

# JOYS: A BRIEF MORAL AND CHRISTIAN GEOGRAPHY

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This paper is an initial effort preparatory for a more thorough “theology of joys.” I distinguish joys from other kinds of pleasure and argue that joy can be seen as the form of all the so-called positive emotions (the ones that feel good). So joy is properly treated in the plural: joys come in a variety of kinds. I distinguish canonical (joys with single-term names) from non-canonical joys. The worthiness of joys is primarily a function of their objects—what the joys are about. I look at a few examples of joys that appear in the New Testament and sketch the relation of joys to happiness.

## *Introduction*

Why a theology of joys? In Christian tradition joy is an index of appropriation. The center of Christian teaching is good news, indeed, by the lights of that tradition, news so extraordinarily good that it must subsume and stand criterion for all other goodness and good news. Joy, being the proper affective way of taking in such news, of understanding and appreciating it, of personally owning it, is affectively central to Christian theology and life. Thomas Aquinas notes,

The ultimate perfection, by which a person is made perfect inwardly, is joy, which stems from the presence of what is loved. Whoever has the love of God, however, already has what he loves, as is said in 1 John 4:16: “whoever abides in the love of God abides in God, and God abides in him.” And joy wells up from this.<sup>1</sup>

Alexander Schmemmann writes,

From its very beginning Christianity has been the proclamation of joy. . . . Of all accusations against Christians, the most terrible one was uttered by Nietzsche when he said that Christians had no joy.<sup>2</sup>

Søren Kierkegaard ends one of his discourses at the communion on Fridays by saying,

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<sup>1</sup>Aquinas, *Commentary on Galatians*, 179–180, as quoted in Stump, “The Non-Aristotelian Character of Aquinas’s Ethics,” 43.

<sup>2</sup>Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, 270–275.



[The tax collector] went home to his house justified. And you, my listener, when you go home from the Communion table, be assured that you found justification at the Communion table, that your going there will become a joy and a blessing to you. Now, before you go to the Communion table, the same wish: May you find joy and blessing in it.<sup>3</sup>

Anna Wierzbicka notes that in everyday American English the word “happy” is much more frequent than “joy” and that some American psychologists have “elevated the state of being ‘happy’ to the status of a basic human emotion.”<sup>4</sup> And she says that “from a cross-cultural perspective, the word *joy* (with equivalents such as *Freude*, *joie*, *gioia*, *radost*, etc. in other European languages) might have seemed a much better candidate for such a status.” Earlier in the book she explains this preferred status: “The cognitive scenario of *joy* is simpler than that of *happy* or *happiness*, and partly for this reason *joy* is a better starting point for the analysis of ‘positive emotion terms.’” The “two crucial cognitive components in the *joy* scenario [are] an evaluative one: ‘something very good is happening’, and a volitive one: ‘I want this to be happening.’”<sup>5</sup>

Long before Wierzbicka, Schmemmann, Kierkegaard, or Aquinas, Augustine had said,

Will is indeed in all [motions of the soul]; in fact, all are nothing but acts of will. For what is longing or joy but a willing that agrees with its object? And what is fear or sorrow but a willing that disagrees with its object? But when our agreeing will seeks its object it is called desire; and when it possesses its object, it is called joy.<sup>6</sup>

And long before Augustine, Aristotle noted the function of delight as an index of moral character:

We must take as a sign of states of character the pleasure or pain that supervenes upon acts; for the man who abstains from bodily pleasures and delights in this very fact is temperate, while the man who is annoyed at it is self-indulgent, and he who stands his ground against things that are terrible and delights in this or at least is not pained is brave.<sup>7</sup>

We can see here the same pattern that Aquinas, Wierzbicka, and Augustine note of a meeting between something volitional and something taken to be “present” that satisfies the volition: The virtuous person wants to be temperate and brave and sees that these virtues are present in him, and pleasure supervenes. His acts satisfy his desire or concern to be a certain way.

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<sup>3</sup>Kierkegaard, *Without Authority*, 133–134. Joy is a major theme in at least seventeen of Kierkegaard’s upbuilding discourses. See Part Two of *Christian Discourses* and Parts Two and Three of *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*. Joy (*Glaede*) is a large theme throughout Kierkegaard’s writings.

<sup>4</sup>Wierzbicka, *Emotions Across Languages*, 249.

<sup>5</sup>Wierzbicka, *Emotions Across Languages*, 50.

<sup>6</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, xiv.6.

<sup>7</sup>Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2.3, 1104b4–7, 31–32.

It is true, I think, that “negative” emotions can be, in their own way, indices of appropriation and expressions of character. The pain of contrition, for example, can indicate serious appropriation of the Christian outlook, and emotional guilt can indicate serious moral character. But negative emotions must be, from a normative point of view, spiritually and morally secondary to joy, because they will always indicate some kind of trouble or deficiency.

As the title indicates, this paper sketches briefly what, in a sequel, would be more fully displayed. It is preliminary to a theology of joys. I call it a geography because its mode is exploratory and its product is like a map that “locates” things by displaying schematically where things are in relation to one another. And its purpose is also like that of a map—to guide and encourage the traveler who wants to know how to get around well in the logical and psychological space of joys, to avoid the hazards and deceptive appearances “that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found.”<sup>8</sup> Like all ethical philosophy and spiritual theology in the Christian and ancient mode, the purpose of the conceptual exploration is the acquisition of wisdom and the betterment of the explorer’s soul.<sup>9</sup>

The course of this paper is as follows: I begin by distinguishing joy, which is an emotional pleasure, from two other kinds of pleasure. I then note some differences in usage among various synonyms for “joy,” after which I address the question whether *emotion* is really the best category for what the paper explores. Next, I describe how we distinguish types of emotion from one another and argue for what I call the simplicity thesis about the nature of joy. If this thesis is correct, then other “positive” emotions such as gratitude, pride, and relief are species of joy, and I answer a recent published objection to the simplicity thesis. Then I turn to the question what makes joys good or bad, and briefly illustrate what a theology of joys would cover by looking at three kinds of joy that come forth in the New Testament. Finally, I sketch the place of joys in the happy life.

### *Joys and Other Kinds of Enjoyment*

Joy is a kind of pleasure. It isn’t the only positively valenced (pleasant) kind of mental state. Two other kinds of enjoyment are sensory pleasures and the pleasure of unimpeded competent activity. Let’s first try to distinguish these three kinds of pleasures, after which we’ll notice that they interact in complicated and important ways. Imagine this: you’re a four-time grandmother by your daughters, but your son and his wife haven’t provided you a grandchild. You dearly wish to have one. The announcement finally comes one evening when they are visiting, and you’re overjoyed at the good news. You have sensory experiences in various modalities: With

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<sup>8</sup>Collect for the Fifth Sunday in Lent, *Common Prayer*, 219.

<sup>9</sup>On ancient philosophy, see Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*; on ancient theology, see Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds*.

your eyes you see your son and daughter-in-law sitting there on the sofa. With your ears you hear their voices as they tell the news. You have tactile impressions: the chair is pressing a bit uncomfortably on your backside (this experience is subliminal, swamped in your attention to their narrative). Also rather subliminally, you feel a little leap in your mid-section and your heart beating a little faster. Your joy at the news is exultant and pleasant in the extreme.

I submit that the pleasure of your joy is quite a different pleasure from any or all of the sensory experiences that are connected with it. In fact, none of them is particularly pleasant: your son and daughter are good-looking enough, but your pleasure is not in their visual beauty. The sounds they make as they announce their news are not poetry or music; it's just the sound of ordinary English prose—in itself not ugly, but certainly not beautiful enough to account for your joy's pleasure. And those sensations in your mid-section: if they have any hedonic tone, it's a slight *discomfort*. No, the pleasure of your joy is quite different from sensory pleasure. It's a pleasure *in the news*, or rather, in what the news is about: the coming birth of your grandchild. As far as experience goes, this pleasure is not in your body but out there in the world.

