“Attending to Inadvertency”: The Meaning of Forgetting in Joseph Butler’s Account of Forgiveness

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For Mom, Dad, Molly, Anthony, and Stephen

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This dissertation argues—both from a descriptive and normative aim—that Joseph Butler emphasizes inadvertence as one way to elicit an emotional kind of forgiveness. This is a kind of forgiveness that goes further than the decisional kind of forgiveness he argues earlier on in the sermon. This kind of forgiveness appeals to the general principle of benevolence. In this way, Butler's account endorses two kinds of forgiveness (i.e. decisional and emotional). In sermon nine, "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries," however, Butler also morally obliges the injured to "make allowances for inadvertence" (*S* 9.25). As I will argue in the chapters that follow, these allowances for inadvertence correspond between the wrongdoer and the injured. If the injured feels that the wrongdoer committed a wrong through inadvertency, then the injured must also take into account that they have committed inadvertent injuries to others, too. Self-love tends to magnify everything that is wrong about the wrongdoer, and this magnification tends to make the injured forget their own wrongs. Butler asks his audience to reverse the magnification, deliberately considering the times they have acted inadvertently, in order to forgive the injuries others have inadvertently caused to them. Subsequently, "the indignity or injury would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come out to be nothing at all" (*S* 9.22). This method for mitigating resentment is another way for the injured to forgive the wrongdoer, especially, writes Butler, "to beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us" (*S* 9.3). Long overlooked by scholars, my consideration of Butler's appeal to inadvertency is a crucial contribution to his overall account of forgiveness.

In sermon nine, paragraph twenty-one, Butler introduces the reader to his further reflections, writing, "let me add some few reflections, which may have a more direct tendency to subdue those vices in the heart, to beget in us this right temper, and lead us to a right behavior

towards those who have offended us" (*S* 9.21). From a descriptive lens, these reflections, left unexamined to date by scholars, offer additional aspects to his account of forgiveness. Then, from a normative lens, I argue that Butler obliges the injured to consider inadvertency—both on behalf of the wrongdoer and on behalf of themselves—as another worthy route to an emotional kind of forgiveness. If the injured finds themselves unable to forgive wrongdoers, then they *ought* to consider any inadvertency to help encourage them to do so. Butler is steadfast to get his congregation and readers to forgive.

Butler argues for human beings to practice forgiveness, and this is demonstrated to at least four audiences. The first concerns the congregation where he delivered the sermon, at the Rolls Chapel. There, he preached that forgiving would help to reconcile the highest and lowest members of the equity law courts (e.g. judges, lawyers, clerks, Master of the Rolls, Lord Chancellor, and so on). These individuals make up most of the collective body at the Rolls Chapel. They were philosophically and legally educated. So, precepts such as "forgive," and "love our enemies," or even, principles of general benevolence, would not have been peculiar sayings for them to hear. From the pulpit, Butler argues that forgiveness can help to rehabilitate the moral character of the equity courts. As will be discussed further in chapter three, the moral character of the equity courts had been under great scrutiny during the time Butler preached. On the one hand, the equity courts were scrutinized by those who represented the common law courts. In the essay, "Reasoning about morals from Butler to Hume," Aaron Garrett writes, "This was the time when a long-brewing conflict between the common lawyers and the Chancery had come to a head. Common lawyers accused equity judges of resting their judgments on nothing beyond the 'absolute and extraordinary power' of the judge in opposition to common-law judgments which rested in rules and precedent" (Garrett *PRE* 179). On the other hand, the equity

courts were under great scrutiny by public opinion, especially on the heels of the South Sea Bubble economic collapse.

The Master of the Rolls, Joseph Jekkyl, appointed Butler to preach at the Rolls Chapel at the end of 1718. He began to preach there at the beginning of 1719. Around this time, Jekkyl aimed to help morally rehabilitate the equity courts. In the book, *Common Law and Enlightenment, 1689-1750*, Julia Randolph discusses some of his efforts of equity moral reform, writing, "Master of the Rolls Joseph Jekkyl [was] notably active in the eighteenth-century movement for moral reform. Indeed, it was Jekkyl, a prominent advocate for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, who pushed for the investigation of ministerial corruption after the collapse of the South Sea Bubble. Jekkyl was a man of principle as well as party and profession" (Randolph 207-208). Jekkyl's appointment of Butler to preach at the Rolls Chapel, is thus, no exception to his overall goal of rehabilitating the equity law courts.

Secondly, Butler argues that his readers (those outside of the Rolls Chapel) ought to be forgiving of each other. His eighth and ninth sermons, "Upon Resentment," and "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries," were eventually edited, compiled, and finally, published for a general readership. By choosing to publish these sermons to a general audience, he wanted human beings to forgive each other in their personal relationships, public interactions, working relationships, and so on. As a result, Butler's sermons offer the pragmatic view that human beings are better off—both publicly and privately—when they are forgiving rather than if they consistently hold grudges.

Third, Butler argues to a larger religious audience. In his view, human beings ought to be forgiving when considering matters of faith and salvation. In Butler's view, it would be better to face your Creator, in the afterlife, having known that you were a forgiving person during your

time on Earth rather than if you were not a forgiving person. He obliges the reader to imagine standing naked before the Judge of all the Earth, and writes, "could any thing raise more dreadful apprehensions of that judgment, than the reflection that you had been implacable, and without mercy towards those who had offended you: without that forgiving spirit towards others, which that it may now be exercised towards yourselves, is your only hope?" (*S* 9.28). By the time we stand before the Judge of all the Earth, argues Butler, we will likely ask for forgiveness of our sins. Now, if we had forgiven others throughout our lifetime, then it is more likely that the Judge will also forgive us when we are in need of it the most.

Fourth, Butler aims to convince the sceptics of forgiveness to be forgiving as well. Even the sceptic may understand that it is important for human beings to forgive, especially when it comes to other people. However, the sceptic may not be convinced to forgive when *they* are in the position to do so. If the sceptic is in the position to forgive, then they may recall that it is the law of our nature to forgive those who have wronged us. Moreover, they may be able to acknowledge that it might only require seeing the wrongdoer as a mere fellow citizen to elicit forgiveness. Perhaps, all they need to do to forgive the wrongdoer, writes Butler, is "to be affected towards the injurious person in the same way any good men, uninterested in the case, would be" (*S* 9.19). From the sceptic's point of view, this is possible; however, it might still not convince them by not holding enough emotional emphasis. As a result, Butler proceeds to consider the role of inadvertency to help elicit the sceptics to forgive. As will be discussed in chapter three, Butler considers different kinds of inadvertency. Some kinds are derived from mistake, misunderstanding, or carelessness. Other kinds of inadvertency derive from forgetting. Making allowances for different kinds of inadvertency are precisely, writes Butler, "what common sense should suggest, to avoid judging wrong of a matter before us, though virtue and

morals were out of the case" (*S* 9.25). In this way, he does not demand the forgiver to be an expert in virtue to properly forgive. Subsequently, if the sceptic is willing to consider various kinds of inadvertency, at least from a common sense suggestion, then this could also help persuade them to forgive.

My interest in examining inadvertency in Butler's account of forgiveness began after reading Jeffrie Murphy and Jean Hampton's 1988 book, *Forgiveness and Mercy*. In the opening page of "Forgiveness and Resentment," Murphy writes, "Forgiveness, Bishop Butler teaches, is the forswearing of resentment – the resolute overcoming of the anger and hatred that are naturally directed toward a person who has done one an unjustified and non-excused moral injury" (Murphy and Hampton 15). In this regard, the injured cannot properly forgive unless they have resolutely overcome the anger directed at the person who committed the unjustified moral injury. Here is a definition of forgiveness that establishes the philosophical conversation—between Murphy and Hampton—that would ensue throughout the rest of their book.

Murphy's assessment of Butler's definition of forgiveness does not stop here, however. He continues to develop Butler's definition further, writing, "By his emphasis on the forswearing of resentment, Butler indicates that he quite properly wants to draw a distinction between forgiveness (which may be a virtue and morally commanded) and forgetting (which may just happen). Forgiveness is the sort of thing that one does for a reason, and where there are reasons there is a distinction between good ones and bad ones" (Murphy and Hampton 15). In this passage, Murphy emphasizes that Butler "wants to draw a distinction" between forgiveness and forgetting. On the one hand, forgiveness is a morally commanded virtue, done for a reason, and when there are multiple reasons to forgive, there are good reasons and bad reasons to do so. On

the other hand, forgetting "may just happen." In sum, forgiving is one thing, forgetting is something else; that is, something separate and removed from forgiveness.

Murphy's simplified reading of Butler encouraged me to pick-up and read Butler's *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*, and specifically, I spent much time studying sermon eight, "Upon Resentment," and sermon nine, "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries." Toward the end of sermon nine, I kept finding the word, "inadvertency," or "inadvertence." This term kept coming up in sermon nine, paragraphs twenty-two, twenty-four, twenty-five, and twenty-six. As a reader in many texts in moral philosophy, I had never come across a moral philosopher who obliged his readers, "to make allowances for inadvertence" (*S* 9.25). After looking up this term, I saw that inadvertency shares a relationship with forgetting. Sometimes, people say things inadvertently because they forgot that something was said in confidence. An inadvertent slip of the tongue can indicate that information was not supposed to be shared to another person, inadvertently providing this information could indicate the person forgot to keep it private. There are also other kinds of inadvertency that indicate something done unintentionally or by accident. In these cases, inadvertency might not be directly connected to forgetting. In any case, I was fascinated to see that Butler paid so much attention to this word, especially after reading Murphy's summary that confirmed Butler's account of forgiveness has nothing to say about forgetting.

After reading Butler's sermons several times over, I began to seek Butlerian scholarship on his account of forgiveness. Although I learned a great deal about Butler's account of forgiveness, I continued to detect that no one who had devoted significant attention to his emphasis on inadvertency. This term provides more nuance than Murphy's general assessment of Butler's account that stresses forgiving is one thing, forgetting is entirely something else.

