary by-product of divine love, those who desire to follow Christ need to accept rather than reject this painful experience when it occurs.

Some examples from the Mormon canon will clarify this point beginning with Alma's account of his labours among the people of Ammonihah. In witnessing the wickedness of this people Alma suffers greatly and departs in much sorrow,

While [Alma] was journeying thither, being weighed down with sorrow, wading through much tribulation and anguish of soul, because of the wickedness of the people who were in the city of Ammonihah, it came to pass while Alma was thus weighed down with sorrow, behold an angel of the Lord appeared unto him saying: Blessed art thou, Alma; therefore, lift up thy head and rejoice for thou hast great cause to rejoice; for thou hast been faithful in keeping the commandments of God.⁵⁰

The irony of this passage captures like few others the LDS view on the suffering that often accompanies love. Just as the angel gives comfort to the anguished Alma he also commands him to return to the source of his sufferings because through Alma's preaching and through his work some unbelieving individuals may repent and turn to God. True, Alma has been spiritually strengthened through this vision and is now able to return to his spiritual work with a renewed conviction of God's love and support. Still, the suffering can only be removed through the repentance of the people of

⁵⁰ Alma 8:14-15.

Ammonihah, on whom he has no direct control and for whom he is likely to feel great love and concern. Perhaps, like his friends Ammon, Aaron, Himni, and Omner, he also “could not bear that any human soul should perish” the very thought causing him to “quake and tremble” when empathizing with them when anticipating their future sufferings.⁵¹

In this context it must be recognized that LDS canonical texts are seldom explicit in relation to the source of the sorrow which a prophet experiences. Therefore, especially in cases where great wickedness is manifested, it is usually unclear whether empathic sorrow emerges primarily from love of truth, of God, or of humanity. In fact, it may even be supposed that sorrow could emerge from love of self given the personal loss and persecutions that the righteous often experience in such negative spiritual environments. Yet, in the first place, since Mormon scriptures repeatedly stress the inherent unity and even equivalence between godly and neighbourly sorrow the exact source of the sorrow is not as important as the textual recognition of a righteous motivation, which is necessarily loving. Furthermore, the presence of self-love does not appear as inherently incompatible with empathic sorrow when such love exists in a context of obedience and righteousness. Indeed, in some instances, it is precisely the focus on this love for self, with the accompanying joy that one’s positive standing before God entails, which helps the individual to cope with the empathic sorrow that emerges from witnessing wickedness. Of this Mormon is an example when he laments “My heart has been filled with sorrow because of their wickedness all my days.” However, he also adds, “nevertheless, I know that I shall be lifted up at the last day.”⁵²

Therefore, the presence or absence of empathic sorrow, among other things, is indicative of one’s spiritual connectedness with God and of the associated ability to love and to assist others. In fact, King Benjamin warns his people about the necessary connection between loving God and lifting the burdens of others. This he does by making use of a rhetorical role reversal which highlights the parallelisms between the believers’ relationship to God and their interaction with fellow humans in need,

Ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish. Perhaps thou shalt say: The man has brought upon himself his misery...for his punishments are just...O man, whosoever does this the same hath great cause to repent...For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have...of every kind?⁵³

⁵¹ Mosiah 28:3.

⁵² Morm. 2:19.

⁵³ Mosiah 4:16-19.

Thus, empathic sorrow, which is constitutive of charity, will lead individuals to action and to sacrifices. In another context Nephi puts it in these terms, “wherefore, if they should have charity they would not suffer the laborer in Zion to perish.”⁵⁴ In short, acts of service and love usually begin with the ability to feel another’s sorrow in the dire circumstances which make them suffer, whether in the present, or as in Alma’s and in the sons of Mosiah’s case, in the eschatological future.

Parenthetically, empathic sorrow is at times described in terms of *anxiety*, as Alma writes in one of his exhortations: “My brethren, I wish from the inmost part of my heart, yea, with great anxiety even unto pain, that ye would...cast off your sins.”⁵⁵ At the opposite end, instead, one finds indifference, lack of concern, or even rejoicing in the suffering of others. Nephi’s account of his brothers’ joy in witnessing his suffering is in this sense indicative. Upon their refusal to assist him in the building of the ship Nephi states that “I, Nephi, was exceedingly sorrowful because of the hardness of their hearts; and now when they saw that I began to be sorrowful they were glad in their hearts, insomuch that they did rejoice over me.”⁵⁶ Thus, this is a clear example of joy, or more properly pleasure, which is connected to wickedness, jealousy, and rebellion. On the other hand, as seen in various instances within the BoM narrative, Nephi’s love for God, truth, and family is accompanied by feelings of sorrow. True, Nephi was “highly favored of the Lord”, but he himself cannot help but recognize that the path of discipleship often involves “many afflictions”.⁵⁷

Undoubtedly, both LDS scriptures and the biblical record emphasize God’s promise that the faithful will rest from all their afflictions and pains in the glorious eschaton which will follow this mortal experience. Yet, Mormon theology provides indications that, at least in its potentiality, empathic sorrow will not be annihilated. The case of the three Nephite disciples, who desire to remain on the earth until Christ’s second coming, is in this respect highly illustrative. When Jesus promises these three Nephites that they will not experience death or physical pain while continuing to live in the world until His return He makes the following exception, “save it be for the sins of the world.” Mormon further explains in the same chapter that to fulfil this promise

⁵⁴ 2 Ne. 26:30.

⁵⁵ Alma 13:27.

⁵⁶ 1 Ne 17:19.

⁵⁷ 1 Ne. 1:1. Other scriptural references of human empathic sorrow in the face of wickedness can be found in 2 Ne. 2:1; 26:7; Alma 19:28; 31:2; 35:15; Hel. 7:6-9,14; 3 Ne. 1:10,29; Morm. 5:9,11; 6:20.

“there was a change wrought upon their bodies, that they might not suffer pain nor sorrow save it were for the sins of the world.”⁵⁸ Why was this kind of sorrow irremovable, even by the omnipotent God? Because in the Mormon theological framework ‘sorrow’ as a consequence of external agents’ negative choices coexist with and indeed are necessary to a character rooted in altruistic love. Thus, a removal of the potential for sorrow over the sin of others would ultimately remove the very foundation of these Nephites’ righteousness, namely love.

In fact, as would be expected of a theology that highlights the *imago Dei* and the *eternal* nature of *principles*, God is not immune from such empathic sorrow. Indeed, in a distinct Mormon departure from the classical Christian doctrine of Deity the God of LDS scriptures is a ‘suffering’ God far beyond the earthly context of the Incarnation. Specifically, in the Enochic pages of the book of Moses and at a time of great wickedness upon the earth, “the God of heaven looked upon the residue of the people, and he wept.” The account continues as it tells of the surprise the prophet Enoch experienced in witnessing the weeping of the great God. Through words describing Enoch’s knowledge of the majesty, perfection and grandeur of God, the prophet enquires with puzzlement about the unexpected revelation of God’s suffering, which he evidently had believed inconsistent with God’s perfect nature. The divine response focuses on suffering as a response to the wickedness of His children, showing poignant and intense emotions underlying the price paid when love, indeed the most perfect love, is present. It is a love that desires the most for the beloved and which is willing to accept the risks inherent in the exercise of agency and in the corollary omnipresent possibility that bad or undesirable choices will thus be actualised.⁵⁹

Therefore, if attempting to describe the perfect emotional make-up of the God that they worship Mormons would fully agree with the following statement by a modern theologian, “There is no love without openness to rejection, suffering, and loss. To believe in the triune God is to believe in a God who shares our suffering, a suffering that is not a sign of impotence but of strength and that leads to final victory.”⁶⁰ This is the kind of love that Mormons aspire to and which underlies one of the core messages of LDS scriptures, namely that the experience of divine love is contingent on the personal embrace of the gift of Atonement and on the associated willingness to nurture

⁵⁸ 3 Ne 28:9, 38

⁵⁹ Moses 7:28-40. Quotation from verse 28. The BoM also describes the resurrected Christ weeping, although in an emotional context of joy rather than of empathic sorrow (See 3 Ne. 17:19-22).