In his *Nicomachean Ethics* (Book 10.1–5), Aristotle may have unearthed a kind of pleasure that is neither emotional nor sensory. He points out that we naturally enjoy unimpeded competent activity. If you are good at woodworking, then as you engage in this activity in reasonably ideal conditions—your tools function well, you have good materials to work with, you're not impeded by distractions, and so forth—you will enjoy the activity. This is not the sensory pleasures of seeing, touching, and smelling the wood, or of handling the tools, nor is it the emotional pleasure of being glad *that* you are doing woodworking or *that* the project is coming along well, though both of these kinds of pleasure may accompany the activity. No, this is the pleasure of *being* active, being a doer, of engaging your body and mind, by way of their implements, in the activity of woodworking. It is the experience of activity that Mihali Csikszentmihalyi calls "flow."<sup>10</sup> This experience seems not to have the "aboutness" that characterizes joy. Grandmother's joy is *about* the coming child, and the person who for some reason is glad that he is in the shop with the lumber is glad *about* doing the activity, but the person in a state of flow isn't thinking about what he is doing in that way, but has become the center of the activity. "Flow" happens when you lose yourself, so to speak, in the activity and so in a sense merge with the activity. That is, at any rate, a shot at distinguishing the emotion of joy from activity pleasure.

Having distinguished joy from sensory and activity pleasure, note that in human experience they seldom if ever come in pure form. Occurring *through* one another, they enhance and color each other in hundreds of ways. Joy is often expressed, confirmed, and enhanced by *celebration* of

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<sup>10</sup>Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow*.

the object of joy. Celebration is a kind of activity, and parts of celebratory activities can be performed competently and without impediment. For example, dancing is often part of the celebration of a wedding. The guests, as friends who love the couple, rejoice with them about their union and express their joy, in part, by dancing. If Aristotle is right, the competent dancers among them may experience the activity-pleasure of dancing well. If their dancing also expresses their joy about the union of the couple, the pleasure of dancing will mingle with the pleasure of their joy, and the two pleasures will enhance one another. Celebration also usually involves eating and hearing music—two sources of sensory pleasures. If the food and music are excellent and the celebrants are capable of appreciating them, the pleasures of eating and hearing music will infuse the joy that the celebration expresses, coloring and enriching it. This is not to deny that we can experience joy in the absence of the other pleasures, or even in spite of pain and difficulties. The fact that we can and do do this supports the distinctness of the three kinds of pleasure.

*“Joy” and Some of its Siblings*

English has several words that are or can in some contexts be equivalent or nearly equivalent in meaning to “joy”: “delight,” “gladness,” “exultation,” “mirth,” “jubilation,” “bliss,” “cheer,” “pleasure,” “happiness,” “comfort,” “satisfaction,” “gratification,” “glory.” Some of these words have verb-cognates: “rejoice,” “delight in,” “exult,” “enjoy,” “glory,” “welcome.” Much of the variation in sense of these terms is context-bound. These words have in common that they denote general, unspecific emotional pleasure or satisfaction. In particular contexts, joy, delight, or gladness takes particular objects with particular moral or spiritual significance and so expresses widely different moral and spiritual states of the person experiencing the emotion.

I say these words *can* be “nearly equivalent” because contexts can provide a natural setting for one or more words that would sound odd in other contexts. If, after a troubled pregnancy, our baby is born healthy, we don’t say “We were pleased by the outcome,” but instead, “there was much rejoicing in the family” or “we were greatly relieved,” or “we’re enormously grateful.” If someone compliments me on my haircut, very likely I don’t report that I rejoiced or exulted (even if I did) or was in a state of bliss, but that I was pleased or satisfied. It’s a little weak to say, “I was pleased when they said, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord.’” “Rejoice” and “be glad” can often be substituted one for the other; similarly, “to be pleased” and “to be satisfied.” “Jubilation” and “exultation” are reserved for dramatic and intense rejoicing. “Happy” in the emotional sense seems to cover the whole gamut of cases. I was happy when they said, “Let us go into the house of the Lord,” and I was happy that he liked my haircut. As I’ll explain later, there is a classical sense of “happy” that functions very differently from words for emotions.

### *Is Joy an Emotion?*

This question admits of two interpretations. The first bears on what kind of thing the word refers to, the contrast being a felt episode versus something else. We sometimes *feel* joy—say, joy at the news that our child’s fever has broken. In this usage, “joy” clearly refers to an emotion—a hedonically toned situational construal, based on our concern for the child’s wellbeing. A contrasting case is the apostle Paul’s reference to the Philippian church when he says to them, “You are my joy and my crown” (Phil 4:1). “Joy” here refers not to an emotion, but to some people living at Philippi. But presumably the two usages are related: the Philippians are Paul’s joy because when he sees them, hears about them, thinks about them, and so forth, he often or typically feels joy. Similarly, when the angel announces, “Lo, I proclaim to you a great joy” (Luke 2:10), he refers not to an emotion but to a piece of news, but it’s clear that the word “joy” is appropriate because the news is *good* and thus an occasion for feeling joy. So it seems that the uses of “joy” in which it doesn’t refer (directly) to an emotion are ones that are justified by a close connection to joy as an emotion.

The second interpretation of the question bears on what kind of mental state the word refers to, the contrast being with finer-grained terms used in the Christian tradition, in particular, “passion” and “affection.” In this connection the question is: Is joy an emotion, a passion, or an affection? Thomas Dixon argues that the word “emotion” is an early nineteenth-century innovation in the service of a secularizing psychology meant to replace the earlier vocabulary, in which “passion” (*pathos, passio*) referred to feeling-responses to sensory events of a kind that humans share with animals, marked by physiological perturbations and often associated with moral temptation or outright turpitude; while “affection” referred to feeling-responses to “intellectual” objects inaccessible to non-human animals, not marked by physiological perturbations and usually associated with what is morally and spiritually admirable.<sup>11</sup> In Aquinas, passions are lodged in the soul’s sensory appetite, while affections are lodged in the soul’s will. Animals experience only passions, God and angels (being non-corporeal) experience only affections, and human beings experience both. A human passion, when reflectively endorsed by its subject, can be transformed into an affection. “Emotion,” argues Dixon, is indiscriminate with respect to the passion-affection distinction and is part of a scientific program in which human beings are just a variant of animals, without the “intellectual” appetite that was earlier located in the distinctively human faculty of will. Emotions, in the new vocabulary, are irrational physiological events. They lack what philosophers call “intentionality.”

Clearly, when ordinary people refer to joy, rejoicing, being joyful, and so forth, they are experiencing far more than an ‘emotion’ in its original reductive secularizing sense in the writings of Thomas Brown, Herbert

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<sup>11</sup>Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*.

Spencer, Alexander Bain, and later William James. Our joy is *about* this or that, often what it's about is not the sort of thing that any non-human animal could get excited about (whether a rise in the stock market, the downfall of a petty rival, or the gospel of Jesus Christ), its object may or may not be apprehended through sensory input, and it may or may not be accompanied by corporeal sensations and an urge to prance. So if our options are either to use "emotion" in the sense its original innovators gave it, or to use the traditional vocabulary of "affection," we will surely choose to call the most interesting kinds of joy affections.