Furthermore, the secondary scholarship continued to carry Murphy's baton, so to speak, on Butler's account of forgiving involving a strict boundary between forgiving and forgetting. In my view, as I will demonstrate in the following chapters, the link between forgiveness and inadvertency complicates these strict boundaries.

Murphy's analysis of Butler's indication of forgiving and forgetting returns later on in chapter one. Reflecting on his definition of forgiveness—as the resolute overcoming of resentment—Murphy asks, "Is every instance where resentment is overcome a case of the virtue of forgiveness?" (Murphy and Hampton 22). He quickly answers, "No." Some people are able to overcome resentment, and yet, not forgive the wrongdoer. He considers the case of forgetting. To further emphasize the opposition of forgetting with forgiving, he explains, "Sometimes we lose a vivid memory of old wrongs, become bored with our resentments, and simply forget. But this just *happens* to us; that is, it is totally non-voluntary. As such it seems too removed from agency to count as a moral virtue – though it might be a desirable disposition of character to possess" (Murphy and Hampton 23). From Murphy's view, forgetting means to lose a vivid memory of old wrongs, to become bored with our resentments, and simply, to forget. In a passive vein, forgetting just happens to us. Or rather, forgetting often happens to us spontaneously, without our control. Forgetting is totally non-voluntary, and thus, although it *is* a way to resolutely overcome resentment directed at the wrongdoer, it is not a way to forgive.

Finally, in a footnote to this passage, Murphy acknowledges that there *is* much more complexity about forgetting; however, readers will not be able to grasp such complexity by referring to Butler's account. He writes:

> Although I am not here able to pursue the matter in any depth, I should at least note that forgetting is in fact more complex than this account [Butler's] suggests. As both

> Nietzsche and Freud have taught us, some cases that appear to involve mere non-voluntary forgetting might, when analyzed in depth, prove to be complex (though unconscious) rational strategies – strategies for which an individual might legitimately be held accountable. Here cases that initially look like mere forgetting might merit reclassification as forgetting of a more complex sort or even as forgiving (Murphy and Hampton 23 n. 10).

Murphy is willing to recognize more complexity about forgetting; however, he clearly thinks it is not to be found in Butler's writings. After reading these passages, I questioned: Is this true? Is Butler's understanding of forgetting basic and elementary? Does Butler examine forgetting with more complexity than Murphy maintained? And, if he did, then what significance does this complexity of forgetting contribute to his overall account of forgiveness?

The word, "inadvertence," or "inadvertency," comes up several times in quick succession towards the end of sermon nine. As he instructed earlier on in the sermon, his first goal was to argue that revenge is always wrongful. Secondly, he argues that human beings ought to be forgiving of each other by means of the general principle of benevolence. In this regard, people can be forgiving of others by appealing to the rational principle of benevolence. This appears to indicate a more rational or deliberative kind of forgiveness. But then, he proceeds to make a third and final push for an emotional kind of forgiveness. He lets his readers know that he will "then proceed to *some reflections*" (*S* 9.3). When Butler gets to these reflections, he consistently relies on inadvertency as another way to help elicit forgiveness. Thus, the appeal to inadvertency plays a substantial role in showing our obligations to forgive injuries.

Inadvertency is a term that John Locke defined in his famous 1689 work, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. This was a text that Butler studied throughout his education

at a Dissenting Academy headed by an instructor named Samuel Jones. As Bob Tennant explains, at this academy, students translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek, read Isocrates and Terence, studied "the logic of Heereboord as well as mathematics and Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*" (Tennant 21). According to Locke, inadvertency is defined as the following: "When a man overlooks even that which he does know. This is an affected and present ignorance, which misleads our judgments as much as the other" (Locke 254). Indeed, overlooking does not always derive from forgetting. A person may overlook something that they never even had any memory of whatsoever. Or, it could simply suggest a failure to notice something. With Locke's view, though, inadvertency concerns an overlooking of that which the agent does know. When it comes to forgetting, we usually forget what we know. Forgetting could mislead our judgments. Thus, it would be hard to absolutely exclude forgetting from Locke's definition of inadvertency because it often comes into play when someone overlooks something which they know.

Butler's ninth sermon examines inadvertency to help encourage the injured to forgive wrongdoers. Since Butler was absolutely opposed to the notion of a general principle of ill-will towards others, and also toward ourselves, he argues for human beings to consider inadvertency as a contribution to injuries. It is more probable than not that some factor of inadvertency—on behalf of the wrongdoer—contributed to the transgression. Furthermore, if we are able to acknowledge inadvertency on behalf of the wrongdoer, then we ought to consider that we have also committed inadvertencies as well. As Butler stresses, "Self-love is a medium of a peculiar kind: in these cases it magnifies every thing which is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens every thing amiss in ourselves" (*S* 9.22). When we are wronged, we tend to see wrongdoers—or the injury itself—to be much worse than they are. In so doing, we tend to forget

that there are many things amiss in ourselves, too.

The literature is clear to demonstrate that Butler's account of forgiveness does not consider forgetting to play any role whatsoever. The fact that he put so much emphasis on attending to inadvertency, however, is clearly something that indicates much more complexity about forgetting than what the Butlerian scholarship has maintained. Returning to Murphy's footnote, described earlier, a reader would be better to locate more complexity in forgetting within the writings of Nietzsche and Freud than in those of Butler. In this regard, although Murphy recognizes Butler's definition of forgiveness to be important for examining the debate about its meaning further, he also dismisses his understanding of forgetting to be nothing substantial or worthwhile, lacking depth, and thus, having no contribution to his account of forgiveness. Although inadvertency does not *always* mean that something has been forgotten, in many other ways, it *does* indicate forgotten details that *could* aid in the process of forgiving. The relationship between inadvertency and forgetting is quite complex. Even further, Butler obliges his readers to consider such complexities as another way to help elicit the forgiveness of injuries. It would be hard to maintain such an adamant position that Butler's account of forgiveness absolutely does not consider forgetting to play a role. Inadvertent behaviors can often lead to wrongdoings that put forgiveness in play. The mere fact that inadvertency *can* be caused by forgetting *must* shed light on a crucial feature in Butler's account of forgiveness that has clearly been forgotten over the last three centuries.

In many circumstances, a wrongdoing could be derived from something inadvertently forgotten, even though it should not have been. Indeed, the wrongdoing, blame, and resentment—attributed to the wrongdoer—is still justified. Butler prefers inadvertent wrongdoings—either those derived from forgetting or others not forgotten—over wrongdoings

done out of malice, hatred, or scorn. In his overall view, it is more probable than not that human beings injure each other due to inadvertencies than wrongdoings that emanate from intentional hatred or pure evil. As a result, Butler obliges the injured to look into themselves, and thus, to attend to their own inadvertencies. Since the wrongdoer likely acted out of inadvertency, he obliges the injured *also* not to forget that they have also committed inadvertent wrongs to others, too. Consequently, the emotional intensity of the injury could lessen to quite a degree. When the injured remembers that they are also wrongdoers, then this might help to elicit an emotional kind of forgiveness.

Before arriving at this goal, however, I need to begin by establishing the traditional reading of Butler, derived from Jeffrie Murphy. In chapter one, my goal is to establish the relevancy of Murphy's reading of Butler within the late twentieth-century and twenty-first century North American philosophical debate on forgiveness. His reading was regarded by many theorists—examining the philosophy of forgiveness—as true without question. In so doing, Murphy's reading of Butler grew legs, so to speak, as a traditional reading of his definition of forgiveness, and also, a traditional reading of the distinction between forgiving and forgetting.

In order to establish Murphy's reading of Butler—as a traditional one—I rely on several other theorists who have examined forgiveness with reference to Murphy's traditional reading of Butler. Not only do these theorists regard his reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness to be accurate—without question—but they also accept this distinction between forgiving and forgetting as well. The first theorist we will touch on is Paul Hughes. He clearly recognizes Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness to be an important contribution to the debate about the meaning of forgiveness. Then, he acknowledges Murphy for making this distinction between forgiving and forgetting. Similarly with respect to Murphy, Hughes also

describes forgetting as a totally passive phenomenon, and thus, something completely different than forgiving.

Paul Hughes elaborates on Murphy's account of forgiveness in the 1993 essay, "What is involved in Forgiving?" He poses the question, "But when is overcoming resentment (moral anger) forgiveness? Other writers have argued that overcoming resentment or forswearing negative feelings is forgiveness just in case it is done for a moral reason" (Hughes 332). Hughes describes the overcoming of resentment, emphasizing the importance of activity or effort. In support of Murphy's account, he writes:

> [This] involves the notion of a person's getting beyond obstacles by her or his own efforts, or by the joint efforts of several people. Overcoming resentment presupposes effort or struggle on the part of s/he who overcomes. Forgetting is, however, a completely passive phenomenon, in the sense at issue, and so fails to be a case of overcoming anything at all" (Hughes 333).

The overcoming of resentment must occur for a reason that involves effort and activity. People need to understand forgiveness as a feat, as the successful completion of a kind of obstacle course; a game whose finish-line demands the shedding of resentment directed at wrongdoers. The trajectory of this "obstacle course" cannot be prevailed upon by means of forgetting because "it just happens to us," or perhaps, we get bored, or finally, the vivid memory of old wrongdoings, old resentments, is simply no longer worth the time or energy. In any of these circumstances, forgiveness is not in play. Simply put, we can forget but this is *not* to forgive.

As will be argued in the following chapters, Murphy's definition of forgiveness—and the persistent exclusion of forgetting—derives from his reading of Butler's account of forgiveness.

Thanks to Murphy's adoption of Butler's account of forgiveness, he has reintroduced the writings of an eighteenth-century theologian, moral philosopher, and legalist into contemporary debates about resentment and the forgiveness of injuries. To be clear, Murphy's writings encouraged me to engage more directly with Butler's *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*.