⁶⁰ Pinnock and Paulsen (2007), 507.

love and to purify it in free emotional exchanges with both heaven and earth. It is further a love which involves both great joy and possibly empathic sorrow, but nothing of the bitter remorseful sorrow which is a prerogative of those who love what they should not love and hate what they should not hate.

Hate: the Negative Relating Experience

At least three terms appear in Mormon scripture which I consider to be close if not exact synonyms of *hate*, namely the noun *hatred* and the verbs *to despise* and *to abhor*. These four words are present in at least 68 verses of the LDS canonical texts. Moreover, several other nouns and adjectives describe emotional manifestations which are consciously or unconsciously triggered by some underlying condition of hatred in its various degrees of intensity. For example, the aggression intrinsic to *anger* is often associated with the hatred experienced towards particular individuals or groups; thus, anger and hatred may appear as two sides of the same emotional coin. In this context anger functions as a physiological and behavioural manifestation of hate (probably its most typical manifestation, at least within our culture) whereas hate has reference to the internal cognitive/affective experience of the subject which is not as accessible to external observers.

However, notwithstanding such close relationship, treating hate as a necessary precondition for the emergence of anger is questionable at best. In fact, mere frustration of personal preferences in consequence of either impersonal dynamics or of social forces outside one's control often give rise to the irritation that culminates in an angry emotional condition. In many of these instances and even after careful introspection it can be difficult to pinpoint a human source or a clear object of one's anger, also because anger has the capacity to acquire the generalized and enduring attributes which are typical of a mood. Instead, in conditions which are not pathological, people know what they hate and in most instances they also know the reason for such hate. Furthermore, while it is possible to speak of a hateful personality it is more difficult to conceptualize a hateful mood. Therefore, these differences cast some doubt on the idea of a strict causal relationship between hate and anger, especially if such causal associations are drawn as necessary trajectories beginning with focused hate and culminating in generalized anger.

Yet, there is no question that in many instances anger does function as a manifestation of pre-existing hate as confirmed by even a cursory exploration of LDS

canonical texts. Therefore, deciding whether to include or to exclude anger from the present exploration has been a difficult choice. Ultimately I have opted to exclude it, both in light of the potential presence of anger when hate is absent and perhaps more significantly because anger is an emotion which deserves greater analysis than the limited space presently allows. In fact, if one adds to the noun *anger* and to its adjective form *angry* the closely synonymous words *fury*, *indignation*, *rage*, and *wrath*, the combined sum of the canonical verses where at least one of these terms is present is no less than 260. Therefore, judging by the mere number of its ‘textual appearances’, it is evident that the subject, which should be subdivided into divine and human manifestations of anger, is of some importance for the Mormon canon. Still, our attention will now focus exclusively on the emotion of hate.

Cognitive Necessity

Whenever LDS scriptures describe particular instances of *hate* they also identify both the reason at the root of the emotion and the specific object towards which hatred is directed. In fact, I was unable to identify a single instance where the motivation for human hate is absent or where the object of one’s hatred is particularly unclear. The impetus generally emerges from dynamics of human relationships which include motivations as varied as being “slow of speech” or claiming to have “seen a vision”, in the case of hated individuals, or being “poor”, having been “robbed” or “wronged”, having “despised the Holy One of Israel”, or having “many miracles” in one’s community in the case of particular groups.⁶¹ To be sure, the motivation claimed by the hater does not always match the one advanced by the hated. In fact, the Lamanites justify their well-documented hatred towards the Nephites in terms of the supposed robbing and usurpation of legitimate power suffered at their hand. On the other hand, it is clear that the Nephites do not accept such accounts as accurate historical descriptions since they choose to label these motivations as “incorrect traditions” or “iniquities of their fathers.”⁶²

Indeed, such differences in perception of reality firmly root hatred to the realm of cognition, as observed with all other emotions examined so far. Furthermore, hatred’s cognitive necessity is underlined by the fact that direct personal experience of a triggering ‘wrong’ is unnecessary, since in many instances the Lamanites hated the

⁶¹ See Moses 6:31; JS-H 1:25; Alma 32:5; 20:13; 3 Ne. 3:4; 1 Ne. 1:14; 22:5; 4 Ne. 1:29.

⁶² Compare Mosiah 10:12-13 and Alma 54:17 with Mosiah 1:5 and Jacob 3:7.

Nephites simply because they had been taught to do so, even in the absence of direct interaction with them. This is probably one of the reasons why the Nephites describe the Lamanites' hatred as "extreme", "fixed", and "eternal".⁶³ Mormon indirectly refers to it as a disease since he describes the sons of Mosiah who are about to embark on a Lamanite mission as hoping "that perhaps they might cure them (the Lamanites) of their hatred towards the Nephites".⁶⁴ In short, the Lamanites' hatred was so difficult to extirpate because it was grounded in a particular perceptive structure of reality which was passed on from generation to generation as a cognitive fixation.

In this light it logically follows that any reduction or elimination of hatred would necessarily include a cognitive restructuring of one's perception of the reality to which hate is reacting. In fact, those BoM accounts which describe the conversion of the Lamanites do not fail to emphasize that repentance is at least partially constituted by the acquisition of correct knowledge, which the humbled individual is now willing to welcome in replacement of the falsehoods previously held to be true. This cognitive emphasis is particularly evident in Helaman's brief account of Nephi and Lehi's preaching among the Lamanites,

"And...they did go forth...declaring throughout all the regions...all the things which they had heard and seen, insomuch that the more part of the Lamanites were convinced of them...and as many as were convinced did lay down their weapons of war, and also their hatred and the tradition of their fathers."⁶⁵

To be sure, in most instances of Lamanite conversion the focus of the preached message does not appear to centre on the nature of ancestral traditions. Instead, it is the acquisition of a global theistic worldview with all its accompanying effects over perception which leads the Lamanite converts to be "convinced" that the traditions at the root of their hatred should be abandoned.

It then becomes significant to explore whether hatred can ever be justified in those circumstances where it emerges in response to evil that was actually suffered. To address this question one should examine what LDS scriptural texts outline about the 'hate' references which pertain to the model of perfect emotional experience, i.e. to God. I was able to identify only one instance, a quotation of Samuel the Lamanite, where the divine is described as hating a particular individual or group. In reference to an earlier history and at a time where the Lamanites are depicted as more righteous than

⁶³ Alma 43:11; Enos 1:20; Jacob 7:24.

⁶⁴ Mosiah 28:2.

⁶⁵ Hel. 5:50-51.

the Nephites the prophet declares that “the Lamanites hath he hated because their deeds have been evil continually”.⁶⁶ In other words, Samuel claims that God’s hatred towards his people was justified because responsive to a true state of affairs which involved the Lamanites’ repeated rebellions.

Yet, the many scriptural passages claiming to be quotation of God’s own words make no direct reference to God’s experienced hatred (the picture would be quite different if we were to examine anger). At most, God appears to be involved in some measure at the causative level of human hatred when Jesus claims “I have caused my people...to become hated by them” in reference to the future state of the descendants of the Lamanites who would be conquered and killed by the Gentiles. Still, the exact nature of such intervention remains unclear since other passages claim that the Lord will not “suffer that the Gentiles shall destroy the seed of thy brethren.”⁶⁷ In other words, at least in the specific context of hate aimed at particular individuals or groups, Mormon canonical texts are inconclusive on the question of divine hatred. In all likelihood the commonly held conceptualization of hate as an enduring and intense emotion which centres in the rejection of individuals makes it incompatible with the perfect personality of a loving Father in Heaven. Anger, on the other hand, seems to be more directly related to an individual’s behaviour rather than to his personal nature; therefore, anger can more easily be appeased through corrective actions. Hence, anger is a better fit for a patient but tutoring God whose fundamental nature is love, the very opposite of hatred.