But the word "emotion" has by now escaped the clutches of its secularizing originators and become a general term that includes both "passions" and "affections." And I would point out that the unspecificity of the word "emotion," with respect to the distinctions bearing on corporeal perturbation, moral quality, and the recruitment of sophisticated cognition, makes it preferable to the older vocabulary, because the species that were distinguished by "passion" and "affection" were not neatly distinct. Too many cases failed to be assignable to one category in exclusion of the other. Many emotions that are marked by strong physiological perturbation have highly "intellectual" objects. Think of passions aroused by political or religious disagreements or the intense, physiologically active joy that some have felt upon religious conversion. And the supposed moral distinction between passions and affections is not neat either. So-called affections can be immoral, say, the cruel joy of watching a colleague squirm as you devastate his philosophical argument; while passions can be admirable, for example, the erotically tinged joy of a woman upon seeing her husband after an absence. As long as "passion" and "affection" were distinguished only informally, such cases would not be troublesome. But the distinction was not well adapted to more rigorous philosophy or psychology. "Emotion," with its more relaxed criteria, is better. It comfortably handles all the variants.<sup>12</sup>

#### *What Makes an Emotion Episode a Case of Joy?*

Luke the evangelist distinguishes, as it were, the psychology of joy from the norms for joy by not building moral or theological norms into his use of the word "joy." He simply says the chief priests rejoiced (*echarēsan*, Luke 22:5) when Judas offered to betray Jesus, and the apostles went away rejoicing (*chairontes*, Acts 5:41) when they were beaten up because they had been counted worthy to suffer for the Name of Jesus. The same word for "rejoice" (*chairein*) occurs in both contexts, despite the enormous moral and theological difference in the two cases. Luke doesn't suggest that one of these joys was not really joy. Theologians sometimes want joy to be, in itself, something profound or good, so they import normative

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<sup>12</sup>Griffiths, in *What Emotions Really Are*, argued analogously that, under scientific scrutiny, the concept of emotion fractures into three radically distinct categories: affect program responses, irruptive motivations, and socially constructed disclaimed actions. See my defense of the coherency of *emotion* and critique of Griffiths's deconstruction in my *Emotions*, 14–45.

properties into its very definition.<sup>13</sup> On such a way of thinking, what the chief priests felt wasn't really joy. But this is confusing. It is much better to begin with a non-normatively chosen array of examples or, perhaps better, an array chosen from among the evil and the good, the trivial and the profound, so as to see what joy is in itself. With the array in place, we can go on to talk about the norms for joy, their intrinsic (and extrinsic) value, and joy's relation to virtues and having a life of beatitude, of thriving, of flourishing—the well-being and full flower of a human life that the Greeks called *eudaimonia* and *makariotēs*.

I will now offer an argument for the diversity of kinds of joy that will serve also to specify the essence of joy. Joy is structurally the simplest of the “positive” emotion types, because an instance of positive emotion counts as joy by satisfying the least number of conditions. We have seen that Wierzbicka makes a similar remark. By contrast, admiration requires the conditions that joy requires but adds to them; and this is true of all the other positive emotion types. Some of them have been given privileged status by being named with names like “relief,” “gratitude,” “admiration,” “pride,” “hope,” and “triumph.” These canonical joys differ from one another in the kinds of situations they experience as joyful: a benefit from a benevolent benefactor, the excellence of something, the association of some excellence with oneself, etc.

People differ in the kinds of situations that are joyful to them, because (1) people differ in what they welcome, what they care about, what they are disposed to like; and (2) a situation elicits joy from a person because he or she experiences it as satisfying a care or concern of his or hers, or as being something that she is disposed to welcome.<sup>14</sup> In Wierzbicka's formation that I quoted earlier she specifies the “volitive” condition as “desire,” but that is much too narrow to cover all the cases of joy.

Another kind of diversity among joys is that some are morally good and others bad. Morally good joys are about situations that satisfy morally good dispositions of will; bad joys are about situations that satisfy morally bad dispositions of will. Another kind of diversity is that some joys are trivial and others profound. Trivial joys are satisfactions of trivial concerns and dispositions of will, and profound joys are satisfactions of profound ones. Among profound concerns are spiritual ones, concerns

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<sup>13</sup>For example, Vaillant says that “joy in any language means reconnection with a power greater than ourselves,” *Spiritual Evolution*, 120; and Schmemmann says that the Christian proclamation of joy “rendered impossible all joy we usually think of as possible,” *For the Life of the World*, 270.

<sup>14</sup>Wierzbicka calls this the “volitive” condition. In an earlier version of this paper I spoke of the subject's *concerns*, but a referee for *Faith and Philosophy* noted, correctly, that to speak of a person's concern for something that he discovers only by noting that he is rejoicing to have it is awkward, and involves stretching the notion of a concern. In the current version of this paper I have retained the word “concern,” since I think it fits many cases of emotion as a way of characterizing their “volitive” condition, but I have supplemented it with a variety of expressions such as “disposition of will,” “disposition of the heart,” “readiness to like,” and “care,” which seem better for “surprised-by-joy” cases. Augustine and Aquinas speak of “love” in this connection, a way of speaking that has its own problems.



about God—for example, the concern to be loved and approved by God, the concern to be righteous before God, the concern to be in the presence of God, the concern to be forgiven by God, and the concern to know God. Spiritual joys are satisfactions of spiritual concerns and dispositions of will. More specifically, Christian joys are satisfactions of spiritual concerns and dispositions of will couched in the terms of a Christian construal of God in Jesus Christ.

How do we answer the question about the nature of an emotion (here I mean *type* of emotion) such as joy? How do we answer the questions *What is envy? What is anger? What is fear? What is admiration? What is joy?* We all know that these emotions differ from one another, but what makes the difference? We might try to answer such a question by looking at the emotion's neurological underpinnings,<sup>15</sup> or the behavior characteristic of it, or its social functions (say, in human evolution, or in people groups across the world).<sup>16</sup> But each of these approaches presupposes that we can already pick out instances of the type. To be able to examine the neurology of fear, for example, we have to know which emotional states to examine, and that will require a prior ability to recognize fear and distinguish it from hope and disgust and all the other types of emotion. Neurologists and psychologists exploit their intuitive ability to distinguish emotion types for the purpose of deploying their own investigative techniques.

But how do such intuitions work? What goes into them? Philosophers try to make explicit what any of us do when we distinguish one emotion from another by type. Their way of doing that is to start with a fund of agreed-on examples and try to formulate the minimal conditions that are required for any instance of emotion to count as belonging to the type—say, joy—under examination. An instance of emotion that satisfies those conditions will belong to the type, and any instance that lacks one or more of the required conditions will be excluded.

Let's look at an example in some detail. A complex example will serve well, since it will be relatively rich in required conditions; also, it will make a nice contrast with the simplicity of joy. What does it take for an emotion episode to count as a case of envy? If we look at an example, we will notice that the person who experiences this emotion sees himself as *losing* in a sort of *competition* with a *rival*. Perhaps the competition is about good looks. The person envies the other his good looks. But if we look at other examples of envy, we see that the rivalry doesn't have to be about good looks. So rivalry is required for envy, but its being about good looks is not required. It might be about intelligence, or social status, or athletic skill, or any number of other things that can seem to lend a person prestige or

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<sup>15</sup>See, for example, LeDoux's *Emotional Brain*, which is an intensive study of the neurological correlates of simple fear (for example, the kind we share with rats).

<sup>16</sup>See, for example, Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions*, about *metagu*, a fear-like emotion, and *song*, an anger-like emotion. The anthropologist doesn't start with her own intuitive emotion-categories, except provisionally, but consults the language and behavioral concomitants of the emotion categories of her target population.

importance. Also, going back to our example of envying another his good looks, we'll see that the envier wishes either (1) that he himself were better looking, or (2) that the rival were less good looking; either one will count as not losing the competition, so either one would be sufficient to quiet the envier's envy. If this is correct (neither of these in *particular* being required for envy), then it seems that the envier is not ultimately concerned about his rival having more of the good quality or his having less of it himself; the rivalry must be about something more fundamental than these particular relativities. What might be the "issue" for the envious person *as such*, not as envious about his falling short or the rival's exceeding him, but simply *as envious*? What do these two concerns have in common, such that they are concerns of envious people? The answer seems to be, *importance by comparison*. Comparing well to some others—that is, *equaling*, or *besting*, some them, are ways of being important as a person. That is what the envious person, as envious, cares about; and envy is the feeling of failure to attain this end.