As will be discussed in chapter five, the growth in neuroscience and empirical psychology has demonstrated ways that normal forgetting—as opposed to pathological forgetting—could be beneficial for human cognition to operate properly. Furthermore, normal forgetting could play a role in the forgiveness of injuries. Instead of reducing forgetting to a purely negative and passive phenomenon that must be avoided at all costs because it exudes cognitive weakness, the research is showing that forgetting could play a more positive role in cognitive strength and emotional regulation. For example, in an article published in 2017, "Could the Best Memory System be one that Forgets?" Andrea Hsu interviewed Blake Richards, a Canadian neuroscientist at University of Toronto about the benefits of forgetting.[1] Throughout their research, they have shown that forgetting helps to mitigate a person's memory from going into overdrive. Human cognition mows the lawn, so to speak, of *some* of our memories so that we can function on an everyday routine basis. It would be hard to function if a person is remembering everything, everywhere, and all at once. Moreover, in the same year, Richards and Paul W. Frankland published an article entitled, "The Persistence and Transience of Memory."[2]

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[1] Hsu, Andrea. "Could the Best Memory System be one that Forgets?" NPR, June 23, 2017. https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/06/23/534001592/could-the-best-memory-system-be-one-that-forgets

[2] Richards, Blake A., and Paul W. Frankland. "The Persistence and Transience of Memory." *Neuron*, vol. 94, no. 6, 2017, pp. 1071–1084.

In this article, Richards and Frankland demonstrate neuroscientific research to argue that forgetting plays a crucial role for a healthy, properly functioning memory system. They also challenge the conventional view that forgetting is disadvantageous for human beings, that it entails failure or negativity with respect to memory. On the contrary, Richards and Frankland maintain that our brains purposefully work to forget information in order to help us live and function on an everyday basis.

Upon my first reading of Butler's *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*, I was puzzled to see that he does not offer any explicit insights that disqualify forgetting from playing a role in forgiveness. This may have been something I simply missed out on after going through the text a first time, particularly because I was not an expert on Butler, and Murphy was. Then, after a second reading of sermon nine, "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries," I noticed that Butler offers an interesting argument toward the end of the sermon. Before elaborating on this argument, he informs his readers and congregation:

> Let me add some few *reflections*, which may have a more direct tendency to subdue those vices in the heart, to beget in us this right temper, and lead us to a right behavior towards those who have offended us: which reflections however shall be such as will *further* shew the obligations we are under to it (*S* 9.21, emphasis added).

These further reflections do not suddenly come out of the blue, however. On the contrary, he had been planning to convey these further reflections from the beginning of the sermon. In sermon nine, paragraph three, he provides a trajectory of ideas he will discuss throughout the sermon:

> I will shew *the absolute unlawfulness of the former; the obligations we are under to the latter*; and then proceed to *some reflections, which may have a more direct and*

> *immediate tendency to beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us* (*S* 9.3, author's emphasis).

The absolute unlawfulness of the former concerns a discussion on revenge. Afterwards, he will examine the obligations we are under to the principle of general benevolence. Finally, he will provide *some reflections* that will have a more direct tendency to encourage human beings to engage in the right emotional temperament towards those who have offended us. With this prelude set up, it should not have come as a surprise that these reflections came up during the latter stages of sermon nine.

By the time he gets to the further reflections of sermon nine, his writing appears pressing, tense, and weight bearing. He is still devoted to the effort of conveying the moral significance of forgiving and loving our enemies. But he is no longer addressing the problem of revenge and he is also no longer deliberating about the principle of general benevolence. On the contrary, his further reflections concern an investigation into inadvertent wrongdoing, both on behalf of the wrongdoer and on behalf of the injured. When considering inadvertent wrongdoing on behalf of the wrongdoer, Butler obliges the injured to "place ourselves at a due distance, i.e. be really unprejudiced, we should frequently discern that to be in reality inadvertence and mistake in our enemy, which we now fancy we see to be malice or scorn" (*S* 9.22). In this regard, the wrongdoer likely acted inadvertency than with malice or scorn. Perhaps, the wrongdoer made an inadvertent accident that was not derived from forgetting. At the same time, though, the inadvertency may be derived from forgetting as well. The fact that inadvertence and mistake are described in this passage does not explicitly rule out an inadvertent forgetting. Indeed, an inadvertent mistake can be one derived from accident without forgetting, or an accident caused by forgetting. In either case, the wrong was likely committed without malice or scorn. To put it

another way, Butler would clearly prefer to consider a wrongdoing committed from inadvertent forgetting than one done from direct malice or scorn.

Butler's ninth sermon's further reflections demand human beings to consider inadvertency to play a crucial role on the path toward forgiveness. Such inadvertencies might be the kind derived from accident or mistake, without forgetting. But also, such inadvertencies may be the kind derived from forgetting. In other words, inadvertent forgetting plays a crucial role in Butler's account of forgiveness. His further reflections of sermon nine, to emphasize a point contrary to Murphy's traditional reading of Butler, does not relegate forgetting to be an entirely passive phenomenon. Butler's demand to consider inadvertency does not equate forgetting to a boredom with our resentments, the simple fading away of old resentments, or finally, something that is too far from human agency to count as a moral virtue. On the contrary, Butler demands his readers and congregation to consider the role inadvertency has precisely as another method "to beget in us this right temper, and lead us to a right behavior towards those who have offended us" (*S* 9.21). To be clear, Butler's further reflections explicitly address the way inadvertent forgetting could help us to elicit forgiveness and loving our enemies.

Contrary to Murphy's traditional reading, Butler's account of forgiveness operates *with* forgetting, not without forgetting. To completely exclude, expel, or diminish the role of forgetting is not an accurate assessment of Butler's account of forgiveness. Moreover, although some writers (e.g. Newberry, Griswold, and Pagani) have come to challenge Murphy's traditional reading, they have also neglected to investigate the demand of forgetting for Butler. This neglect means that an accurate demonstration of Butler's account of forgiveness still remains unexamined. After investigating the further reflections of Butler's ninth sermon, I will then proceed to argue that Butler's account of forgiving with inadvertent forgetting is relevant

with some growing empirical research—especially since around the year 2000—on the benefits of forgetting with forgiving. In so doing, Butler's account of forgiveness is not only expressed more accurately, but also, his further reflections become even more relevant with respect to the growing empirical research on the benefits of forgetting with forgiving.

In the first chapter, I examine the importance and influence of Murphy and Hampton's co-written text published in 1988, *Forgiveness and Mercy*. As will be shown, this text had a great impact, especially within the North American philosophical debate, on forgiveness. The majority of philosophers in this debate, including Murphy, do not subscribe to a religious affiliation with respect to forgiveness. Henceforth, most of the late twentieth and twenty-first century philosophers that this project investigates come from a secular background. In spite of this fact, however, the majority of contributors engaging in forgiveness have cited Butler as a starting point to debate about the meaning of forgiveness. Therefore, I target Murphy and Hampton's book to show its influence within this secular philosophical tradition. From there, I investigate Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness *and* the indicated distinction between forgiving and forgetting that follows from this definition. Second, I elaborate on the fact that Murphy's reading of Butler became an authoritative view insofar as many contributors acknowledge his reading of Butler, without question. Not only has the North American debate acknowledged Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness, but moreover, they have accepted the indicated distinction between forgiving and forgetting. Third, I elucidate two thinkers—Patrick Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Jeffrie Blustein—who have opposed the view that forgetting is not compatible with forgiveness. Instead of appealing to Butler, these thinkers prefer to rely on Nietzsche's insights on forgetting to demonstrate the view that there is a virtue of forgetting that plays a role in forgiveness.

Chapter two introduces a group of thinkers whom I identify as the "Contemporary Butlerians." These thinkers have come to challenge Murphy's reading of Butler for two main reasons. First, they scrutinize Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness, and second, from a historical vantage point, they argue that Murphy did not take into account the theory of emotions that Butler would have adhered to during the time he wrote and preached *Fifteen Sermons*. As a result, this chapter demonstrates their findings and internal debates which helped to motivate my more direct reading of what Butler's account of forgiveness *really* is.

In chapter three, I investigate the historical circumstances that contributed to Butler's writing and preaching *Fifteen Sermons*. Since it was Sir Joseph Jekyll who appointed Butler to preach at the Rolls Chapel, I investigate some of the motivations for his appointing Butler to preach there. Who was Butler preaching to? Were there any social, moral, or political conflicts that played a role in the content Butler chose to preach? Was Butler morally fit to preach at the Rolls Chapel, and why? From these historical circumstances, the chapter uncovers Butler's philosophical views on virtue, underscoring the first three of his sermons, "Upon Human Nature," to assess his account of human nature. Afterwards, the chapter analyzes Butler's view on the importance of human ignorance and the seriousness he considered with respect to the sceptic of virtue. These considerations help to transition into a direct reading of Butler's further reflections in sermon nine, "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries."

Sermon nine, paragraphs twenty-one through twenty-eight, demonstrate the crux of my reading of Joseph Butler's account.. As will be demonstrated, Butler considers the meaning of inadvertency to help elicit the injured sceptic to forgive and love our enemies. This term has an association with forgetting that Murphy and the Contemporary Butlerians do not acknowledge in their readings of Butler's account of forgiveness. After investigating these further reflections, I

will show that Butler did, in fact, consider forgetting (i.e. inadvertent forgetting) to play a crucial role in his account of forgiveness.