In any case, what the canon makes explicit is that God does not directly encourage or fully justify human hatred towards another individual or group. In fact, in echoing the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses His believers on the American continent in these words,

And behold it is written also, that thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; But behold I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good.⁶⁸

Then, Jesus seems to affirm that although the perception which gives rise to a retaliatory hate is empirically correct, hatred should still be avoided. Such perception should be enlarged beyond the immediate causes of pain and offense to include a view

⁶⁶ Hel. 15:4.

⁶⁷ 3 Ne. 16:9; 1 Ne. 13:31.

⁶⁸ 3 Ne. 12:43-45.

of the offending individual as a member of God’s family who is also cared for by a loving Heavenly Father. One need not deny that evil has occurred or that the other is acting as an enemy, but as I am about to examine, this is no justifiable reason for a hateful response by the true follower of Christ.

Personal Responsibility

Although references to active divine commands to love are more common than God’s directives to avoid hate LDS scriptures provide evidence for both. Interestingly, when God commands humans not to hate He either identifies a very specific human object or He describes a more general and impersonal focus. In the first case, by the instrumentality of His Prophet, the divine voice warns that “no man (should) despise my servant Oliver Granger” or, in a later setting, “my servant George (Miller)”.⁶⁹ On the other hand, the most common nonhuman object is God’s own word or His revelation. Moroni puts it succinctly in these terms, “O then, despise not, and wonder not, but hearken unto the words of the Lord.”⁷⁰ More frequent than these direct commands to avoid hate are several references where God infers condemnation for individuals who have manifested hate. For example, Jacob specifically singles out the rich as he warns “wo unto the rich...for because they are rich they despise the poor” whereas in a later passage he speaks of the Jews in a condemning tone when he claims that “they despised the words of plainness”. Other texts clearly associate hatred to wickedness, both when hate is directed at other individuals and when it is reserved for God’s message and His commandments.⁷¹

Therefore, God holds individuals accountable for their hatred. Then, especially when He finds Himself to be the object of this hatred, His response involves in the least the abandonment of these beings to the natural consequences of their wicked actions.

The D&C puts it straightforwardly in these terms:

And the iniquity and transgression of my holy laws and commandments I will visit upon the heads of those who hindered my work, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord...And I will answer judgment...so long as they repent not, and hate me.⁷²

However one interprets the prolongation of condemnation to the third and fourth generation it is clear that this expression is no isolated rhetorical hyperbole. In fact, the

⁶⁹ D&C 117:15;124:21.

⁷⁰ Morm. 9:27;Jacob 4:8.

⁷¹ 2 Ne. 9:30; Jacob 4:14. Also see Alma 4:12;46:18;Moro. 1:2;D&C 3:7;Moses 7:33.

⁷² D&C 124:50,52. Also see 2 Ne. 15:24.

warning appears in several other texts as it clearly pinpoints God's displeasure for not receiving any love from the spiritual children He has created and blessed.⁷³ As highlighted earlier, His response also involves sadness and suffering, particularly when He is portrayed to be contemplating those humans whose wickedness is so great that they are "without affection, and they hate their own blood."⁷⁴

Furthermore, in those instances where hatred could be seen as understandable because emerging in response to the pre-existing hatred of the other individual or group, God still warns people that the human judgments which trigger hatred are limited at best and misguided at worst. Thus, as already mentioned, Jacob chastises his people as he tells them that the hated Lamanites "are more righteous than you". Similarly, Moroni calls his government to repentance in asking "can you suppose that the Lord will spare you and come out in judgment against the Lamanites when it is the tradition of their fathers that has caused their hatred?"⁷⁵ In a separate context, and at the end of an account characterized by divine condemnation of the Jews of Jerusalem, both from Lehi's time and from a time yet future, Nephi quotes the divine word directed at the Gentiles with the following admonition: "O ye Gentiles, have ye remembered the Jews, mine ancient covenant people? Nay; but ye have cursed them and have hated them." The larger context clearly shows that such hatred is not pleasing to God so much that He adds the foreboding promise, "Behold, I will return all these things upon your own heads".⁷⁶

In short, whatever condemnation God may utter and whatever curse or punishment may be seen to originate in His will is not a sufficient or justifiable reason to support hatred against the individual or group subjected to God's judgment. In fact, divine judgment is usually not permanent since both Jews and Lamanites, who in various parts of the BoM are explicitly condemned by God, ultimately find favour and mercy before His eyes. Therefore, the finality and intensity typical of hatred, which implies a definite judgment of a group or individual, is incompatible with our limited knowledge and with other characteristics which make our discernments imperfect in the least. Perhaps this picture is somewhat different in the case of temporary anger, but when it comes to hatred, Jesus' higher standard of love for one's enemy should at least begin with an avoidance of hatred towards the one who has caused us evil. Indeed,

⁷³ Other references are found in D&C 98:46;103:26;105:30; Mosiah 13:13.

⁷⁴ Moses 7:33.

⁷⁵ Jacob 3:5; Alma 60:32.

⁷⁶ 2 Ne. 29:5.

Mormon theology highlights that it is always wicked parents who teach their children to hate.⁷⁷

Yet, there are some objects which God's followers should hate and some realities which good parents should teach their children to hate. These are not individual human beings but impersonal objects, which nevertheless exert influence over our lives, particularly when, although avoidable, they are allowed to exist or when they are actively pursued. Specifically, Alma counsels his son Heleman to teach the people "an everlasting hatred against sin and iniquity". Similarly, Jacob describes the righteous as those who have despised the shame of the world and the D&C calls the repentant to symbolically "come forth out of the fire, hating even the garments spotted with the flesh" of those who have rebelled against the Lord.⁷⁸ Clearly, since such wickedness is always perpetrated by individuals distinguishing between the sins that should be hated and the sinners who should be loved is not a necessarily simple endeavour. Still, it is a message of the LDS canonical texts that, with God's help, the full avoidance of the hate directed at individuals is fully compatible with the hatred of that which is false, corrupt, and sinful. Therefore, humans are ultimately responsible for when and how the emotion of hatred is manifested within their hearts.

Developmental Instrumentality

Since hatred towards other individuals is regularly condemned by LDS scriptures it is expectedly difficult to identify any statement which points at its developmental instrumentality. On the contrary, hate blocks progress, locks the mind in cycles of revengeful rumination, and motivates acts of destruction which cause irreversible damage. In fact, when stating that "the Lamanites began...to exercise their hatred upon them" Mormon underlines this connection between emotion and murderous behaviour.⁷⁹ Moreover, it is not only the lasting damage on those who stand at its receiving end that makes hatred an instrument of regression but it is also the burden which it represents for the one who experiences it in the first place. In fact, when reflecting upon the fruits of his missionary labours, Ammon declares: "For if we had not come up out of Zarahemla, these our dearly beloved brethren, who have so dearly beloved us, would still have been racked with hatred against us, yea, and they

⁷⁷ Mosiah 10:17; 4 Ne. 1:39.

⁷⁸ Alma 37:29,32; 2 Ne. 9:18; D&C 36:6.

⁷⁹ Mosiah 11:17.

would also have been strangers to God.” Therefore, hate ‘racks’ the individual since it is “sore” to the soul, i.e. it deepens the spiritual isolation and the misery of its subject.⁸⁰

At the same time, Mormon scriptures recognize that human hatred may fulfil a function which, in some of its aspects, can be considered positive. For example, the BoM indicates that those who share an object of hate often enjoy great unity in their single objective. In describing one of the many unbelieving communities in its pages it pinpoints that “notwithstanding they were not a righteous people, yet they were united in the hatred of those who had entered into a covenant to destroy the government.”⁸¹ Yet, although it may occasionally perform a politically positive function, the whole canonical text conveys a message of incompatibility between spiritual development and human hatred. Of course, the picture is quite different if we shift our focus from human objects to the appropriate objects of hatred which God has commanded humans to despise, namely sin and iniquity. Furthermore, it is also possible to identify some positive spiritual developmental aspects when considering textual evidence about the way in which received hatred can be transformed into a source of sanctification.