These, then, are the interlocking essential features of envy: *losing a competition with a rival about some kind of excellence for comparative personal importance*. As my comments have already suggested, the emotion of envy unites these elements in a definitely structured way, a structure that can be expressed in the form of a narrative proposition: *I am losing in my competition with R over E for my comparative personal importance*. Particular instances of envy will fit into this form by filling in who the rival (*R*) is and what the rivalry is about (*E*: beauty, wealth, etc.).

Note that envy takes the *self* as an object as well as a subject. That is why the self is mentioned in the analysis of the emotion type. All emotions are somebody's, and so all are *located* in a subject (a self). But only some emotions, including envy, are also *about* the subject's self. Other emotions that are essentially about the self are guilt and shame. Envy is about the subject in the sense that he feels *himself* to be demeaned (made less important) by the rival's excellence and that what he cares about is his *own* importance relative to that of the rival. As we will see, joy is unlike envy in *not* being necessarily about the self. Joy can be quite "self-forgetful." But pride, which is a variant of joy, *is* about the self. These conditions constitute what may be called the formal object of the emotion. They specify what the form of any intentional object of an emotion has to be if the emotion is to be a case of, e.g., envy.<sup>17</sup>

It is important to notice that notions like competition and rivalry and excellence and importance naturally evoke cares and concerns in people who see situations in their terms. One might even think that it's not possible to see someone as a rival without caring about winning out in the rivalry or to see a situation as impinging on one's importance as a person

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<sup>17</sup>This analysis is perhaps not complete enough to serve as a definitive account of envy; here it is meant merely as an illustration of how we go about distinguishing emotion types. For a more extensive analysis of envy, in comparison with the related emotion of jealousy and in conversation with Farrell's "Jealousy," see Roberts, *Emotions*, 256–264.

without caring about it. This I take to be generally true about emotions: that they will not occur or be felt in response to situations whose features don't impinge on the subject's dispositions of will about those features. I will argue that in the case of joy, what one is joyful about needs to be seen as good, and that for it to evoke joy, the subject must care about it as good. The subject of an emotion doesn't need to know that he has the concern or disposition of will on which his emotion is based; the concern may come to light with the emotion. You may not realize how much you care about somebody until you notice your joy in seeing her again or sorrow at her departure.

What philosophers call the "intentional object" of a mental state is what the mental state is *about*, but only in a certain sense. It is what the object is *as presented in the mental state*—not the object as it actually is. So when Judas offered to betray Jesus to the chief priests and officers of the temple police and these "rejoiced" at his offer, the intentional object of their joy—Judas's offer—appeared good to them. In fact, Judas's offer was evil, an act of treachery. So the way the offer appears to them is not accurate. Their joy presents the object falsely in this respect, but its goodness is nevertheless a feature of the intentional object of their mental state.

The intentional object of every actual case of envy will, as we have seen, have features that are not required for an emotion to be a case of envy. For example, a particular case might be about good looks, but that isn't required for envy as such. So we need to distinguish the notion of an intentional object from the notion of the intentional object of an emotion *type*. Let's call this the *formal object* of an emotion type. Psychologists sometimes call this the "appraisal structure" of an emotion, and they intend "structure" to convey roughly what I convey with "formal." I have also spoken of the narrative structure of an emotion type. The formal object is the bare form of the intentional objects of all emotions that count as belonging to a type—say, envy or joy.

I have gone on at some length about the emotion of envy because I want to illustrate how philosophers make precise and explicit our ordinary intuitions about how emotion types like fear, anger, joy, hope, disappointment, regret, admiration, wonder, pride, and relief differ from one another. We are all, presumably, intuitively accessing the conditions for the intentional objects of these various kinds of emotions when we identify the emotions we are feeling (I wasn't really angry; I was feeling disappointed), or attribute particular emotions to others (Paul wasn't just hopeful about the project; he was proud of his own contribution), or anticipate which type of emotions a certain situation is likely to evoke in ourselves or others (if I say that, she won't take it as a compliment, and will get huffy; if I were in your situation, I would be scared spitless). In deploying these intuitions in our social world, we take into consideration how we and others are likely to "see" situations and what they and we characteristically care about. Philosophers take these intuitions, which all of us have, and try to make them more than just intuitions, specifying just

how they work by attempting to formulate the intentional object structures, trying to exhaust the necessary conditions and to avoid generalizing what is not quite general.

So envy's structure is fairly complex and thus specific. The concern on which it is based—for comparative importance as a person—is rather specific. And envy has several “cognitive” conditions: that there's a rival, a competition in some matter (e.g., beauty, talent, power, status, etc.) that bears on comparative personal importance, and that the subject (self) is losing in this competition to the rival.

Joy, by contrast, is as simple and unspecific as an emotion type can get. Its structure is: *something [some situation] satisfies a concern (disposition of will) of mine [and thus appears good]*. And unlike envy, which has to be based on a concern for comparative personal importance, joy can be based on *any concern whatsoever*, whether it be what Augustine calls an agreeing or consenting will or what he calls a disagreeing or dissenting will. You can feel joy at the failure of what you hate, as well as at the success of what you love. Joy is simply emotional pleasure, emotional satisfaction, whether that satisfaction be screamingly intense or calm almost to the point of undetectability. It corresponds to the simplest possible emotional pain, whose structure is: *something [some situation] frustrates a concern (disposition of will) of mine*. We might call it (emotional) distress. All the “negative” emotion types—disappointment, anger, regret, fear, envy—are specifications of distress. It is general emotional pain or discomfort. Let us call my claim that joy is the form of all the “positive” (pleasant) emotions *the simplicity thesis*, because it has the simplest formal object of all the pleasant emotions.

The structure of joy leaves entirely open both what the concern is on which it is based and what the “something” (the intentional object of the joy) is. These are obviously linked: the concern is *about* the “something.” A person can be joyful about anything he can be concerned about, if only that concern is (to him) conspicuously satisfied. In knowing that a person rejoiced about X, you know about X only that his will was well disposed towards it and he got it (so to speak). Compare this with envy. If you know that somebody was envious about X (say, another's talent), you know several things about X as the subject sees it. You know that he sees X as involved in a *contest* with a *rival*, and that the issue is ultimately *personal importance*, and that the subject sees himself as *losing* the contest.

#### *Canonical and Non-Canonical Sub-Species of Joy*

The form of joy, then, is: *disposition of will + satisfaction thereof*. And this form is shared by all the so-called positive emotions. “Positive,” in this usage, means pleasurable. It doesn't mean that the emotion is good; we have seen that some joys are downright nasty, no matter how good they may feel to the person experiencing them. The other positive emotions are sub-species of joy—specifications—joys in this or that special kind of thing for some special kind of reason. If we contemplate the many things

that people can take joy in, we see that there are thousands of kinds of joy: joy in books, in compliments, in insults, in revenge, in possessions, in power over others, in giving, in pure drinking water, in excellent coffee, in the kingdom of God, and so on and so forth. Among the many possible intentional objects of joy, a handful have been canonized in our language. From German we borrow a special name, *Schadenfreude*, for example, for joy in damage, ruin, or hurt (usually somebody else's). Not just anything can be the object of *Schadenfreude* but only damage, ruin, hurt, and that sort of thing. The invidious joy in the satisfactions of envy is a kind of *Schadenfreude*. Other named "positive" emotions are admiration, pride, triumph, hope, relief, gratitude, nostalgia, and adoration. Each of these is joy in some specific kind of thing: excellence, excellence of self, winning, good prospects, relief from distress, benevolently given favors, goods of time past, and God's glory, each based on a corresponding specific disposition of will. I call these kinds of joy *canonical*, in contrast with the many unnamed types of joy, because tradition has picked them out and given them names, and the names thus carry rules specifying appropriate objects.