Since chapter three serves to demonstrate the meaning of forgetting in Butler's account of forgiveness, the fourth chapter poses the question: What theory of passions did Butler adhere to? Indeed, this question harkens back to the Contemporary Butlerian debate explored in chapter two. If Butler allowed room for forgetting to mean something with respect to forgiveness, then does this derive from a "feeling theory" of emotions or from a "cognitivist theory" of emotions? In this way, I aim to settle the Contemporary Butlerian debate on which theory of emotions Butler would have adhered to. In order to answer this question, however, I turn to a historical account of what theories of emotions (or passions) were in vogue during the time Butler wrote and preached. Although Newberry is central for introducing Descartes's theory of the passions as *the* primary theory that Butler would have subscribed, this is actually far from being the case. On the contrary, it is more likely that Butler, and his contemporaries, were engaged with Malebranche's theory of the passions. As Schmitter, Harris, James, and McCracken demonstrate, Malebranche's theory of the passions considers ways sadness, joy, fear, and resentment could arise either involuntarily *or* voluntarily. From this assessment, I argue that Butler's theory of the passions would have been—at the very least—indirectly influenced by Malebranche's theory of the passions. Given Butler's overall tendency to moderate between extreme philosophical positions, I argue that Butler's theory of the passions is ambiguous (i.e. he accepts aspects of both the feeling theory and the cognitivist theory).

With these historical insights demonstrated, I argue that sermon nine, paragraph twenty-seven concerns another way to consider the meaning of inadvertency; that is, an inadvertency of the passions. By the time paragraph twenty-seven comes around, Butler had already discussed

the importance of inadvertence four times in quick sequence (i.e. *S* 9.22, 9.24, 9.25 and 9.26). In those paragraphs, he considered inadvertency as a way to reconsider the severity of the injury itself, the judgments made about the wrongdoer and the inability to perfectly consider and judge of things "as they are in themselves" (*S* 9.25). Sermon nine, paragraph twenty-seven, however, serves to pivot away from these rational considerations, and in so doing, he allows for the *strength* of the passions to justify themselves toward the judgment of forgiving and loving our enemies. As a result, Malebranche's theory of the passions serves as a supplement to Butler's twenty-seventh paragraph that addresses an inadvertency of the passions.

In chapter five, I pivot from Butler's account of forgiveness to an investigation into some twenty-first century empirical studies about the benefits of forgetting with forgiving. In this way, I argue that Butler's further reflections can be reinforced with the recent growth of empirical studies on forgetting with forgiving. This growing research about forgetting with forgiving, therefore, helps to bring even more relevancy to the empirical evidence Butler was drawing from when he preached the sermon, "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries." Finally, before concluding this thesis, I examine the varieties of inadvertency from a moral and legal perspective, especially as it pertains to debates concerning the distinction between negligence and reckless behaviors and how they contribute to culpability, blameworthiness, and the severity of punishment.

CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE SCENE: JEFFRIE MURPHY'S READING OF JOSEPH BUTLER AND ITS PHILOSOPHICAL IMPACT ON "FORGIVING AND FORGETTING"

INTRODUCTION

Many contributors within the North American debate on forgiveness have made reference to Joseph Butler's account. Although some writers have thoroughly investigated Butler's ninth sermon, "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries," located in the text *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*, many other writers have instead relied on Jeffrie Murphy's reading of Butler, located in the 1988 book he co-authored with Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*. As Karen Pagani summarizes, in her 2010 essay, "The Uses and Abuses of Joseph Butler's Account of Forgiveness: Between the Passions and the Interests," since the publication of Murphy and Hampton's book, "Joseph Butler's accounts of both resentment and forgiveness have regularly been invoked in philosophical literature concerning reconciliation and at times even been taken as a starting point for constructing a definition of forgiveness" (Pagani 13). Although Butler was an eighteenth-century Anglican philosopher, legal thinker, preacher and theologian, many secular ethicists have even been impacted by Butler's writings, or rather, from Murphy's reading of Butler.[3]

Murphy and Hampton's book clearly played a role in motivating thinkers (primarily

[3] Joseph Butler was not a Bishop during the time he wrote and preached *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*. He became Bishop of Bristol twelve years after he left the Rolls Chapel, in 1738. Finally, in 1751, he became Bishop of Durham. As a result, with the exception to sources that identify him as "Bishop Butler," he will only be identified by his proper name while he preached: Joseph Butler.

North American) to make reference to Butler's definition of forgiveness. In the opening pages of Chapter One, "Forgiveness and Resentment," Murphy writes:

> Forgiveness, Bishop Butler teaches, is the forswearing of resentment—the resolute overcoming of the anger and hatred that are naturally directed toward a person who has done one an unjustified and non-excused moral injury. By his emphasis on the forswearing of resentment, Butler indicates that he quite properly wants to draw a distinction between forgiveness (which may be a virtue and morally commanded) and forgetting (which may just happen). Forgiveness is the sort of thing one does for a reason, and where there are reasons there is a distinction between good ones and bad ones" (Murphy and Hampton 15).

In this passage, Murphy draws out two key points about Butler's account of forgiveness. First, he calls on Butler to define forgiveness as the forswearing of resentment. When an unjustified or non-excused moral injury occurs, resentment is naturally directed towards the wrongdoer. Resentment serves properly to prevent or remedy further injury from occurring. It also serves to administer justice.[4] In order to *overcome* the resentment from the moral injury, forgiveness is a morally commanded virtue. As a result, Murphy states the second key point in Butler's account of forgiveness. Butler's definition indicates that he wants to draw a proper distinction between forgiveness and forgetting. Forgetting is not a morally commanded virtue because *it just happens*. Something that "just happens" could be spontaneous, surprising, by chance, or an unlikely circumstance. For example, it just happened that I drove my car through three yellow

[4] Butler explains this in Sermon Eight, "On Resentment." *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel and Other Writings on Ethics*. Edited by David McNaughton. Oxford University Press, 2017. Pages 68-74. This text will be investigated further in chapter two. McNaughton's edited edition is the text that I will primarily be quoting from.

light traffic intersections in a row. Or, it just happened that I shared a bus ride into downtown with an old friend. I did not consciously plan my day to drive through three consecutive yellow light intersections, nor did I plan to run into an old friend on a bus. In any case, these occurrences just happened.

Can forgiving be conceived as "just happening?" For example, on the bus ride to school, a stranger smacks their backpack against my shoulder as they are moving passed the aisles to find a seat. I grow resentful at the stranger, wondering to myself, "Why did they not have the courtesy to look at their surroundings?" Then, the next morning, I see the same person riding the bus once again. However, instead of reengaging in resentment, I simply forgive them spontaneously. It "just happened." Of course, I still remember that the stranger smacked me with their backpack the previous day. I did not just happen to forgive everyone spontaneously, especially those on the bus who did not harm me. However, I may simply forgive the stranger, and yet, not be able to know precisely why. It seems viable that forgiveness just happened in this set of circumstances; however, Murphy insists that forgiveness does *not* "just happen," precisely because forgiving must occur *for a reason*. In other words, forgiveness is not a spontaneous act. The act of forgiving must have been morally calculated in some way. Therefore, since forgiving is acted out for a reason—a reason commanded by virtue—forgetting is not compatible with Butler's account of forgiveness.

The main focus of this chapter, therefore, is to demonstrate the influence Murphy's reading of Butler has had within the North American debate on forgiveness. In particular, Murphy's reading of Butler has impacted two main aspects on the ethics of forgiveness. First, many philosophers have engaged with Murphy's reading of Butler to evaluate the definition of forgiveness, and second, his distinction between forgiving and forgetting—also drawn from a

reading of Butler—has also resonated with those who have contributed to the debate. Many philosophers have agreed with Murphy's assessment of Butler's definition of forgiveness.[5] Moreover, some contributors have referenced *Forgiveness and Mercy* to investigate, challenge or develop some of their own ideas about the meaning of forgiveness further.[6] Finally, some philosophers have come to challenge the accuracy of Murphy's reading of Butler. Charles Griswold, Paul Newberry, Ernesto Garcia and Karen Pagani, in particular, have criticized Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness as "the overcoming of resentment." In doing so, these theorists have illuminated Butler scholarship, particularly on his eighth and ninth sermons, "On Resentment," and "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries." While many theorists have investigated Butler, thereby criticizing some components of Murphy's reading, no theorist has gone further to investigate the proper *distinction* Murphy draws forth from Butler's definition of forgiveness. For Murphy, it is from the definition of forgiveness, as the overcoming of resentment, that Butler indicates he wants to establish a proper distinction between forgiving and forgetting. I want to do two things. First, show that Murphy's reading of Butler's argument is flawed; second, argue that we should go back to Butler's position on forgiveness to get a better understanding of his argument.

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[5]The list of contributors is quite extensive. These include the following publications: Norvin Richards, "Forgiveness," 1988. Howard McGary, "Forgiveness," 1989. Paul M. Hughes, "What is involved in Forgiving?" 1993. Berel Lang, "Forgiveness," 1994. David Novitz, "Forgiveness and Self-Respect," 1998. Pamela Hieronymi, "Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness," 2001. Patrick Boleyn-Fitzgerald, "What Should "Forgiveness" Mean?" 2002.

[6] Cheshire Calhoun, "Changing One's Heart," 1992. Robert C. Roberts, "Forgiveness," 1995. Piers Benn, "Forgiveness and Loyalty," 1996. Trudy Govier, "Forgiveness and the Unforgivable," 1999. Eve Garrard and David McNaughton, "In Defense of Unconditional Forgiveness," 2002. Lucy Allais, "Wiping the Slate Clean: The Heart of Forgiveness," 2008. Brandon Warmke, Dana Kay Nelkin and Michael McKenna (editors), *Forgiveness and its Moral Dimensions*, 2021. As a result, this list helps to show the growth of philosophical engagement on Murphy and Hamptons' book, *Forgiveness and Mercy*.

I am going to proceed, first, by unpacking Murphy's reading of Butler's account of forgiveness. Then, I plan to explain how this account has made a significant impact, particularly within the analytic philosophical tradition. Although Hieronymi, McGary, Richards, Hughes, and others have accepted Murphy's reading of Butler, Newberry, Pagani, Garcia and Griswold have been critical of Murphy. The criticism of Murphy primarily concerns his scholarship of Butler, and this will be evaluated in chapter two. I do not want to stop my research by appealing *only* to some Butler scholars, however. In chapters three and four, I will proceed to read Butler directly. My primary focus concerns Murphy's assessment of Butler's distinction between forgiving and forgetting. This distinction stems forth from the definition of forgiveness as the resolute overcoming of resentment. Does Butler, himself, indicate that this *is* a proper distinction? If the answer is no, then does Butler's account of forgiveness actually *involve* forgetting? In other words, can an investigation of Butler unearth an account of forgiveness that is somehow operating with the help of forgetting? Or, more precisely, for Butler, is there an account of forgetting that gives meaning *with* forgiving?