In the first place, hatred of sin can intensely motivate individuals to act in obedience to divine truth and to perform great sacrifices for the sake of righteousness. The most visible example of this kind involves the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi many of whom, as Ammon describes, “have laid down their lives; and we know that they have gone to their God, because of their love and of their hatred to sin.”⁸² Furthermore, the sorrow which ensues from being the receptor of hatred can function as a humbling catalyst, which nudges the individual to turn to God in repentance. In speaking to the poor Zoramites Alma makes this point very clearly,

It is well that ye are cast out of your synagogues, that ye may be humble, and that ye may learn wisdom...for it is because that ye are cast out, that ye are despised of your brethren because of your exceeding poverty, that ye are brought to a lowliness of heart; for ye are necessarily brought to be humble. And now, because ye are compelled to be humble blessed are ye; for a man sometimes, if he is compelled to be humble, seeketh repentance; and now surely, whosoever repenteth shall find mercy.⁸³

Therefore, although the perpetrator is by no means justified in his actions, being the receptor of hatred may at times facilitate the process of repentance and sanctification through the condition of humility which is likely to ensue.

⁸⁰ Alma 26:9;24:2.

⁸¹ 3 Ne. 7:11.

⁸² Alma 26:34.

⁸³ Alma 32:12-13.

Moreover, scriptures often highlight the fact that the love of God exists in contraposition to the hate of the world. To obey God's commandments and to follow in His path of discipleship does not guarantee popularity; in fact, it often involves the exact opposite. Thus, in a letter to the Church Joseph Smith laments, "For if I, who am a man, do lift up my voice and call upon you to repent, and ye hate me, what will ye say when the day cometh when the thunders shall utter their voices?" Jacob similarly describes his people as "a lonesome and a solemn people, wanderers, cast out from Jerusalem...and hated of our brethren".⁸⁴ Therefore, although not to be sought because inherently painful, persecution driven by hatred often follows the individual who chooses God over Satan. Indeed, the Lord says "I call upon the weak things of the world, those who are unlearned and despised, to thrash the nations by the power of my Spirit."⁸⁵ In these contexts the faithful will not be excessively surprised by the opposition and will humbly seek divine assistance to overcome it. Then, as assistance is received, such occasions will function as further strengthening testimonies of one's faith in a loving God, as witnessed by Zenos in the midst of his prayer: "Yea, and thou hast also heard me when I have been cast out and have been despised by mine enemies; yea, thou didst hear my cries".⁸⁶

Therefore, just as it may motivate individuals to either good or evil, depending on its object, hatred may also teach something to individuals, whether about themselves or about others. On the one hand, the person who consistently manifests hatred towards another is not driven by the Holy Spirit and is therefore in great need of repentance. To be sure, in light of previous warnings, such recognitions cannot justify retaliatory acts of hatred and can only be accepted as preliminary imperfect judgments which have no eternal finality. On the other hand, hatred by itself does not warrant an evaluation of the person who receives it, and it does not teach by necessity that the one who is its object should modify his behaviour in order to appease such 'hatred'. In fact, the evaluation should be focused on the reason for such opposition and at most, the character of the individual may be assessed for how he chooses to respond. Still, in some cases, hate may indeed teach both hater and hated that something is in need of change: to the former, the intensity of one's personal opposition, and possibly to the latter, one's immoral behaviour, which lies at the root of the reactive emotion.

⁸⁴ D&C 43:21; Jacob 7:26.

⁸⁵ D&C 35:13.

⁸⁶ Alma 33:10.

In this context a final and much needed consideration remains to be explored. In light of the previously mentioned principle of ‘opposition’, which is so basic to Mormon theology, one of the teachings of Jesus, also repeated in the BoM, acquires particular significance, “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other”.⁸⁷ What is of interest in this passage is that love and hatred, while focused on quite separate objects, are shown to be coexisting. In similar fashion, a previous reference on the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi mentioned both their love for God and their hatred of sin as a necessary pair. In other words, love and hatred appear as two sides of the same cognitive/affective manifestation in which the presence of the one seems to require the presence of its necessary opposite.⁸⁸ In fact, the very foundation of morality is built on such necessary and recognized dichotomy. Thus, Jesus states that if one truly loves God he must hate that which is its opposite, namely Satan. Therefore, the strength of one’s positive emotion is measurable also in terms of its negative counterpart. Should hate for Satan and evil be lukewarm or not very intense then, correspondingly, the individual’s love or devotion to the divine cannot have reached its highest peak.

What this affirmation of emotional opposition should imply for a Mormon theology of hatred in its various historical, sociological, and psychological extensions I can only begin to allude at this point. Indeed, it seems that every ideology and philosophy which has succeeded in motivating people and in making a difference in their lives has needed to identify some appropriate focus of hatred in order to avoid the indifference of its adepts. In the case of Mormonism, and indeed of most other religions, sin, iniquity, and various impersonal negative forces generally fill this realm. Other secular or political ethical systems have identified different kinds of impersonal forces, such as particular ideologies or specific values, as the evils which should be hated (slavery, Nazism, Communism, etc.). In both realms, whether secular or religious, moral systems have at times explicitly personalized their objects of hatred and in so doing have unfortunately justified crimes like murders and persecutions. Indeed, perhaps the greatest challenge of our world is to demarcate morality and freedom in such ways as to allow them to coexist.

⁸⁷ 3 Ne. 13:24.

⁸⁸ In this context a recent medical study on the shared neural pathways of love and hate is certainly of interest. See Zeki and Romaya (2008), e3556.

Finally, returning to Mormonism, one of the things which distinguishes the tradition theologically is its belief in a corporeal personal God who *embodies* all possible goodness more literally than other Christians believe. Then, this is perhaps one of the reasons why the personage of Satan continues to hold a place of significance in LDS theology at a time when most Christian theologies seem to make no mention of a spiritual devil which personifies evil. In other words, although he is not believed to be the ultimate necessary source of evil, but only evil's main facilitative instrument Lucifer is for Mormons a personage of spirit who embodies evil and hatred in clear 'opposition' to the good and the love which is embodied in the Heavenly Father. Indeed, although both good and evil may be depersonalized in the Mormon theological context of eternal principles the 'plan of salvation' as presently taught would not have meaning without Satan's hatred for God's children. Thus, if Christ's love for humanity as manifested in His Atonement defines the positive centre of the plan of progression correspondingly Satan's hatred delineates its negative core.

Hatred vs. the Atonement

As the archetype of the greatest act of self-sacrificing love the Atonement clearly stands at the antithesis of hatred. Indeed, if at all connected to hate, its effects are understood in terms which pertain to its elimination or reduction rather than to its inception or increase. Moreover, even when considering sin and wickedness as hatred's objects, Mormon scriptures do not directly associate the Atonement with the presence of such 'righteous' hate although the wider theological framework must certainly affirm the two to be compatible. In fact, if only indirectly, and in light of the previous discussion on 'opposites', by facilitating and intensifying the flow of divine love the Atonement contemporaneously channels an emotional rejection of what stands as contrary to that love, namely sin. Therefore, although a first impression would suggest that hate and the Atonement are completely unrelated, there is at least some less visible thread that connects what is usually considered to be the most unacceptable emotion and the ultimate expression of divine emotional perfection.