Here are (roughly) the formal objects or narrative structures of several of the main canonical kinds of joy. *Schadenfreude*: *An evil befalling S [usually a person] satisfies my concern that S be damaged, ruined, hurt, spoiled.* Admiration: *X's excellence satisfies my love of [concern for] excellence in Ys [where Y is some kind of thing].* Pride: *My (our) association with X (something excellent) satisfies my concern to be important.* Nostalgia: *Memories of X (happy event) satisfy my love of happy memories.* Adoration: *God satisfies my concern (disposition of will) that God be gorgeous.* Triumph: *A triumph satisfies my concern to prevail.* Relief: *This turn of events satisfies my concern for the alleviation or removal of present or prospective distress.* Hope: *Prospects satisfy my concern about the future.* Gratitude: *a benefactor's bestowing a benefit on a beneficiary satisfies my concerns for good things from benevolently intentioned agents.* Pride and adoration can also be seen as variants of admiration, pride being self-admiration and adoration being admiration of God.

Each of these kinds of joy specifies more narrowly and adds narrative structure to joy's basic schema. They are like variations on a theme, speciations of a genus. While "joy" and its synonyms ("gladness," "delight," "happiness," etc.) leave unspecified what the object of the concern and its satisfaction is, the others specify it to some extent.

We've seen that joy is an umbrella emotion type with a number of named emotion types as its sub-species. Yet in ordinary discourse we distinguish joy, as one emotion (type), from gratitude, admiration, pride, and so on, as though joy is *one* of the positive emotions. If we agree that gratitude and the others are kinds of joy, how shall we answer the question whether there are cases of joy that are *just plain* joy? But the fact that an emotion's category is not named doesn't imply that it belongs to no category. The following seem to be categories that don't have single names in English:

Joy in something you've created

Joy in natural beauty

Joy in cozy circumstances

Joy in something surprising

Though these joys don't have devoted vocabulary in English, they are just as much sub-species of joy as the canonical ones. In the absence of the vocabulary, though, English speakers are more likely to call cases of them simply joy or follow "joy" with a specifying phrase. Where we have a more precise word, we may use it, but we may also just call it joy without further specification. Strictly speaking, there is probably no such thing as sheer joy—a concerned apprehension of goodness with *no other qualifications whatsoever*.

It's arguable that we sometimes *experience* "sheer" joy where in fact we are rejoicing for reasons that might be brought out by reflecting. On examination we might discover that our joy is actually gratitude or hope or admiration. Or it might belong to a category that has no name. In other words, our emotional *experience* is often not the whole story about the emotion *itself*. Emotions are notorious for being subject to exploration, articulation, and thus further specification (as in psychotherapy).

#### *A Challenge to the Simplicity Thesis*

Let me now support the simplicity claim by considering a recent paper that disputes it. Philip Watkins and colleagues state that "joy can be distinguished from other positive emotions both in appraisals and function."<sup>18</sup> This agrees with the foregoing discussion, because joy per se is not the same as any of the other positive emotions. That is because the other emotions are *specifications* of joy, smaller classes within the class of joys. But Watkins et al. take the statement to be a critique of my view, because they think the appraisal structure<sup>19</sup> of joy is more complex than that of the other positive emotions.<sup>20</sup> If this were true, then joy's appraisal structure could not be the form of all the other pleasurable emotions; instead, it would be just one among the many "positive" emotions. What is their case for the complexity of joy's appraisal structure?

In a conceptual section of the paper titled "What is Joy?" the authors note that the intentional object of joy is something perceived as good, and they canvass some opinions about further qualities that a person must attribute to that good to experience joy in response to it. These would be further features of joy's formal object, features that would narrow the range of responses that would count as joy. Their canvass includes nine

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<sup>18</sup>Watkins et al., "Joy is A Distinct Positive Emotion," 2.

<sup>19</sup>"Appraisal structure" is another term for what I have been calling the narrative structure or the formal object of an emotion type. The term seems to have originated with Lazarus. See his *Emotion and Adaptation*.

<sup>20</sup>Watkins et al., "Joy is A Distinct Positive Emotion," 2.

possible conditions (see below). They claim that joy has a very complex appraisal structure, perhaps even uniquely complex among the “positive” emotions. And it does indeed if (1)–(9) are all necessary conditions for an emotion episode’s counting as joy! But I think we can go through their list and show that for each condition, some cases of joy fail to meet that condition. Consider the following counterexamples to the proposed features:

- (1) the good thing is something that the person *has been longing for*;

*Counterexample:* A woman in her late thirties, who thinks she is finished having children and certainly doesn’t long to have another, gets unexpectedly pregnant. She finds herself rejoicing about the prospect of having a new child.

- (2) the good thing is such as to suggest that the person is *favored or blessed*;

*Counterexample:* An atheist wins the lottery and rejoices. As far as he is concerned, this is purely a matter of luck and has nothing to do with being favored by God or fate.

- (3) the good thing is seen as *not owed* to the person who experiences joy in response to it;

*Counterexample:* Greg has owed Sam a large amount of money and the time for repayment is long past. Sam has come to think Greg will never pay him, but he does! And Sam rejoices that he got what was owed him.

- (4) its goodness *surpasses one’s expectations*;

*Counterexample:* A high school student applies to Yale and is confident she will be accepted. When she is accepted, she rejoices.

- (5) it is seen as coming by a “*turning of fortune or a redemptive twist, where something good follows on the heels of something bad*”;<sup>21</sup>

*Counterexample:* A high school student applies to Harvard and is confident he will be accepted. When he is accepted, he rejoices.

- (6) the good “*involves some kind of triumph after all seemed lost*”;

*Counterexample:* A high school student applies to Princeton and is confident she will be accepted. When she is accepted, she rejoices.

- (7) the good is “*consistent with one’s life plan*”;

*Counterexample:* A woman in her late thirties, who thinks she is finished having children and plans not to have another, gets unexpectedly pregnant. She finds herself rejoicing about the prospect of having a new child.

- (8) the good thing indicates “*increased connection with something good*”;

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<sup>21</sup>McAdams, *The Redemptive Self*.

*Counterexample:* A father contemplates his children, who are flourishing. He is no more connected with their flourishing now than he has been in the past, but he rejoices in considering their flourishing.

(9) the good thing belongs to a “situation of *secure attachment*.”<sup>22</sup>

*Counterexample:* Greg has owed Sam a large amount of money and the time for repayment is long past. Sam has come to think Greg will never pay him, but he does! And Sam rejoices. Secure attachment seems to play no role in Sam’s joy.

Since, for each proposed feature of joy’s formal object, some cases lack the proposed feature, none is in the formal object of joy. All of conditions (1)–(9) are satisfied in *some* instances of joy, but some of them are more typical, or even required, conditions for more specific pleasurable canonical emotion types. For example, (5) is characteristic of the kind of joy that we call “*relief*.” (2) and (3) seem to belong to *gratitude* (Watkins et al. confirm this judgment<sup>23</sup>), and to joy only as belonging to gratitude. (4) belongs with joyful *surprise*, which is another positive emotion type, though it lacks a single-term name. (6) belongs to the joy that we call “*triumph*.” Watkins et al. reject conditions (2) (favored or blessed) and (3) (unowed) as conditions for the object of joy, remarking that *instead*, they are conditions for gratitude:

[I]n factor analyses gratitude and joy always emerged as distinct factors. Indeed, even though the DPES [Dispositional Positive Emotions Scale] does not have an explicit gratitude factor, one seemed to emerge that was distinct from the joy factor, and the item ‘I consistently receive blessings that seem undeserved’ (designed to tap the ‘unowed’ aspect of joy), loaded strongly on this factor. *These findings contradict theories maintaining that gratitude is a form of joy.*<sup>24</sup>

The final inference in this quotation is invalid. Factor analysis shows only that people distinguish gratitude and joy, not that gratitude is not a kind of joy. To say so would be like pointing out that in factor analyses, people distinguish the categories “mammal” and “raccoon,” and concluding that this shows that raccoons aren’t mammals.