WHY DID MURPHY AND HAMPTON WRITE A BOOK ABOUT FORGIVENESS?

As Jean Hampton writes in the Preface of *Forgiveness and Mercy*, the book began from conversations and correspondence between Hampton and Murphy in 1985, after Murphy published an essay in the September 1982 *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* journal entitled "Forgiveness and Resentment."[7] Prior to publishing this essay, Murphy devoted his career to examining the philosophy of law, criminal punishment, ethics and religion, moral psychology, and Kant's moral and legal philosophy. For Murphy, the investigation of forgiveness was

[7] Murphy, Jeffrie. "Forgiveness and Resentment." *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, *7*, 1982, pgs. 503–516. A version of this essay is included as Chapter One of *Forgiveness and Mercy*.

derived particularly from his interest in punishment and moral psychology. Murphy stresses that forgiveness "is intrinsically interesting because it is part of a set of concerns—too long neglected by moral philosophers—centering upon the role of *feelings* in the moral life" (Murphy 504). Furthermore, feelings, such as resentment or hatred, may contribute to perpetuating poor, perhaps even inhumane, operating conditions of prisons. Although resentment *is* a justified feeling for injured persons to experience, it can also be "an obstacle to the restoration of equal moral relations among persons, and thus it cannot always be the 'bottom line' as the response we take to those who have wronged us" (Murphy 504). Murphy is therefore intrigued to identify resentment as a *legitimate* feeling for people to experience, and yet, he also finds it to be an obstacle that needs to be *traversed* for restoring equal moral relations among persons.

In Hampton's writings within *Forgiveness and Mercy*, Murphy's dual identification of the legitimacy of resentment, combined with the identification of resentment as a feeling to traverse, gets him into some puzzling difficulties. Before examining those difficulties, however, it would help to briefly explain what motivated Hampton to begin corresponding with Murphy about forgiveness.

During the 1980s, Jean Hampton was focused on political philosophy, publishing primarily on social contract theory. Shortly before publishing *Forgiveness and* Mercy with Murphy, Hampton published *Hobbes and the Social Contract Condition*, in 1987. In addition to political theory, Hampton was interested in the emotions of resentment, compassion, hatred, forgiveness and mercy. Reading Murphy's 1982 "Forgiveness and Resentment" essay, therefore, prompted Hampton to reflect on and write about the issues it had raised, not only for legal theory, but also for ethical theory, social, and political philosophy.

Hampton and Murphy began to engage in a philosophical correspondence about the

themes of resentment and forgiveness. Eventually, this correspondence motivated Murphy and Hampton to gather these writings toward the publication of *Forgiveness and Mercy*. From Hampton's preface, "The book is not, in any strict sense, a dialogue. What each other has done is to use the other's preceding chapter as a springboard from which to explore further dimensions of the topics under discussion" (Murphy and Hampton x). In this way, the authors did not attempt a line-by-line commentary or refutation of each other's essays. Rather, the authors reacted and built on previous discussions "to enrich and deepen the exploration of the important issues" (Murphy and Hampton x). Several philosophical questions are posed and examined throughout *Forgiveness and Mercy*, including, when, if ever, should hatred be overcome with sympathy or compassion? What are forgiveness and mercy, and to what degree do they require—conceptually and morally—the overcoming of passions such as anger and hatred? What are the conditions for the appropriateness, and inappropriateness, of overcoming resentment in order to forgive?

Chapter Two of *Forgiveness and Mercy*, entitled, "Forgiveness, Resentment and Hatred," is written by Hampton. In this chapter, she expresses a puzzling difficulty with Murphy's account of forgiveness. The puzzle derives from Murphy's acknowledgement that forgiveness is not always beneficial. As he elaborates, the "hasty readiness to forgive—or even a refusal to display resentment initially—may reveal a lack of respect, not just for oneself, but for others as well" (Murphy and Hampton 18). In other words, an individual who is too hastily forgiving may be unable to acknowledge the moral value embodied in their own person. Thus, a too forgiving person may too easily be taken advantage of by others because of the inability to care about the very rules of morality. From this point, Hampton asserts the following puzzle: "How can forgiveness be a duty when it seems to involve overcoming a useful, even therapeutic emotion in

a way that can do harm to the forgiver?" (Murphy and Hampton 36). The puzzle primarily concerns Murphy's view, drawn from Butler, asserting that forgiveness is the *overcoming* of resentment. If it is wrong to be too hastily forgiving; that is, by overcoming resentment too quickly, then how can forgiveness be a duty if it involves overcoming a therapeutic emotion that can actually harm the forgiver?

Hampton gives Murphy the benefit of the doubt concerning his reading of Butler. As Hampton writes, "Murphy's puzzle naturally arises from his and Butler's understanding of forgiveness as the 'overcoming of resentment.' If that definition is not correct, then the problem of determining the moral appropriateness of forgiveness might need a different formulation, and thus admit of a different answer, than that given by Murphy" (Murphy and Hampton 36). On the one hand, Hampton was willing to acknowledge Murphy's reading of Butler. She does not venture into Butler's text to challenge whether or not this is an accurate description. On the other hand, Hampton proceeded to evaluate the meaning of this definition of forgiveness. For example, she raises the question, "how can forgiveness be a duty when it seems to involve overcoming a useful, even therapeutic emotion in a way that can do harm to the forgiver?" (Murphy and Hampton 35-36). Is maintaining resentment more of a virtue than overcoming resentment? Hampton offers these puzzling questions to challenge Murphy's definition of forgiveness.

Although Murphy likes Butler's definition, he also thinks it is incomplete because there are times when a person overcomes resentment of an injury, and yet, refuses to forgive. Returning to his "Forgiveness and Resentment" chapter, Murphy poses the following question: Is forgiveness always expressed whenever an injured person overcomes their resentment? He writes, "I (agreeing, I believe, with Butler) think not" (Murphy and Hampton 22). Then, he considers two cases where overcoming resentment does not always mean forgiveness follows.

First, Murphy considers, again, the case of forgetting, writing:

> Sometimes we lose a vivid memory of old wrongs, become bored with our resentments, and simply forget. As such, it seems too removed from agency to count as a moral virtue—though it still might be a desirable disposition of character to possess. Thus, to the extent that forgiveness is properly regarded as a moral virtue, it strikes me as a mistake to identify forgiving with forgetting (Murphy and Hampton 23).

To unpack Murphy's point here, let's say that a friend of mine wronged me in the past. The friend promised to pick me up from the airport, and they never showed up. As a result, I contacted Uber to pick me up and take me home instead. Since I was exhausted from the long airplane flight, the fact that my friend never followed through on their promise did not irk me to such a great length. Even though I initially experienced some resentment at my friend, I eventually shrugged my shoulders and still got home another way. Moreover, let's say that I had a busy week ahead, and the exhaustion and busyness caused me to forget that my friend failed to follow through on the promise. Does this mean I have forgiven the friend? Not at all. As Murphy concludes, even though forgetting may be a desirable disposition of character to possess, it would be a mistake to identify forgetting *as* forgiving. In other words, it would not make sense to identify my forgetting as a virtuous act of forgiving my friend who forgot to pick me up from the airport!

In Murphy's account, forgetting comes in at least three forms. First, the vivid memory of old wrongs fades away. Second, individuals may become bored with old resentments. Third, individuals simply forget. For all three of these determinations of forgetting, none of them qualify as a moral virtue. The main reason why they do not qualify as a moral virtue is because forgetting is too far removed from agency to qualify as the moral virtue of forgiveness.

Subsequently, even though individuals *are* capable of forgetting—as a way to overcome resentment—this manner of overcoming does not qualify as forgiveness.

In a footnote to this passage, Murphy admits, "Although I am not here able to pursue the matter in any depth, I should at least note that forgetting is in fact more complex than this account suggests" (Murphy and Hampton 23 n. 10). In particular, Murphy references Nietzsche as a philosopher who considered complex rational strategies of forgetting; however, he does not venture further into uncovering these complexities.

What did Nietzsche discuss about forgetting? In Maudemarie Clarke and Alan J. Swenson's 1998 translation of *On the Genealogy of Morality*, for example, Nietzsche writes, "Forgetfulness is no mere *vis inertiae* as the superficial believe; rather, it is an active and in the strictest sense positive faculty of suppression, and is responsible for the fact that whatever we experience, learn, or take into ourselves enters just as little into our consciousness during the condition of digestion" (Nietzsche *GM* 35). Here, Nietzsche offers materials for a a much more nuanced view on forgetting, as an active and positive faculty of suppression. Concluding the footnote, Murphy writes, "Here cases that initially look like mere forgetting might merit reclassification as forgetting of a more complex sort *or even as forgiving*" (Murphy and Hampton 23 n. 10, emphasis added). So, although Murphy maintains—throughout *Forgiveness and Mercy*—that forgetting is *not* to be identified with forgiving, he also admits that his assessment of forgetting is lacking in depth. Moreover, he acknowledges that forgetting *may* participate in a more complex sort of forgiving. Unfortunately, Murphy never follows through to further investigate how, or why, forgetting *can* serve forgiveness. Instead, he continues on in the text by doubling down on his exclusion of forgetting from forgiveness.