In this context the most explicit connection is perhaps found in the very nature of the act of Atonement. In other words, the sacrifice which constitutes Christ's offer of a perfect life is often conceptualized as involving His *reception* of human hatred. Thus, Jesus stands as the object of all hate, or, as stated in Abinadi's quotation of Isaiah, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with

grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”⁸⁹ While this description may extend to include a wider portion of Jesus’ life such hatred was particularly concentrated against Him at the time of *the Passion*. Then, human hatred played a significant and needed role in the process of Atonement because it first set in motion the arrest and trial which culminated in Jesus’ willing death on the cross and secondly it contributed to give His death its unique meaning, i.e. that it was a loving sacrifice in behalf of a hateful humanity.⁹⁰

Furthermore, the LDS theology of Atonement also frames Jesus’ experience in Gethsemane in the large context of divine sufferings which included the effects of human hatred. Indeed, although no visible human hatred ‘caused’ Gethsemane in the same way as it ‘caused’ the crucifixion, Jesus’ substitutionary absorption of the all encompassing suffering of humanity must have included the painful effects of human hatred alongside such things as sin, disease, and afflictions. In this manner Christ functioned as the object of all possible human hatred, whether in its past, present, or future manifestations, when He experienced its concentrated effects as part of His voluntary suffering in humanity’s behalf. In turn, as previously outlined, this experience of ultimate sorrow endowed Jesus with a fuller ability to empathize with the human family which then enabled Him to more effectively come to the rescue of those individuals who turn to Him for assistance. Among these are certainly some who suffer under the yoke of hatred, whether in the capacity of haters or as the objects of hate.

Therefore, in the various conversion experiences previously quoted, it is Jesus’ Atonement which ‘cures’ individuals of their existing hatred as the Holy Spirit fills them with the sanctifying ‘fruits’ of love and joy. Examples are numerous and it is sufficient to mention the people of Ammon (or Anti-Nephi-Lehi), Alma the Younger, the sons of Mosiah, Zeezrom. Furthermore, when subjected to hateful persecutions, others find comfort in the peace of the Spirit while also seeking to be delivered from their affliction. Examples include Nephi son of Lehi, the people of Limhi, the people of Alma, the righteous church members in the book of Helaman, Joseph Smith, and many others. In these instances, as already examined, the Atonement seems to function at both cognitive and affective levels of emotional experiences. Indeed, ‘sanctified’

⁸⁹ Mosiah 14:3.

⁹⁰ Within the penal-substitutionary view of Atonement, as also present in LDS theology, Jesus is the receptor of God’s wrath or of eternal justice for the sins of the whole world. Yet, since this particular conceptualization has more direct reference to anger than to hatred I do not find it to be of relevance in the present analysis.

individuals are described in terms which point both to their acquisition of an expanded and hopeful eternal perspective as well as to the strengthening of their affective state through feelings of peace, humility, and even joy.⁹¹

In these contexts the Atonement may enlighten the suffering person to discern between circumstances when it is appropriate to continually petition for deliverance from hateful individuals, when defensive violence is an acceptable means to obtain such deliverance, and when the humble disciple simply needs to endure with patience and long-suffering. In fact, the power of the Spirit works its main transformative effect in those contexts where a willing heart seeks to receive its influence in humility. In short, as previously highlighted, the Atonement generally functions in a context of respect for individual agency. This means that if the hater chooses to nourish his negative emotion and fully refuses to reject hatred for love, God will usually respect this act of agency while endeavouring to strengthen and support the suffering object of such hate until deliverance is possible. Clearly, in circumstances of murder such ‘internal’ support does not prevent the taking of a life, thus creating one of those instances in which the ‘problem of evil’ visibly rears its head, even for people of great faith.

A classic illustration of this pattern is found in the BoM narrative which depicts the believers’ martyrdom by fire before the eyes of Alma and Amulek. As the scene unfolds Amulek is overcome with empathic sorrow for the many women and children being killed. He then asks Alma: “How can we witness this awful scene? Therefore let us stretch forth our hands, and exercise the power of God which is in us, and save them from the flames.” Yet, Alma refuses to act and justifies his decision in these terms,

The Spirit constraineth me that I must not stretch forth mine hand; for behold the Lord receiveth them up unto himself, in glory; and he doth suffer that they may do this thing, or that the people may do this thing unto them, according to the hardness of their hearts, that the judgments which he shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just; and the blood of the innocent shall stand as a witness against them.⁹²

Thus, Alma knows by means of some implied revelation that God allows evil persecutors to perpetrate their hateful actions in order for their agency to be fully

⁹¹ For example, when Alma and his followers are in bondage of a newly formed coalition of Lamanites and Alma’s former priestly associates, persecutions become so unbearable that the believers repeatedly petition God for deliverance. However, God does not immediately deliver this people although “the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.” (Mosiah 24:15) Thus, although sorrow-causing hatred is not removed, an internal change is facilitated so much that the impact of the hateful circumstances is diminished.

⁹² Alma 14:10-11.

expressed. This conscious restructuring of the ‘meaning’ of suffering enables him to overcome his natural inclination to eliminate, resist, or impede hatred at all costs. Furthermore, it is significant to note that when the hate hits him more directly through physical pain and privations he abides by this same ‘revelation’.

In fact, throughout the rest of this BoM chapter Alma and Amulek become the main victims of persecution as they are subjected to beating, binding, starving, mocking, and spitting for a prolonged period of time. Then, only “after they had thus suffered for many days” Alma cries to God for power to be delivered from such hateful treatment and subsequently he and Amulek are able to break the chords that bind them and escape.⁹³ The text does not explain how Alma knows that the time to say ‘enough’ has arrived, or why that particular moment should be the appropriate time of deliverance. In any case, Alma’s faith is what emerges prominently from the account surpassing what may be viewed as his very natural and certainly acceptable desire to avoid suffering. Thus, Alma recognizes God’s will as the greatest good for which to strive whereas faithless individuals always retain the avoidance of suffering as the highest priority to be pursued at all costs, even sin.

There is certainly no specification within Mormon theology that, in its details, Alma’s experience should be considered normative, although the general principle of attendance and obedience to the spirit of revelation remains of significance. Indeed, LDS canonical texts do not allow a generalization in respect to a specific manner in which individuals are called to respond to hatred since accounts range from justified use of war or violent retaliation to pacifist, self-sacrificial responses, which may either be limited in time, as in Alma’s case, or which may culminate in the ultimate sacrifice of one’s life, as in the case of the people of Ammon. Still, one point is quite explicit, namely that if the Atonement is to assist in the difficult experience of being the receptor of hatred the individual must endeavour to prevent what may otherwise function as the worst possible spiritual damage, i.e. emotional contagion. In other words, LDS scriptures pinpoint that when viewed from an eternal perspective it is worse to hate than to receive hate, particularly when hatred endures, because human hatred closes the door to the presence of a Holy Spirit which conveys peace, joy, and love. Then, perhaps the greatest succour of the Atonement comes from its endowment of strength, perception, humility, and patience which prevents hatred from ever taking root in one’s soul.

⁹³ Alma 14:14-26.

In conclusion, in this chapter I have analysed a few passages from the LDS canon, whose content pertains to the *relating* emotions as represented by *love* and *hate*. By highlighting the explicit and implicit textual evidence for the cognitive necessity, personal responsibility, and developmental instrumentality associated with these terms I have aimed to provide support for an implied ‘folk model’ of emotion, which brings these canonical authors to echo modern scholars and scientists in affirming the three basic characteristics which define emotions. Furthermore, I have examined various interlinks and contingencies that associate the Mormon understanding of Atonement with both love and hatred and have highlighted the significance of such interactions within the wider theological framework of Mormonism. Thus, having completed my analysis of the textual evidences that relate to the three selected categories of emotion I now summarize my main conclusions and briefly explore some potential questions and foci of exploration which may facilitate the advance of this area of research at a future time.

CONCLUSION

Mormon Emotions: Knowledge, Character, Spirit

The first of the two primary objectives of this work has been to initiate a dialogue on *emotion*, if only by highlighting some points of correspondence, between a socio-scientific approach on the one hand and that of LDS theology on the other. To be sure, Mormon theology has all but monopolized the stage in the present context since no attempt has been made to ensure equal time for the exposition of socio-scientific perspectives. One of the reasons for such imbalance has been my desire to demonstrate at the outset of this dialogue that the conversation is both possible and worthwhile. Since in the present era the scientific perspective enjoys widespread acceptance while theology is increasingly viewed as an obscure field of discourse, which at best is meaningful to a selected few and at worse lacks legitimate epistemic value, this work has attempted to emphasize the common core that LDS theology and socio-scientific perspectives share on the subject of emotion. Therefore, having established some general foundations in the two fields, it is my hope that the conversation may be considered sufficiently promising to be carried forward in a variety of possible directions.