Watkins et al. say that, though gratitude is not a sub-species of joy, it is “related to” joy, and they speculate that dispositional gratitude (the trait of being a grateful person) makes one more prone to experience joy. This claim would be tautological if gratitude is a kind of joy, since dispositional

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<sup>22</sup>The notion of a secure attachment of a child or adolescent to a parent originates with John Bowlby. A child’s attachment to her parent is secure when the child has the confidence to venture into the world outside the relationship because of her confidence that when she returns to the parent for nurture, protection, and encouragement she will find the parent available to her. See Bowlby, *A Secure Base*. While the quality of a person’s attachment will plausibly affect the quality and patterns of a person’s joys, it is not a necessary condition for feeling joys.

<sup>23</sup>Watkins et al., “Joy is A Distinct Positive Emotion,” 9.

<sup>24</sup>Watkins et al., “Joy is A Distinct Positive Emotion,” 13, italics added.



gratitude is a disposition to feel gratitude. But it may be non-tautologically true as well if the following is roughly correct: Being a grateful person has a tendency to make one better liked by fellow human beings, and being well-liked tends to bring good things into one's life; so the grateful person will tend to have more occasions for joys in general than a less grateful person.

Watkins et al. seem to be especially interested in the relation of gratitude to joy, but they might have studied any of the pleasurable emotions in relation to joy. And we can expect that factor analyses of appropriate questionnaires would yield similar results for any of them, namely, that pride, triumph, relief, hope, etc. will all belong to different, but "related," factors. At any rate, this is what we would expect if they are all sub-species of joy.

### *Norms of Joy*

#### *Introduction: The Value of Joys*

What makes joys valuable? Well, I suppose that, other things being equal, the fact that these emotions are *pleasant* is one value. Other things being equal, we prefer to feel joy instead of sorrow or fear—because joy feels good, and sorrow and fear are unpleasant. But the value of joy is much more complicated than this. Barbara Fredrickson has spent her career showing how the pleasant ("positive") emotions have *consequential* value—that is, they *lead* to good things such as personal resourcefulness and effectiveness. Positive emotions undo the deleterious, hindering effects of such emotions as fear, anxiety, and anger, and they build resources for coping and resilience. Fredrickson summarizes this latter value in her "broaden-and-build" theory of positive emotions.

The function of positive emotions, as shaped over millennia by natural selection, . . . was to build an individual's resources for survival. The means by which this build function was achieved was by a momentarily broadened scope of awareness, creating a form of consciousness within individuals that included a wider array of thoughts, actions, and percepts than typical.<sup>25</sup>

Joy and the positive emotions open us up to the world, allowing us to see a wider range of options, thus making us more creative and judicious in solving problems and choosing courses of action. As a consequence of this "broadening," we acquire a larger fund of personal resources—skills, attitudes, social connections—for coping with problems and achieving good things in the world. This is the "build" function of our joys.

But the story of positive emotions is even happier than this. The pleasure value of joys is not just a source of their consequential value (the broaden-and-build function), but their consequential value in turn consolidates and increases their pleasure value.

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<sup>25</sup>Fredrickson, "Positive Emotions," 15.

Resources built through positive emotions also increased the odds that our ancestors would experience subsequent positive emotions, with their attendant broaden-and-build benefits, thus creating an upward spiral toward improved odds for survival, health, and fulfillment.<sup>26</sup>

In this “upward spiral” positive emotions broaden our minds and thus build our resources, generating more positive emotions that then broaden our minds and build our resources, generating more positive emotions, etc.

In this essay, I haven’t stressed either the pleasure value or the consequential value of our joys. I don’t deny them, but I think they need to be ethically and spiritually relativized, because positive emotions can be nasty. We must not confuse positivity as pleasantness with positivity as goodness. Fredrickson is clear: The “positive” emotions are “emotions with a pleasant subjective feel.”<sup>27</sup> And this is the way psychologists use the word.

Daniel Haybron begins to put our joys in perspective in his essay, “The Value of Positive Emotion: Philosophical Doubts and Reassurances.”<sup>28</sup> We shouldn’t just try to maximize our positive emotions. He points out that we need negative emotions because sometimes they are called for. “If you discover a friend bullying someone, reacting with joy would be perverse. On the contrary, you should be angry and disappointed with her.”<sup>29</sup> Our emotions should not just be “positive,” they should be fitting; and what they should fit is the value of the situations they are about. Joys fit good situations, and distresses fit bad situations. And I propose that the value of our joys, as well as of our distresses, depends on their fit with the situations they are about. Good joys are ones that are felt in response to good situations, and good distresses are ones that are felt in response to bad situations; bad joys are ones that are felt in response to bad situations, and bad distresses are ones that are felt in response to good situations.<sup>30</sup>

The broaden-and-build theory of the value of joys neglects their moral/spiritual value and the related fact that joys are built on and are relative to concerns. According to Fredrickson, the “positiveness” of joys is what undoes the deleterious effects of the “negative” emotions and builds resilience and coping resources by way of its power to “broaden” our outlook. Would the joys of revenge and self-righteousness, of vanity and domination, of arrogant self-assertion, of invidious pride and *Schadenfreude*, also buffer against the effects of negative emotions and build resources for coping? Maybe. But if so, shouldn’t we also expect that these joys will undermine our *happiness*?

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<sup>26</sup>Fredrickson, “Positive Emotions,” 15.

<sup>27</sup>Fredrickson, “Positive Emotions,” 13.

<sup>28</sup>In Gruber and Moskowitz, *Positive Emotion*, 281–300.

<sup>29</sup>Haybron, “The Value of Positive Emotion,” 292.

<sup>30</sup>This formula is imprecise, and for precision would need to take into consideration that the “situations” referred to are intentional objects.

It seems arguable that some positive emotions have consequential *dis*-value. For example, *Schadenfreude*, vengeance, and invidious pride seem to undermine relationships that protect their members, such as friendships and marriages. Do they possibly “broaden and build” maladaptive patterns of living? Does the broaden and build theory predict that joy in the contemplation of revenge will make a person more inventive and insightful about possibilities for getting revenge, and that this in turn will build one’s character as a vengeful person? “Don’t get angry; get even!” could be taken to mean: “Don’t suffer the dysphoria of resentment, but look on the bright side of being offended. Think positively: you *can* get even!” What a delicious thought! These seem to be positive emotions that are likely to cause *downward* spiraling—into self-isolation and conflict and the “negative” emotions attendant on that.

The broaden-and-build theory seems to neglect the question of “positive” emotions that are socially “negative” such as malicious joy, invidious pride, the pleasures of vengeance, relief at discovering the Russia investigation is on the wrong track, admiration of dictators and white supremacists, gratitude to confederates in debauchery, triumph in the struggle of evil over good, pride in being the best car thief in Cleveland, adoration of Satan, and nostalgia for the good old days of our criminal youth. Fredrickson’s work is all about the *value* of positive emotions, but she goes into no detail about their negative value, about despicable, misery-producing “positive” emotions. This is because her method of evaluating emotions doesn’t consider the concerns and dispositions of will on which they are based and consequently the objects in which the emotional pleasure is taken.

Some positive emotions are both intrinsically evil—evil simply *as* positive emotions—and also consequentially bad, leading, for example, to social isolation. And some negative emotions are both intrinsically good and consequentially good, leading, for example, to the consolidation of friendships. Significantly, the apostle Paul instructs the church at Rome *both* to rejoice with those who rejoice *and* to weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15).

The joys that are relevant for a theology of joys are by no means limited to the English canonical joys, but I think our examination of them helps us appreciate the diversity among kinds of joys. It also happens, unsurprisingly, that many of the examples of joy in the NT fall into the canonical categories. Let’s first look at a few that don’t, and then turn to a few that do.