In Murphy's account, another method of overcoming resentment—without forgiving—is

for the injured person to overcome resentment for therapeutic reasons. To exemplify this, a person has wronged me deeply, and I bitterly resent them for it. The resentment eats away at me to such an extent that I cannot sleep, I snap at my friends, and no longer work effectively. Murphy writes, "In order to regain my peace of mind, I go to a behavior-modification therapist to have my resentment extinguished. Have I forgiven you? Surely not—at least in the sense where forgiveness is supposed to be a moral virtue" (Murphy and Hampton 23). Of course, Murphy is not opposed to people seeking therapy for dealing with emotional difficulties. Rather, the motivation for extinguishing resentment for the wrongdoer—by means of therapy—is *not in itself* forgiveness. Instead, the therapy served to quell the resentment endured by the individual. In other words, the therapy could help the injured overcome resentment without forgiving the wrongdoer.

After pinpointing these cases of overcoming resentment *without* forgiveness, Murphy decides to extend his definition of forgiveness further than Butler's account. Subsequently, he defines forgiveness as the overcoming of resentment with the qualification that it must be done so on *moral grounds*. From this definition, Murphy proceeds to lay out at least five moral grounds that justify the appropriate act of forgiveness, writing:

> 1) He repented or had a change of heart 2) He meant well (his motives were good) 3) He has suffered enough 4) He has undergone humiliation (e.g. "I beg forgiveness," 5) of old times' sake (e.g. He has been a good and loyal friend to me in the past (Murphy and Hampton 24).

All of these acceptable reasons for forgiveness must be compatible with self-respect, the respect for others as moral agents, and finally, the respect for the rules of morality or moral order.

For all five of these reasons, forgiveness can take place—as a moral virtue—insofar as it maintains the self-respect of the persons wronged. Murphy therefore inherits Butler's definition of forgiveness as the forswearing of resentment; however, he adds the prerequisite condition of self-respect because some people could be too forgiving. People who consistently overcome resentment could motivate wrongdoers to continue committing wrongs toward them. A too forgiving person, therefore, can be taken advantage because of their lack of self-respect. In this regard, Murphy detects a way for the overcoming of resentment to provoke weakness regarding the self-respect of the injured. To solve this problem, he grounds his account of forgiveness, derived from Butler's definition, albeit with the additional import of self-respect.

Murphy's account of forgiveness as the overcoming of resentment—with the added condition of self-respect—only continues to cause further puzzlement throughout Hampton's chapters of *Forgiveness and Mercy*. She argues that a person can overcome resentment towards a wrongdoer, and even doing so on the condition of self-respect, and yet, this could still fail to be forgiveness. To demonstrate this, Hampton provides an example of a married man and woman. Her father-in-law is getting older and comes to stay with the couple for a visit. He "finds his daughter-in-law's conduct irritating, the food less than perfect, the house less than clean, the conversation rather dull" (Murphy and Hampton 39). In subtle ways, he makes his irritation known with some passing remarks, rolling of the eyes, and awkward gestures. The husband takes his wife into another room and tells her: "Look, he is my father and we should be on good terms with him. I know that you think he is behaving badly, but be good and forgive him so that the family peace can be preserved" (Murphy and Hampton 39). While the husband may be asking the wife to forgive by means of overcoming her resentment in order to protect family peace, this is not forgiveness. Instead, the husband is requesting his wife to *condone* the injurious behavior

of the husband's father. In the husband's view, the protection of family peace is a moral reason that supersedes the wife's self-respect. As Hampton summarizes, "Those who continually engage in such condonation risk undermining their sense of self-worth and becoming servile to others" (Murphy and Hampton 39-40). Condonation can serve to overcome a person's resentment towards a wrongdoer; however, the means for doing so are grounded in self-deception. As Hampton stresses, condonation would serve to drop the judgment of the father-in-law's bad behavior, "the angry feelings it engenders, and go on to respond to the father-in-law as if no offense had occurred, for the sake of preserving harmony in the family" (Murphy and Hampton 39). Here is a case when the wife is manipulated to overcome their resentment in a way that condones the wrongdoing, but does not properly forgive it.

The puzzlement Hampton addresses with Murphy's account of forgiveness is grounded by the view that forgiveness is the overcoming of resentment. Even though Murphy attempts to add the condition of self-respect to his account, it still remains a flawed account of forgiveness for reasons discussed earlier. Many philosophers have tried to address similar concerns in their own accounts of forgiveness. Nonetheless, Murphy's reading of Butler's account of forgiveness has proven to be a significant source within the debate. Moreover, contributors to the debate on forgiveness have also accepted Murphy's distinction between forgiving and forgetting. Again, both of these points rely on Murphy's reading of Butler's philosophy. Before investigating the accuracies of Murphy's reading of Butler, however, I want to show proof that these points have been accepted by many theorists who have contributed writings about the philosophical meaning of forgiveness.

FORGETTING: OUTSIDE THE BOUNDARIES OF THE DEBATE ON FORGIVENESS

Pamela Hieronymi opens her 2004 essay, "Articulating an Uncompromising Forgiveness," writing, "Most contributors to the discussion agree with Bishop Butler that forgiveness entails the forgoing of resentment" (Hieronymi 529). In the footnote to this sentence, she references Murphy and Hampton's *Forgiveness and Mercy* to support the agreement regarding Butler's definition of forgiveness. Similarly with Hampton, Hieronymi does not examine Butler's writings to support their accuracy; however, she is also puzzled with respect to the definition of forgiveness as the forgoing of resentment.

For Hieronymi, forgiveness is not a matter of manipulating oneself out of an unpleasant or potentially destructive emotion. Taking a pill designed to completely forget a wrongdoing, for example, does not count as genuine forgiveness (Hieronymi 530). If a person is overwhelmed with resentment, for example, then taking a pill to forget every memory associated with this resentment may allow them to succeed in overcoming that resentment—directed at the wrongdoer—and yet, no longer require forgiveness. Since the resentment has been overcome, then so has the wrongdoing. There would no longer be a demand to forgive after such an annihilation of memory. Further, Hieronymi stresses that putting so much effort to distract oneself from the wrongdoing would also not qualify as forgiveness. The injured may decide to spend all of their time playing video games or gambling at a casino. Perhaps, this could help the injured to overcome their resentment; however, it does not necessarily lead the injured to forgive. Although she largely accepts the view that forgiveness requires the injured to overcome resentment, she also detects problems whereby the simple overcoming of resentment does not necessarily entail genuine forgiveness. Hieronymi writes, "So while forgiveness requires the overcoming or forgoing of anger and resentment, not just any overcoming counts as forgiveness" (Hieronymi 531). Here, she is in agreement with reflections discussed in Murphy and Hampton's

philosophical conversation. Indeed, there are times when overcoming resentment does not count as forgiveness. As a result, genuine forgiveness happens for a reason. Indeed, Hieronymi carries Murphy and Hampton's baton forward. She agrees that forgiveness requires a matter of self-respect (Murphy) and it cannot amount to condonation (Hampton).

In Hieronymi's account, forgiveness must *articulate* the revision in judgment or change in view without compromise. In other words, taking a specially designed pill to completely forget the wrongdoing would not constitute forgiveness because the taking of the pill would be aimed to overcome resentment without the necessity of forgiving the wrongdoer. Perhaps, the taking of the forgetting pill compels the angry and resentful person to overcome such emotions; however, the reasons for forgiving the wrongdoer would no longer resonate in terms of *articulating* the emotional overcoming. Without articulating an emotional overcoming, according to Hieronymi, genuine forgiveness has not occurred. Hieronymi would conclude that the taking of a specially designed forgetting pill is to compromise, not to forgive. Elaborating on this point encourages Hieronymi to demonstrate forgiveness to be uncompromising.

At the end of the opening paragraph to the essay, Hieronymi provides another footnote to stress Murphy's distinction, derived from his reading of Butler, between forgiving and forgetting. Parenthetically, she writes, "(This feature distinguishes forgiveness, 'which may be a virtue and morally commanded,' from simply forgetting, 'which may just happen'" (Hieronymi 530 n.3). The footnote is important to mention because it reemphasizes Murphy's two key points, both relying on a reading of Butler. First, Hieronymi accepts Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness as the resolute overcoming of resentment. In other words, she accepts Murphy's expertise on the writings of Butler, without question. Second, she agrees with

the distinction between forgiving and forgetting, and this distinction *also* derives from Murphy's reading of Butler.

Whether philosophers agreed or disagreed with Murphy's definition of forgiveness, his reading of Butler was primarily accepted without question, and thus, it eventually became a traditional reading. To be clear, not only did Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness resonate with other theorists, but also, his distinction between forgiving and forgetting has reverberated. To demonstrate this, I now transition into another philosopher, Lucy Allais.

In her 2008 essay, "Wiping the Slate Clean: The Heart of Forgiveness," Allais developed an account of forgiveness that was motivated by her desire to make sense of the expressions of forgiveness with regard to several testimonies during the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), established in 1995. Growing up in South Africa during this time, Allais found the TRC to be an institution that posed challenging and profound questions about the philosophical meaning of forgiveness. For example, she was astonished by Balbalwa Mhlauli's TRC testimony about the murder of her father, Sicelo Mhlauli. Her father, it was well known, worked against the injustices of Apartheid in a rural and poorer area of South Africa. These efforts would lead to brutal violence enforced by the leaders of the Apartheid regime. Allais writes, "Sicelo Mhlauli was stabbed sixty-eight times with different weapons, had acid poured on his face, and had his hand chopped off and preserved in alcohol at police headquarters in Port Elizabeth, where police referred to it as 'the baboon's hand' and used it to intimidate detainees" (Allais 40, 2008). Given these circumstances, it makes sense that forgiveness would not even be worth a single thought. When Balbalwa finished her testimony, however, the room fell into an intense silence, after she said, "We do want to forgive, but we don't know whom to forgive"

(Allais 40, 2008). In spite of expressing this profound desire to forgive, no one stepped forward to admit to the wrongdoing. No one identified themselves as the perpetrator and, therefore, no one was present to offer remorse for the murder of her father. In many accounts of forgiveness, according to Allais, the wrongdoer needs to take accountability for the wrongdoing, express remorse, and apologize. Only after these steps are taken is forgiveness in play. However, the fact that Balbalwa was willing to express a desire to forgive, without a perpetrator to express blame and resentment, and further, without the perpetrator taking accountability for the wrongdoings, motivated Allais to examine the philosophy of forgiveness. Upon hearing this, many people had a hard time making sense of this desire to forgive without identifying the wrongdoer. Was it logically mistaken, or morally irresponsible? Subsequently, Lucy Allais was interested in further examining some of these questions.[8]

Allais' account of forgiveness aims to make sense of Balbalwa's desire to express forgiveness as one that *is* morally acceptable. Balbalwa's expression, "We want to forgive, but we don't know whom to forgive," challenges Murphy's account of forgiveness in the following way. Again, for Murphy, forgiveness is the resolute overcoming of the anger and hatred that are naturally *directed toward a person* who has done one an unjustified and non-excused moral injury" (Murphy and Hampton 15, emphasis added). Balbalwa's anger and resentment, however, were not able to be directed at a person because no one had stepped forward to admit guilt. Since Balbalwa was unable to point at the guilty person (or persons), and subsequently, direct resentment at them, Murphy's account would not grant Balbalwa's expression as genuine

[8] Another profound story, derived from the proceedings of the TRC, is written by psychiatrist, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. In the book, *A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid*, Gobodo-Madikizela recounts her experience interviewing Eugene de Kock (aka 'Prime Evil').

forgiveness. In other words, forgiveness cannot be properly expressed *before* identifying the culpable person who caused the unjustified and non-excused moral injury.