Indeed, some researchers, especially Mormon scholars, have already engaged the conversation at a more focused level of enquiry in all likelihood having assumed that enough commonalities exist to make these pursuits of some value. My approach has begun in the opposite direction but it ultimately confirms and attempts to articulate these very assumptions. Furthermore, it has been my goal to explicitly assert that conversations of this nature are possible in relation to most subjects of scientific enquiry, although at various levels of depth, since Mormon theology is inherently incomplete, developing, and unapologetic about its willingness to borrow truth from whatever its legitimate source. Therefore, inasmuch as a field's epistemology does not inherently clash with the epistemic framework of the LDS worldview the possibilities for exchanges of this kind are virtually limitless. Then, when the objectives and

methods of socio-scientific disciplines do not involve such necessary conflicts, Mormonism should and often has welcomed conversations and potential acquisitions of this nature.¹

In fact, and to return to the present endeavour, I have demonstrated that some of the core concepts which underlie socio-scientific perspectives on emotion also appear prominently within the theological ‘scaffolding’ of the LDS view of existence. This is certainly the case for such foundational ideas as *responsibility*, *development*, and perhaps, in a less explicit manner, for the *monistic unity* inferred by current cognitive/affective definitions of emotions. Indeed, one cannot fail to note that there are at least some affinities between the significant emphasis on the role of cognition in the socio-scientific study of emotion and what I have termed the *materialistic monism* of Mormonism which involves both normative and descriptive unities of body and spirit, or of mind and brain. Furthermore, I have repeatedly highlighted how one of the framing principles of LDS theology, namely Christ’s Atonement, also functions as the root metaphor which characterizes all of Mormonism’s emotion-related rhetoric. In this context, and to stress only one area of its defining role, I have suggested that the Atonement operates as the theological parallel to what socio-scientific studies have identified as *emotional regulation*. Yet, the Atonement may also be understood to include theologically many other ‘secular’ emotion-related processes such as emotional interpretation and therapeutic emotion intervention.

Then, with this introductory overview in place, the main body of this analysis has centred on a more focused examination of the specific emotion references which appear within the texts of unique LDS canonical scriptures. To facilitate this exploration I have identified three categories of emotional phenomena, which I have labelled respectively the *predicting*, the *assessing*, and the *relating* type, each of which was further classified into a dichotomous distinction of its most typical manifestations. Consequently I have focused my attention on three pairs of emotions, each of which depicts both a positive and a negative manifestation of that particular kind of phenomenon. In turn, I have explored all textual instances of these six emotions with the expressed purpose of addressing whether their specific usage and context supported an implied understanding of emotion which affirms its three core socio-scientific foundations, namely *cognitive necessity*, *personal responsibility* and *developmental*

¹ An historical analysis of the relationship of Mormonism with science may be found in Paul (1992).

instrumentality. Finally, for each emotion I have also analyzed its relationship with the LDS doctrine of Christ's Atonement, specifically focusing on the way in which the Atonement shapes the evaluation, meaning, and management of each of these emotional phenomena.

The three emotion pairs with which I have been concerned are the following: hope-fear, joy-sorrow, and love-hate. To each of these I have devoted a chapter within which I have aimed to outline at least some of the relevant scriptural verses that contain and describe these very emotions. As a result, I was able to conclude that significant evidence exists for an LDS canonical theology of emotion, which firmly supports the three-fold view affirmed by socio-scientific perspectives. Furthermore, in relation to the authors of these unique scriptural texts, the evidence points in the direction of a 'folk model' of emotion which is similarly based on this distinct foundation. In other words, the Mormon canon does not hold the old dualistic perspective which devalued emotion in viewing it as inherently irrational, beastly, and in opposition to the spiritual nature of humanity. Instead, and in agreement with Christian theologians like Jonathan Edwards, Mormons affirm that the "religious man is not one who subjects passion to the rule of reason, but one whose reason is passionate and whose affection is intellectual."²

Indeed, in light of the uniquely theomorphic emphasis of LDS theological anthropology, not only the religious man but also his ultimate example of a distant perfection, namely God Himself, is emotional. Thus, Elliott summarizes it well when he affirms:

God is personal, God is emotional and God feels all the emotions that love can produce. This is central to the character of God. Our emotions are part of being made in the image of God; they are a good and integral part of human existence...As a man Jesus sets an example for the emotions of the Christian. As God, Jesus shows us the emotions of the creator. While the Gnostic Christ cures people of their passions, the Jesus of the Gospels is a man of passions...Jesus responds to the anguish of the world with compassion... Jesus Christ is portrayed as a man of deep emotion. Jesus felt in passionate fullness (John 7:37-38). Further, if Jesus was one with the Father this is also good evidence for the emotional nature of God himself (John 10:30, 14:9).³

The God of Mormonism, both in the person of Jesus and of the Heavenly Father, is certainly such a Being. In Him are found all the emotions in their perfect nature and in their perfect expression, including the appropriate time, intensity, and object. By contrast, human capacity for emotion is more limited since the manner of its expression

² Cherry (1990), 167.

³ Elliott (2005), 247-49.

is often driven by the “natural man” who is “an enemy to God” when left to his own strength and to his own tendencies. For this reason human emotions need to be properly directed and controlled.

The Holy Spirit is the primary instrument which enables this process of intervention and sanctification of the emotions. In turn, it is Christ’s Atonement that bridges the gap between divinity and mortality by allowing the Spirit to function as an actual presence in the lives of those humans who remain open to its influence. Thus, within the Mormon theological framework, the Spirit performs multiple functions in relation to the emotions. Its facilitative and purifying role can then be felt in such diverse areas as the identification of emotion sources, the moral evaluation of both the internal and external dynamics which trigger them, the selection of the most appropriate object and environment for its expression, the use of negative emotions as an instrument for character-building experience, the ability to control the intensity of particular emotional expressions, the use of emotion as an epistemic instrument for both spiritual and secular information, and others. In short, the functions of the Holy Spirit are as numerous as the functions of the living human being as Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt once explained,

An intelligent being, in the image of God, possesses every organ, attribute, sense, sympathy, affection, of will, wisdom, love, power and gift, which is possessed by God Himself. But these are possessed by man in his rudimental state in a subordinate sense of the word...The gift of the Holy Spirit adapts itself to all these organs or attributes. It quickens all the intellectual faculties, increases, enlarges, expands, and purifies all the natural passions and affections, and adapts them by the gift of wisdom, to their lawful use. It inspires, develops, cultivates, and matures all the fine-toned sympathies, joys, tastes, kindred feelings, and affections of our nature. It inspires virtue, kindness, goodness, tenderness, gentleness, and charity... Love, joy, hope, ambition, faith, and all the virtuous principles of the human mind may here expand and grow, and flourish, unchecked by any painful emotions or gloomy fears⁴

Therefore, the Spirit intervenes on all relevant aspects of emotion, including its *cognitive necessity, personal responsibility, and developmental instrumentality*.

In the first place, the Holy Ghost operates over the cognitive faculties of the individual in order to regulate emotions. Indeed, my examination of the six selected emotions has regularly confirmed that a cognitive component is always intrinsic to emotions and that, at least in some instances, it is also causative of these very phenomena. It is true that some types of emotions, the *predicting* ones for example, are more visibly cognitive than other emotions like the *relating* love and hate. Still, all emotions have a reason or motivation which is not exclusively based on physiological

⁴ Pratt (1978), 96-97.

factors, but which is further and often mainly defined by a particular way of thinking. Therefore, in His roles as *testifier*, the Spirit often aids the individual to shift his focus on significant and often invisible aspects of a spiritual reality, thus facilitating the enlargement of perspective and consequently the reduction, or in some cases intensification, of particular emotional reactions.