### *A Theology of Joys*

What is a Christian theology of joys? I propose that it’s *an articulation of an effort to understand the place of joys in the psychology of persons who live by the world-outlook originally sketched in the New Testament*. Joy is, of course, not peculiar to the Christian life; it is a generic type of human emotion. So in the earlier parts of this essay I have attempted to clarify what that emotion type is.

Joy, in its various forms, is pre-eminently the emotion of Christian life because it is the generic human way of being in touch with what is *good*, and Christianity teaches that the fundamental evaluative quality of ultimate reality is good. God is good, creation is good, the gospel of Jesus Christ is good news. Evil, the sort of thing that properly evokes fear, sadness, anger, disappointment, remorse, and the rest of the “negative” emotions, is secondary and deviational. Though it may be hard to see, or even to believe, through all the pain, good will have the last word. *Gratitude* sees the good as freely and benevolently given benefit; it is a response to generosity, and God is generous in Jesus Christ; *admiration* in its three variants (*adoration*, *admiration*, and *pride*) sees the good as glorious—the glory of God, the glory of things, and the glory of being human; *relief* sees the good as the removal of burdens, and the central event of the New Testament, the redemption of the world in Jesus Christ, is the removal of the master burdens of human life, the burdens of sin and death; *triumph* sees the good as the outcome of a struggle, and Christ has defeated the powers of sin and death; *hope* sees the good in prospect, and ultimate prospects are good in Christ. I have room here for only a few illustrations, but a theology of joys will examine and expound each of these takes on the good as they are represented in the New Testament.

But there is also a group of references to joy in the New Testament that don’t fit neatly into any of the categories, either because the context is not concrete enough to indicate a category (the word “joy” is used in a generic reference) or because the context of the reference doesn’t fit into any of the named categories. Some of these references bring out functions or contexts of joy that also contribute to its value, yet are not a matter of differentiated intentional object.

While in their joy [*apo tēs charas*] they were disbelieving and still wondering [*thaumazontōn*, marveling], he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. (Luke 24:41–43)

The disciples were so astonished to see Jesus that they could “hardly believe” their eyes. Yet their joy at beholding him suggests that they did believe it was he. We might call this “astonished joy.” Their astonishment registers the extraordinary and unexpected character of the good that is Jesus’s appearance before them.

John answered, “No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him.’ He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. For this reason my joy (*chara*) has been fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3.27–30)

John the Baptizer compares himself with the friend of a bridegroom. The bridegroom is the one who will enjoy the fulfillment of having the bride, and the other, being his friend, cherishes the wedding for the sake of his

friend. One category that John's joy belongs to is that of *sympathetic* joy: joy in someone else's good, in virtue of loving the other. The friend rejoices, as does the bridegroom, in the prospect (hope) of the bridegroom's having the bride. Given the friend's interest, when he hears the voice of the bridegroom (that he has arrived to take the bride), he "rejoices greatly": this great good is finally *present* (or at least imminent). This is not the joy of hope, but the joy of *fulfilled hope*. John's joy is also spiritually interesting because of the humility it expresses. Up to this point John has been something of a celebrity and may have derived some joy from the crowds that came out from the towns to hear his preaching. But his love of Jesus and commitment to Jesus's mission apparently makes it easy for him to forfeit this special standing in favor of the one whose ministry he has been foreshadowing. I don't know of a single word, in Greek or English or any other language, for either astonished joy or sympathetic joy or the joy of fulfilled hope, or humble joy. In the absence of such a word, we must pick them out using locutions like "sympathetic joy" and "joy of fulfilled hope." By contrast, we don't need an expression like "joy in something's excellence," because we have a word like "admiration."

*Joy in Loving Favors: Gratitude.* Gratitude is one of the named categories of joy. It is a double joy: joy about the benefit that is received with gratitude, and joy about the good will of the benefactor who has bestowed the good thing for the benefit of the beneficiary. It is not just gladness about a benefit received.

Hichem Naar has argued, in effect, that only some gratitude is joy.<sup>31</sup> "Generic gratitude" is gratitude that consists in nothing more than a belief that one has been benefited in some way by a benefactor; it can be perfunctory and without emotional involvement. Naar's example is gratitude to persons in an academic audience who have made useful comments on a presentation, expressed in a footnote of its published version. For this kind of gratitude, he argues, it is not necessary to *feel* grateful; but "deep" gratitude, by contrast, involves feeling grateful. The fact that Naar's claim about generic gratitude is novel and controversial suggests that the default view—common sense—is that genuine gratitude is an emotion, and indeed, a happy feeling. Unmoved "gratitude" is just conventional polite behavior and not really gratitude at all. In fact, I think that all the canonical varieties of joy—admiration, pride, adoration, hope, relief, and triumph—have merely behavioral-conventional counterparts, and a crucial mark of whether an instance is genuine is that it is a case of emotional pleasure.

Mary's gratitude to God, described in Luke 1:46–49, is anything but perfunctory.

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices (ēgal-liasen) in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

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<sup>31</sup>Naar, "Gratitude," 15–34.

Mary credits God with the benefit, which is God's favor in making her mother of the Savior. Her rejoicing is a clear case of heartfelt gratitude. She also feels *honored* by God's favor, so her joy is both gratitude and a certain holy pride. Pride doesn't require that the association of the excellent with oneself be one of agency—that one deserve credit as an agent for having the excellence of which one is proud. Other kinds of association are also characteristic of pride—in this case, being the recipient of the blessing that establishes the excellence. God has honored her, and the generations to follow will honor her.

See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice (*chairete*) at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. (Luke 10:19–20)

Jesus discourages the disciples from rejoicing in their authority and power over the spirits, which would be a feeling of pride. Instead, he recommends that they rejoice that God has graciously blessed them by writing their names in heaven. He is saying, in effect, "Rather than be proud, try being grateful."

*Joy in the Glory of God: Adoration.* The glory (*doxa*) of something is its manifest excellence. That is, it is both excellent and shows itself to be so with a kind of radiance of excellence. But the radiance doesn't guarantee that the excellence will be seen, because the beholder may lack the emotional qualification (the disposition of will) that allows her to see it. In the following passage, we can imagine, only some of those present had the qualification.

"And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing (*echairen*) at all the wonderful things (*endoxois*) that he was doing. (Luke 13:16–17)

Jesus had just healed a woman, and the leader of the synagogue had become indignant and announced that people shouldn't come to be healed on the Sabbath. He saw nothing glorious in what Jesus was doing, though he may well have seen that it was extraordinary (thus "wonderful" in that sense). But he didn't admire it. The glory of something is a kind of goodness and can be perceived only with joy. If you perceive something glorious without joy, you're missing something, even though you may perceive that it's *amazing*, and you may even know, "intellectually," that it is good. The crowd in the synagogue rejoiced at the glorious things Jesus was doing, and so saw them better for what they were.

As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully (*chairontes ainein ton theon*) with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying,

“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory (*doxa*) in the highest heaven!” (Luke 19:36–38)

The scene is celebratory, and the glory in the highest heaven that the crowd commends is the celebration of the glorious things that God is doing: may there be celebration in heaven as there is here on earth of these great good things! *Giving* God the glory—shouting, singing, and presenting offerings—is recognizing and reduplicating the manifestation that is inherent in his glory. And all this must be done joyfully, if the manifestation of the excellence is actually to be enhanced. Because celebrations are *expressions*, they cannot really be celebrations without the joy.