Analogous to Hieronymi's opening paragraph to her essay, Allais also acknowledges Murphy's eminence within the debate. Allais writes, "For example, in Murphy's well-known and influential account, forgiveness involves the resolute overcoming, on moral grounds, of the retributive emotions that are naturally directed towards a person who has done one an unjustified and non-excused moral injury" (Allais 41, 2008).[9] Allais also disagrees with Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness, specifically because it entails the view that resentment is *supposed* to be overcome. For Allais, it should not be *necessary* for resentment to be overcome to express forgiveness. On the contrary, when it is warranted, resentment is a fitting and appropriate response to culpable wrongdoing. People who have been morally injured should not feel as though their resentment is supposed to be overcome. Allais stresses this point again in her 2021 essay, "Frailty and Forgiveness," writing, "But if wrongdoing warrants resentment and makes it appropriate, then it seems that giving up resentment would be failing to have an appropriate attitude toward the wrongdoer" (Allais 260, 2021). Even though Murphy's account of forgiveness *begins* from a person experiencing anger and resentment—caused by an unjustified and non-excused moral injury—the forgiver must eventually overcome these emotions in order to properly forgive. In other words, until the forgiver overcomes anger and resentment, genuine forgiveness cannot occur.

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[9] Lucy Allais revises her terminology in the 2021 essay, "Frailty and Forgiveness." Allais prefers the term "blaming attitudes" instead because "retributive attitudes" may be potentially misleading. It may suggest a necessary link to punishment or a desire for punishment (263). Warmke, B., Nelkin, D. K., & McKenna, M. (2021). *Forgiveness and its Moral Dimensions*. Oxford University Press.

According to Allais, by relying on Murphy's account of forgiveness, people who have been wronged would be training themselves to overcome emotions that are important to have within interpersonal relationships. To this point, Allais is in agreement with Hieronymi. If a person is morally injured, then they *ought* to think it appropriate to experience anger and resentment directed at the wrongdoer. The injured person should not think that anger and resentment have to be resolutely overcome. In this regard, Murphy's emphasis on the *overcoming* of resentment does not do enough to render *legitimate* the appropriate responses of anger and resentment.

Another reason Allais offers to question Murphy's account concerns the fact that not every overcoming of resentment is enough for forgiveness to be expressed. The victim of a wrongdoing, for example, may inform the wrongdoer, "I'm no longer angry with you, but I'll never be able to see you in the same way again."[10] Even though the resentment has faded away, at least for the most part, the slate has not been wiped clean either. Consequently, a wrongdoer will likely *not* feel forgiven after hearing these words. Another example Allais provides of overcoming resentment—without appropriately forgiving the wrong—would be through *forgetting* the wrong. At this point, Allais realigns with Murphy's distinction between forgiving and forgetting. A victim of a wrongdoing may, for example, ask to be hypnotized out of their resentment, or perhaps even, seek to therapeutically dissipate the emotion for the sake of the victim's mental health. Although Allais is willing to admit that therapy could be aimed at helping the victim to be forgiving, the process of getting rid of negative emotions are for the sake of the injured person. They do not require the injured to change or alter their resentful judgements

[10] Allais also discusses this in a podcast hosted by Nigel Wharburton called, *Philosophy Bites*: https://nigelwarburton.typepad.com/philosophy_bites/2015/01/lucy-allais-on-forgiveness.html

directed at the wrongdoer. Consequently, the therapy seeker may choose not to dwell on the wrongdoing and put the wrongdoer out of their thoughts entirely. In other words, the wrongdoer is out of sight, and thus, out of mind. Therefore, the therapy helps the injured get over their resentment but this success may no longer demand forgiveness.

Here again, the strategy of *forgetting* is not acceptable for forgiveness. By encouraging the injured to forget, the victim is motivated *not* to dwell on the wrongdoing and the culpability of the wrongdoer. Consequently, forgetting would annul all of the circumstances that identify the injured as such. Forgetting could help to bypass the appropriate experience of blaming attitudes. As Allais emphasizes, forgetting "does not seem to count because they do not have the right kind of focus on the wrongdoer" (Allais 45, 2008). Going back to Hieronymi's concern of taking a forgetting pill, or of distracting the injured, Allais agrees by maintaining the view that forgetting serves to disqualify resentment without maintaining an appropriate kind of focus on the wrongdoer. Nevertheless, what does Allais mean by describing the importance of having the right kind of focus on the wrongdoer?

One strategy Allais examines for having the right kind of focus on the wrongdoer would be the idea of understanding the point of view of the perpetrator, seeing the act from their perspective (Allais 46, 2008). In this regard, the person injured ought to "walk in the shoes" of the wrongdoer. Allais does not accept this strategy, however, because it could lead to enhancing resentment. The injured person may, for example, learn more about the wrongdoer's manipulative and selfish motives that serve to increase anger and resentment. Seeing it from the perspective of the wrongdoer could move the injured person further away from forgiveness. Or, seeing things from the wrongdoer's point of view may serve to excuse or condone the person's wrongful behavior. Although Allais is willing to allow the injured to walk in the shoes of the

wrongdoer to elicit compassion for their circumstances, this is still one step short of forgiveness. In other words, the injured may have compassion for the wrongdoer, and yet, still refuse to forgive them. For example, "She did not grow up with morally responsible parents. Also, look at how much stress she has been going through lately." These phrases could motivate compassion and the ceasing to blame the wrongdoer, and thus, they might still be one step short of forgiveness.

For Allais, having the right kind of focus on the wrongdoer means that the person wronged must still maintain the judgment about the wrongness of the offense and the culpability of the wrongdoer, and yet, they must *also* see the wrongdoer for being *more* than the offense. As Allais writes, "forgiveness constitutively involves the victim making some kind of separation between the wrongdoer and his wrong act in the way she feels about him, such that the wrong act does not play a role in the way the victim affectively sees the wrongdoer" (Allais 51, 2008). The forgiver somehow sees the wrongdoer *better* than their action warrants seeing them. Thus, Allais views forgiveness to be a radical expression because it maintains the judgment of a wrongful act, and the warranted culpability of the wrongdoer, while also seeing the wrongdoer as something *more* than these appropriate judgments. Somehow, the injured has to see the wrongdoer as something more than their wrongful acts legitimate. Although this excess may bring in further transgressions to the fore, Allais' aim is that the injured sees the wrongdoer as a frail human being who is capable of goodness as well.

Allais offers an intriguing account of forgiveness because it involves both a maintained judgment of wrong and seeing the wrongdoer as better than their action warrants seeing them. Although I find this idea compelling, it comes on the heels of Allais excluding forgetting from forgiveness. How can the separation between the wrongdoer and their wrong act occur without

some aspect of forgetting? Again, for Allais, forgetting does not participate in forgiveness because it does not have the right kind of focus on the wrongdoer. The separation deals with a contributing lack of focus on the wrongdoer. In other words, if the forgiver is able to see the wrongdoer as *more than* the action that warrants seeing them, then the forgiver must be able to separate themselves, at least to some extent, from strictly focusing only upon maintaining their judgment about the wrongdoer's action(s).

Hieronymi and Allais are similar for drawing out criticisms of forgetting by making similar references to the ideas developed in Murphy and Hampton's book. Both philosophers agree with Murphy's determination that forgetting does not contribute to the meaning of forgiveness. This general consensus even goes further than their essays, however. Thus, it is vital to further emphasize how much scholarship has relied on Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness *and* the distinction—derived from this definition—between forgiving and forgetting.

Paul M. Hughes upholds Murphy's distinction between forgetting and forgiving, drawn from Butler's putative definition of forgiveness (i.e. the forswearing of resentment). In fact, he actually quotes Murphy's exact phrase on forgetting, writing, "Forgetting or becoming bored with our resentments 'just happens to us,' and is hardly to be counted as a virtue, let alone the virtue of forgiveness" (Hughes 333). He connects with Murphy's determination of forgetting as an entirely passive phenomenon. Forgetting is not included in the virtue of forgiveness because such a virtue, following Murphy, is something one does for a reason. As Hughes elaborates, "Overcoming resentment presupposes effort or struggle on the part of s/he who overcomes. Forgetting is, however, a completely passive phenomenon, in the sense at issue, and so fails to be a case of overcoming anything at all" (Hughes 333). Forgetting is therefore excluded from

forgiveness because to forgive another requires a victim of wrongdoing to actively struggle to overcome anger and resentment.