Then, with this recognition of cognitive necessity and of some cognitive causality in the background, as well as in the context of the strong LDS emphasis on the principle of agency, I have shown that Mormon canonical texts underline *personal responsibility* for both experience and expression of emotions. In fact, God's children are commanded to experience particular forms of emotion, such as love for the divine, and not to have others, like joy in wickedness for example. For these emotional choices individuals are held accountable and the Holy Spirit functions both to strengthen this accountability and to reduce its effects. As needed, it may remind some of the moral significance attached to most of the emotions whilst it will also help those who have repented of emotional transgressions to feel the forgiveness that removes the negative effects of their mistakes. Thus, in His role as *comforter*, the Spirit aids the individual to find peace in a context of imperfect and negative emotions, whether one has been the experiencer of emotion in sin or whether he is the innocent victim of somebody else's sinful manifestation of these phenomena. In this manner LDS canonical texts emphasize that since choices relative to emotions are often of great consequence they require divine guidance to function in their fullest positive potential.

Finally, my analysis has highlighted several scriptural passages in which the *developmental instrumentality* of emotions was visibly inferred. To be sure, I also pinpointed those instances in which the 'negative' emotions, i.e. fear, sorrow, and hate, were presented as an obstacle rather than as a catalyst for progression. Yet, it was not necessarily the type of emotion which created the impediment; instead, the obstacle was found in the specific object of the emotion or in its exclusivity. Still, emotions can both teach and motivate and in so doing they move individuals forward in their path of human and spiritual development. The Spirit facilitates these very processes by intensifying them, by directing them, and by exposing those aspects of both external reality and internal desires which often distort the epistemic and motivating value of particular emotions. Thus, in His role as *reminder*, the Holy Ghost prompts the individual in the direction of the most fundamental principles of truth which should both inform and drive human processes of emotion evaluation and employment.

Furthermore, it assists in transforming moments of suffering from the negative effects of emotions into developmental opportunities built on an enlarging experience of empathy. Therefore, as the individual is reminded of Christ's empathic sorrow in his behalf, as his empathic baggage of emotional experiences is enlarged, and as his character is strengthened in the face of adversity, Christ-like love takes root, blossoms, and purifies one's developing spirit.

In conclusion, and in addition to engaging in this early stage of dialogue on emotion between science and Mormonism, my main purpose in this work has been to develop an introductory Mormon theology of emotion. In this context, I have only been able to highlight a few points of significance given the great number of theological tenets with which emotions intersect. Still, it has been possible to lay some foundations, the first being that contemporary LDS theology of emotion parallels socio-scientific enquiry in at least three of its core philosophical and experimental conclusions. Then, emotions have been shown as inherently linked to the Mormon view of existence in which individuals, if they so desire, find themselves dynamically progressing in spiritual capacity and strength. Therefore, emotions function as a key instrument which defines a developing person in relation to such characteristics as *knowledge*, *character*, and *spiritual* interaction (in the sense of experience of the Holy Spirit). In other words, emotions describe what a person is and what he may become, what he knows and what he is; especially, they define what an individual thinks of Christ. Indeed, according to Mormon theology, to achieve the highest potential in knowledge and character, which is to grow in one's emotional life, people require the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, while acting as *testifier*, *comforter*, and *reminder* the Spirit brings, by emotional means, light, strength, and divine grace to the emotional individual. Ultimately, it brings the empathic and loving power of the Atonement of Christ to both spirit and body, or to both mind and heart.

Directions for Further Research

There is no doubt that in the present analysis I have only scratched the surface of what may be identified as the LDS theology of emotion. Furthermore, the theological-scientific dialogue I have employed in constructing such a theology has also been limited to its most basic level of engagement, namely the highlighting of areas of correspondence. It follows that many avenues of potential exploration have remained untouched, but further research may begin to fill these gaps through focused

studies in a variety of possible directions. In fact, although much more could be done theologically, both in the exclusive LDS setting and comparatively, many questions about the nature and role of emotional experiences in the Mormon context could be addressed psychologically and sociologically in informed interaction with the subject population's theology. Therefore, my final challenge in this endeavour is briefly to outline at least some of these potential explorative directions and particularly those that would build on and expand the present introductory examination.

Beginning with the theological focus it is evident that both the objects and the sources of the analysis just completed have involved some necessary limitations. For example, and as already suggested, a canonical exploration of *anger* in the context of the negative *relating* emotions would significantly add to my present study. Furthermore, since my focus has been limited to six prototypical emotions any other emotion term that could be located on the spectra of the three selected emotional categories should receive some attention. Specifically, in the *predicting* category I can think of 'positive' terms like *courage*, *confidence*, *expectation*, and even *prophecy*. Moreover, given its undeniable theological and emotional centrality *faith* should be carefully examined in its relationship to *hope* in order to ascertain both points of contact and of departure. On the other hand, the 'negative' side of the spectrum could be more widely explored by placing terms like *doubt*, *worry*, and *despair* under the lens of analytic focus.

Similarly, in the *assessing* category the canonical use of terms like *gladness*, *rest*, *blessedness*, and of *anguish*, *agony*, *grief*, *affliction*, or *mourn* may contribute to broaden the theological picture presented in this work. Finally, the *relating* spectrum could be enlarged to include *longing*, *respect*, *devotion* as well as *enmity* and a variety of synonyms of *anger* (*fury*, *indignation*, *rage*, *wrath*). Whether the scriptural exploration of these terms were again to be used to address my question about the three-fold nature of emotion or to examine some other aspect of the theological use of emotion words in Mormonism it is likely that such a study could provide at least a nuanced contribution to the LDS theology of emotion. For this purpose other emotions which may not be as easily classifiable, including *jealousy*, *patience*, or *envy* should receive their due attention as well as all those terms, which do not signify a specific emotion, but which are nevertheless significant in describing emotional experiences (*mind*, *heart*, *thought*, *feeling*, etc). In turn, the meaning of all these emotion and emotion-related words could be examined in their nineteenth-century historical context

in order to attempt a canonical exegesis, which is as close as possible to the linguistic reality of the ‘voice’ which dictated these texts, namely Joseph Smith’s.

Indeed, within an expanded LDS theology of emotion greater attention should be paid to Mormonism’s founder. In the first place, his non-canonical teachings should be explored to identify his beliefs on both the general subject of emotion and on more specific emotional manifestations. In fact, although non-scriptural, Joseph Smith’s teachings seem to acquire an immediate quasi-canonical status among the Church’s membership given the unique status of the man as *the* Prophet of the Restoration. Thus, at least for those words which have survived in institutional transmission, Joseph’s written or even reported declarations on the subject have certainly played a role in building the structure of the LDS theology of emotion, however this is to be described. Furthermore, since in the collective Church memory the Prophet still functions, at least to some extent, as the human embodiment of Mormonism the exploration of his emotional life could similarly bring to the surface some important elements which presently inform the emotional interpretation and regulation of many a Latter-day Saint.⁵

Another avenue of exploration which may lead to insights about Joseph Smith’s own perspectives on emotional phenomena would involve an examination of the Mormon canonical texts by him written or produced with the hermeneutical assumption that in such texts his nineteenth century voice is implicitly present. This kind of approach would likely be resisted by many orthodox Mormons, although it is at least debatable, in an LDS theological context, whether prophetic ‘revelation’ must necessarily transcend the reality and the thought of its delivering instrument. In other words, particularly in relation to the D&C but in some degree also in the BoM translation context, I know of no LDS theological tenet which may be paralleled to the common Muslim perspective on the ‘direct’ verbatim reception of the Koranic revelation by the prophet Muhammed. It is therefore at least possible that Mormon theology could conceive of Joseph Smith’s revelations as involving divine origin and content as well as some degree of ‘filtered’ expression. Yet, it is also understandable

⁵ There have been various attempts to present some kind of psycho-history of Joseph Smith, whose life is particularly inviting to such attempts given the many emotional upheavals which characterized it. The most notable one is probably Brodie (1995) and most recently Bushman and Woodworth (2007) have also included some psychological considerations in their historical analysis. Several other authors have widely speculated on Smith’s emotional make-up as well as on the purported psychological consequences of traumatic life events for the theology which he taught. See Vogel (2004), Morain (1998), Anderson (1999), and Davies (2000), 86-90.

why most Mormons would resist embarking in a process of discernment between the one and the other.