#### *Joy in Your Own Glory: Pride*

and when [the religious authorities in Jerusalem] had called in the apostles, they had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. As they left the council, they rejoiced (*chairontes*) that they were considered worthy (*katēxiōthēsan*) to suffer dishonor for the sake of the Name. And every day in the temple and at home they did not cease to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. (Acts 5:40–42)

As they leave the council, possibly bleeding but at a minimum stinging from their flogging, the apostles are feeling good about themselves for how they acted in face of the council’s threats and abuse. They see their flogging as an honor. They take it that God has considered them “worthy” to suffer dishonor for the sake of the Lord who suffered dishonor for them and for the world. They are feeling God’s approval, and the feeling is a kind of joy. And as they move forward with their ministry, they are buoyed by the happy memory of the honor God has bestowed on them.

If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is glorified (*doxazetai*), all rejoice (*synchirei*) together with it. (1 Corinthians 12:26)

Paul seems to regard it as natural and worthy of approval that a person should take emotional pleasure in being honored—or “glorified,” as the Greek would have it. When one member of the church is honored, and the church is functioning as it ought, the other members will share his or her pleasure out of love for their brother or sister in Christ. The “glorification” of the one member will be some kind of celebration, which will include some form of praise of the member—a presenting or manifesting of the excellence for which he is being celebrated.

Another verb for “glory,” found predominantly in Paul, in *kauchaomai*. The dictionary tells us that it can mean, “boast, boast about, take pride in, glory (v.); rejoice, be glad.” To glory in something is to experience joy at being associated with it because of its excellence. But “he who glories, let him glory in the LORD” (2 Corinthians 10:17 NKJV, quoting Jeremiah 9:24). The more recent translations tend to render it “to boast,” and to translate its noun cognates *kauchēsis* and *kauchēma* as “boasting” and “ground or reason for boasting.” This policy somewhat obscures the word’s emotional resonance. Since I want to preserve that resonance, I revert to the

older usage. Boasting, when it is expressive, expresses self-approval and is a kind of self-celebration that invites others to join in the joyful festivities. If the boasting is among friends and without invidiousness, the listeners pick it up and extend the celebration. It has other functions, as well. Boasting may be intended to evoke, not a common joy, but envy, and may alienate rather than bring others onboard the boat of celebration. It may also function, not to express joyful pride, but to shore up a sagging self-esteem. But I think that Paul uses the word expressively and benignly. Glorifying (*kauchēsis*) is self-referential: it is about something that is excellent (say, the Lord) but at the same time it is about the self of the person who “glories”: by being associated with the excellent thing, the subject gets a derivative excellence, as he sees it. Thus, to glory in the Lord is to feel yourself enhanced by your association with the Lord. This is different from glorifying the Lord, which is making the Lord’s excellence manifest through praises and other celebratory actions.

Paul does a lot of glorifying in his second letter to the Corinthians, and he doesn’t limit it to glorifying in the Lord. He glories in his accomplishments as an apostle, in apparent response to some who disparaged his apostleship. He is obviously uncomfortable with some of his glorifying as he details his many sufferings for Christ, sometimes by hiding behind an anonymous “man I know” (12:1–5), and three times calling his boasting “foolish” (11:16, 11:21, 12:11), but then plowing ahead with the boasting anyway.

But sometimes Paul glories in things other than the Lord, apparently without compunction.

In addition to our own consolation, we rejoiced still more at the joy (*echarēmen epi tē chara*) of Titus, because his mind has been set at rest by all of you. For if I have been somewhat boastful (*kekauchēmai*) about you to him, I was not disgraced; but just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting (*kauchēsis*) to Titus has proved true as well. (2 Corinthians 7:13b–14)

Paul is proud of the Corinthians and has expressed his pride to Titus. Here Paul seems to justify his glorifying about the excellences of the Corinthians by noting that he had said nothing but the truth. Paul glories too, and again without compunction, in other fruits of his ministry. He writes to the Thessalonians,

For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting (*stephanos kauchēseōs*) before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? Yes, you are our glory (*doxa*) and joy (*chara*)! (1 Thessalonians 2:19)

### Conclusion: Joys and Happiness

Let’s turn, finally, to the question of how joy is related to happiness. We’ve seen that “happy” can be simply a synonym for “joyful.” The popsicles made the kids happy. But in some contexts, especially where “happy” qualifies “person” or “life,” the word has a more classical sense, a sense like Aristotle’s ‘*eudaimonia*’ or the New Testament “*makariotēs*” or the Latin



"*beatitudo*." In this sense, "happy" qualifies a life, or at least a goodly stretch of one. If I give the panhandler a \$10 bill, it may make him happy, but it won't make him a happy *person* or give him a happy *life*. This is quite a different sense of "happy" from the joy of getting a popsicle when you're seven years old. Aristotle thought that to be happy in the classical sense (*eudaimōn*), you had to be virtuous, have a few friends, and live in a well-constituted city-state. Jesus apparently thought that to be *makarios* (blessed as in "blessed are the peacemakers"), you had to live by the standards of the kingdom of God (see Matthew 5). Thomas Aquinas thought that to be fully *beatus* (happy), you had to be perceiving God.

It seems clear that "positive" emotions, the ones that "feel good," have an important place in the happy life. We can't imagine a happy life bereft of emotional pleasure. We've seen that joys are various kinds of perceptions of situations as good, and surely a happy life must include appreciative perceptions of the good. So we might think, somewhat like the classical utilitarians, that the happy life is simply the one in which pleasant experiences predominate (or overwhelmingly predominate): lots of pleasures, and not too many distresses. But we've also seen that joys come, not only in amounts, but also in qualities. Some joys are despicable, some trivial or foolish. This is because they construe as good what is bad or what is not as good as the joy construes it to be. All three of the classic conceptions of happiness that I've mentioned insist that a happy life needs to be more than a pleasant life. It needs to be a good life—good by standards for evaluating human beings. Only as such can it be a life that appreciates the good in the world it inhabits.

The foregoing considerations suggest that people are not always the best judges of their own happiness. Happiness, then, is not identical with "subjective well-being"—it isn't the same thing as *feeling* that you're happy, because you might feel happy and not *be* happy. In particular, you might be misled by your joys. Your joys might be intense, and yet evil or sordid or trivial. Imagine a very "successful" dictator, one who, by terrorizing the population of his country, can control everything he wants to control. He can arrange for himself to have all the satisfactions he wants, and let us imagine that he has a "sophisticated" notion of satisfactions. He is a connoisseur of music and painting, and he surrounds himself with the best. He is a lot more than a "pig satisfied." But he is selfish, unjust, and bereft of compassion. One of his delights is getting revenge on his enemies, and he is successful and even exquisite in his means of doing so. He is a rare bird, no doubt, but you get the picture. By the standards of all the classic conceptions of happiness, this man is unhappy because, despite and even because of his many joys, he is such a "miserable" specimen of humanity.

What, then, shall we say about the relation between joys and happiness? I think we should say that joys are an important part of the good life, because joys are our epistemic-affective ways of being in touch with the good; and happiness requires being personally in touch with the good.

But the joys that predominate in a happy life must be ones that do put us in touch with the good, and this means that they must be deep and true. They need to be joys that are consistent with human nature—or better, joys that are *fulfillments* of human nature. In a picture of the happy life derived from the New Testament, true joys will be ones that arise out of the love of God (see the Aquinas quotation at the beginning of this paper) and his creatures, especially the human ones. They will be the joys of this kind of fellowship. They will be joys at signs of the kingdom of God—acts of justice, compassion, generosity, the wellbeing of children and adults. Among these will be sympathetic joys—rejoicing in others' good; common joys—rejoicing in shared successes; joys of fulfilled hopes, where the hopes are based on concerns characteristic of well-developed human beings. The happy person will experience small joys, as well, but many of these will be “as if not” (1 Corinthians 7:30) because of the knowledge of true joys; all these joys will be participatory because the joys themselves will participate in the good, as themselves part of the good. In addition to many unnamed joys, happiness will involve the named joys: gratitude, admiration, adoration, pride, relief, hope, and others. If these joys are to form important aspects of the happy life, they will have to be ordered to fitting objects. All of them can go wrong.<sup>32</sup>

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