Less problematic for the purpose of extracting Joseph's theology of emotion would be an analysis of the *Joseph Smith Translation* of the Bible, which does not claim to be 'revealed' but 'inspired' (an adjective with lesser mystic immediacy), and which, notwithstanding its title, recognizably originates in an interpretation rather than in a translation. In fact, from a brief survey of the JST's content it is evident that several of the biblical passages which the Prophet modified are concerned with emotions. For example, he emphasized the need to avoid anger and strengthened the association of anger with sin by removing the clause "without a cause" from Matt. 5:22 and by changing Eph. 4:26 from "Be ye angry and sin not" to "Can ye be angry and not sin?" At the same time he did not remove references to God's own anger and jealousy, thus suggesting that he viewed the biblical, especially the Old Testament, anthropomorphisms on the 'emotional' nature of God as sufficiently correct.⁶ Then, an important question to explore in this context would centre on the identification of those dynamics which distinguish godly from human experiences of anger, particularly in light of the unique LDS perspective on the *imago Dei*. As already suggested, a focused study on the Mormon theology of anger would be highly beneficial for this objective and could shed some light on the relative significance of 'correct thinking' in relation to the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the emotion.

In any case, and more generally, the most visible theological link which is missing from the present work involves the vast body of prophetic statements, including Joseph Smith's teachings, whose content has been focused on the subject of emotion. Given the unique nature of Mormon theology with its emphasis on continuous prophetic revelation examining the words and writings of LDS Authorities on this subject should probably form the highest priority of any future theological study of this kind. This is particularly relevant in the contemporary setting where the sermons of prophets and Apostles delivered twice a year in the World General Conference of the Church are first heard live by a large number of Church members to be then printed for repeated consultation and study in Sunday lessons, home visits,

⁶ In a separate context I have examined how these specific teachings on the emotional nature of God continued to be expressed by Brigham Young and by other Church leaders of the nineteenth century. See Properzi (2009). In this context it would also be of particular interest to explore whether theological ideas about emotions have evolved or changed in association with the various historical transitions that have characterized the history of the Church.

personal instruction, and weekly family gatherings for worship and recreation (family home evenings). In other words, and with the benefits of modern technology, there has never been a time, except in the earliest days of the movement, when the teachings of the Church's highest hierarchy have been as available to the large body of the faithful as they are today. Thus, examining the emotion content of the LDS canon is not sufficient if one aims to construct a comprehensive LDS theology of emotion. Hence, the interpretations that the General Authorities apply to the canonical references on emotion and other teachings that they express on the subject, especially if frequent, ought to be included in any future examination of this nature.

Yet, it is one thing to outline the boundaries of canonical or prophetic statements about emotions and it is quite another to affirm that such view matches the perspective of the majority of church members. Given the increasing cultural, intellectual, and social diversity of twenty-first century Mormons an exact correspondence of perspectives, particularly in a topic as elusive as emotion, should not be assumed. Therefore, examining what the Church membership believes about emotions, both in relation to perceptions of theological orthodoxy and in the context of what is viewed as only 'potentially' doctrinal, could be useful and of great interest in its own right. It would further be of significance to ascertain whether members of the LDS Church experience conflict between their theological interpretation of emotions and the socio-cultural classifications they have internalized. This could lead to unique insights on what areas of emotional interpretation may need further authoritative clarification within the theological communicative content of the Church as well as providing information on the modalities through which members resolve perceived conflicts between 'internal' and 'external' messages of a psychological nature.

By moving in this direction of exploration we would then encounter the social and psychological sciences, which could be engaged directly to examine a variety of aspects that pertain to the Mormon emotional life. While allowing theology to inform our analysis many different questions could be addressed with the expressed purpose of identifying and defining the *emotives* of Mormonism. Examinations of this kind could explore various areas of LDS material and non-material culture, oral traditions, folklore, and ritual practices, whether in the ecclesial or in the family setting. Sociologically, case studies of selected LDS wards could shed light on any underlying rules of emotional expression and on their relationship with social hierarchical roles within the community. Similarly, the *emotives* of unique dimensions of the LDS life,

such as the mission experience, dating, or the ‘Especially for Youth’ programme, could bring to the surface interesting emotional patterns which would then need to be contextualized in the wider framework of the Mormon experience.

Other studies could involve a more comparative or a more international emphasis. Thus, the Mormon normative skeleton in relation to emotions could be juxtaposed to the accepted cultural standards of wider American society for parallel examination. Whether the focus were to centre on specific emotional behaviours or on patterns of emotional regulation which Mormonism and larger society do not share it would be of interest to examine the consequences of such LDS distinctness. For example, although many studies have addressed the physiological impact of the Mormon health code, the ‘Word of Wisdom’, more can be explored in relation to the emotional impact of the LDS prohibition of such substances as alcohol, tobacco, and coffee, which are often used by some in society as emotion or mood regulators. On the other hand, Mormon emotional life could be juxtaposed to other traditions’ interpretation and management of emotion, both Christian and non-Christian, not only in relation to their orthodoxy but also to the wider realm of their orthopraxis. In this context I suppose that an interesting area of enquiry for most religious traditions would involve the often problematic relationship between their emotional orthodoxy and their emotional orthopraxis.

Furthermore, given Mormonism’s increasing international scope, studies may be focused to specifically address local emotional realities in cultural contexts which are distant from the United States’. In fact, it would be of interest to assess the degree to which the emotional picture of Mormonism is homogeneous, especially in ritual and rhetoric, in the larger context of its international extension. Then, studies that would focus on specific LDS populations could explore a variety of their psychological dynamics. For example, the role emotions play in epistemology, especially in their association with divine revelation, seems to require more detailed exploration. It would be of interest to identify patterns of epistemic classifications of emotional experience and potential models of discernment between emotions with epistemic value and those which have none. These could be followed by further analyses that possibly could associate greater tendencies to ‘sacralise’ emotions with other relevant aspects of personality or of individual theology. Similarly, the thought processes of the Saints may be dissected to examine the degree to which theological tenets determine their

decisions in relation to emotional regulation. Then, in addition to exploring the nature of such thoughts, one could also examine their perceived efficacy.

To be sure, any study which were to be concerned with specific aspects of the emotional life of a Mormon population would face the primary challenge of isolating the LDS ‘component’ of exploration within such realms as thoughts, words, and behaviours. In some cases this task may turn out to be impossible or particularly problematic but bringing theology openly to the surface, particularly as it is perceived by the individual subjects of the study, may considerably facilitate the endeavour. Then, even those socio-scientific conclusions, which in the present work have only been engaged somewhat superficially, could be explored in greater detail in dialogue with Mormon theology. For example, as already hinted, the *cognitive necessity* of emotions may emerge strengthened from an exploration of the theological *appraisals* associated with them. Furthermore, the *personal responsibility* which they entail may be highlighted by specific theologically informed patterns of *attentional deployment*. In similar fashion, exploring the significance of emotions for purposes of theological learning may function to emphasize their *developmental instrumentality*.

In conclusion, the intersection of the world of emotion with the world of Mormonism has produced a story that has only begun to be told. Indeed, given its continuous development and extension, it is likely that the tale will never be explored or recounted in its totality. Still, within this narrative there is much that can be understood and related; hence, this work, although only introductory, has represented an effort in this direction. What has emerged is a picture where emotions are the very colours of the illustrations of our lives and of our souls. In this, Mormons would echo Keats in exclaiming, “The common cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is ‘a vale of tears’ from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven – What a little circumscribe[d] straightened notion! Call the world if you Please ‘The vale of Soul-making’. Then you will find out the use of the world...How then are Souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them – so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each ones individual existence? How, but by the medium of a world like this?”⁷ And this world is the world of emotions!

⁷ Gittings and Anstey (1995), 175.

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