Hughes accepts Murphy's view about forgetting, and subsequently, expands on it by describing it as a passive phenomenon. As Hughes writes, "Passively to forget or have anger artificially excised does not involve the "moral work" necessary to forgive another. Forgiveness is an accomplishment; it is a mending of the moral fences between two persons and is the re-acceptance of another" (Hughes 333). In this passage, "passively[11] to forget" is identified in disjunction with "artificially excising one's anger" (Hughes 333). The concern is that forgetting is a dubious response on behalf of the victim to the wrongdoer. In this case, the victim turns their back on the necessary active work in order for overcoming anger and resentment, and forgives, but not to the extent that the tensions concerning anger and resentment are resolutely overcome.

In the essay, "Forgiveness and Self-Respect," David Novitz develops an argument defending the view that forgiveness is a virtue. The virtue of forgiveness requires an appropriate degree of reason along with compassion for the wrongdoer. As a result, forgetting plays no role in the virtue of forgiveness. For Novitz, the injured can gradually get over feelings of bitterness and resentment. For example, they could develop new interests and lifestyles, move to new locations, and make new friends, coworkers, or neighbors. But, Novitz writes:

> This is not to forgive; if anything, it is to forget: it is to have one's attention diverted, and is (in consequence) to develop new and different priorities, so that the wrong and the

[11] Passive (adj.) late 14c., *passif*, of matter, "capable of being acted upon;" of persons, "receptive;" also in the grammatical sense "expressive of being affected by some action" (opposed to *active*), from Old French *passif* "suffering, undergoing hardship" (14c.) and directly from Latin *passivus* "capable of feeling or suffering," from *pass*-, past-participle stem of *pati* "to suffer".
Source: https://www.etymonline.com/search?q=passive

> harm that one has suffered gradually loses its sting. The process is entirely passive and depends not so much on one's character as it does on what has lately happened in one's life (Novitz 304).

Novitz is therefore fully in support of Murphy's view that forgetting must be excluded from the boundaries of forgiveness because it just happens to us; or, as Hughes derived from Murphy's assessment, forgetting is totally passive.

Finally, Berel Lang examines forgetting in relation to forgiveness in section four of his 1994 essay, "Forgiveness." One section of the essay is entitled, "What future conduct is entailed in the act of forgiving?" According to Lang, a common answer to this question is to appeal to the phrase, "forgive and forget." Initially, he concedes that one of the meanings of forgiveness is—at least in some sense—to erase the wrongful act forgiven, especially to the extent that the wrongful act is placed in moral brackets. Lang is suspicious of forgetting in relation to forgiveness for three reasons that draw out what he calls an "apparent paradox" (Lang 109). First of all, "forgive and forget" does not make sense when the victim expresses forgiveness to the wrongdoer, and then later on, recalls the wrongful act again. New reflections of the wrongdoing may elicit further details that are brought to attention. Subsequently, the initial granting of "forgiving and forgetting" is incomplete, pre-mature, or dubious. Thus, in Lang's view, "forgive and forget" gives too much leeway for the forgiver to be able to accumulate, on a retrospective basis, further requirements that tend to lead to a rescinded forgiveness.

The second reason concerns the meaning of forgetting. Lang writes, "The question persists of what forgiveness as 'forgetting'—erasing the past or wiping the slate clean—does entail. The aspect of forgiveness thus invoked might imply a literal remaking or rewriting of history, rendering the wrong committed null; in that case, the moment it had constituted would in

effect disappear" (Lang 109). If the intention of "forgive and forget" is to erase the memory of a wrongful event, then what does it mean to forgive an act that has been erased? The act of erasure inevitably eradicates any reasoning to support the granting of forgiveness. Consequently, there would be no reason to forgive anything so long as "the moment it had constituted would in effect disappear" (Lang 108). With this in mind, forgiving—identified as an erasure—would annihilate the constitution of a wrongful moment. Afterwards, it would be unclear what exactly is being forgiven. The wrongful act would no longer count in moral terms.

Third, Lang is critical of the phrase "forgive and forget" when it comes to a person who consistently wrongs someone in the same way. Lang writes, "If the same wrong were committed repeatedly, it would seem reasonable for the person harmed at some point to refuse to forgive, even if he had before that been willing to forgive and forget and had claimed to do so" (Lang 109). As long as the victim can, at some point, retract from this "forgive and forget" pattern, it implies that the victim "did not quite forget however forgiving his earlier response(s) seemed" (Lang 109). Lang is nevertheless suspicious of forgetting because it does not contribute to genuine forgiveness. If anything, it eradicates the victim's ability to grant forgiveness.

After stressing the written contributions of Hieronymi, Allais, Hughes, Novitz, and Lang, it seems that Murphy's reading of Butler has grown legs, so to speak. A narrative has been established to support two views of Butler's account of forgiveness. First, he defined forgiveness as the forswearing of resentment. Second, derived from this definition, he indicates a distinction between forgiving and forgetting. While forgiving happens for a reason, forgetting *just happens*. Since forgetting just happens, it is too passive of a phenomenon to count within the framework of forgiveness. Thus, forgiving is one thing (i.e. overcoming resentment for a reason), and forgetting is another, separate thing (i.e. it just happens).

Although many theorists have accepted Murphy's distinction—drawn from his reading of Butler—there *are* other writers who have challenged this distinction. They believe forgetting *does* play a meaningful role in forgiveness. Similar to the writers mentioned earlier, however, the following writers *also* did not investigate Butler's writings. Hence, Murphy's reading of Butler still carries some weight within the following debate. As a result, the investigation now turns to understanding Patrick Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Jeffrey Blustein's effort to align forgetting with forgiving.

FORGIVE AND FORGET: NOT DWELLING ON THE PAST

In the 2002 essay, "What Should "Forgiveness" Mean?" Patrick Boleyn-Fitzgerald briefly summarizes several accounts of forgiveness, including the writings of Jeffrie Murphy, Paul Hughes, Cheshire Calhoun, Trudy Govier, Robert Roberts, and Norvin Richards. He specifically acknowledges the significance of Murphy's reading of Butler. In so doing, the narrative about Butler's distinction—between forgiving and forgetting—is even further solidified. Boleyn-Fitzgerald writes:

> Jeffrie Murphy endorses Bishop Butler's use of this distinction: "By his emphasis on the forswearing of resentment, Butler indicates that he quite properly wants to draw a distinction between forgiveness (which may be a virtue and morally commanded) and forgetting (which may just happen)" (Boleyn-Fitzgerald 484).

To be clear, the pages of Butler's *Fifteen Sermons* remain closed, unread, shelved away from view, and forgotten. Instead, Boleyn-Fitzgerald develops an argument that criticizes Murphy, and others, for excluding forgetting from the role of forgiveness. In doing so, however, his argument also implicitly points the finger at Butler, for being the philosopher who founded this

distinction.

According to Boleyn-Fitzgerald, “Philosophers reject forgetting as a virtue because they regard it as passive. Forgetting may just happen” (Boleyn-Fitzgerald 490). In his view, to the contrary, there *is* a virtue to forgetting. The virtue of forgetting involves the avoidance of dwelling on the past. As Boleyn-Fitzgerald emphasizes, not dwelling on the past “is necessary for us to live fully in the present, and it should be seen as the culmination of the virtue of forgiveness” (Boleyn-Fitzgerald 491). Hence, the virtue of forgetting demands the injured to avoid the past and live fully in the present.

To describe the virtue of forgetting, Boleyn-Fitzgerald briefly summarizes Aristotle’s description of virtue. He writes, “For Aristotle, a virtue is a character trait or disposition that enables individuals to move toward their ultimate end. Virtues enable individuals to achieve *eudaimonia* [human flourishing]” (Boleyn-Fitzgerald 491). On the one hand, the virtue of forgetting is a disposition that enables individuals to move towards human flourishing. On the other hand, Boleyn-Fitzgerald acknowledges that the belief of certain dispositions—including forgetting—could actually become self-defeating. For example, an individual’s disposition to forget may lead them to experience frustration for not yet experiencing the desired ends. In other words, the disposition to acquire a certain character could lead to disappointment rather than reward.

In spite of Boleyn-Fitzgerald’s awareness about the pitfalls of acquiring a virtuous character, he still argues for people to demonstrate the virtue of forgetting. People often regard forgetting to be an appropriate response to resentment or anger. Moreover, the phrase, “forgive and forget,” usually carries more complexity than the simplified view of no longer remembering. He writes, “Sometimes forgetting means to be unable to remember, but no one intends this

meaning when they use the phrase, ‘forgive and forget’ (Boleyn-Fitzgerald 490). When someone says, “Forget it,” for example, they are not informing the wrongdoer that they have annihilated the memory of the wrongdoing. Instead, they are letting the wrongdoer know that they are no longer going to dwell on the wrongdoing. As a result, Boleyn-Fitzgerald argues for an account of forgiveness that includes the meaning of forgetting which obliges the injured not to dwell on the past.

In Boleyn-Fitzgerald’s account, forgetting “is part of the process of cooling down and therefore part of a common method of forgiving. To cool down, we must move our attention away from angry thoughts long enough for our acute physiological arousal to subside” (Boleyn-Fitzgerald 490). By not dwelling on the past, the anger felt by the wronged person, may be overcome. Subsequently, as he stresses, “forgiveness should be viewed as letting go of anger, regardless of the reason an agent has for doing so” (Boleyn-Fitzgerald 497). In this regard, Boleyn-Fitzgerald carries a similar approach to forgiveness, as indicated by Murphy’s reading of Butler’s definition of forgiveness as the overcoming of resentment. The only difference concerns the distinction made by Murphy. While Boleyn-Fitzgerald accepts Murphy’s definition of forgiveness, he only disagrees with Murphy’s exclusion of forgetting as a way to overcome resentment.

Indeed, Boleyn-Fitzgerald’s account of forgiveness challenges the established narrative about the distinction between forgiving and forgetting. Simply put, the contemporary debate “mischaracterizes and undervalues forgetting” (Boleyn-Fitzgerald 497). As a result, his essay demands the contemporary debaters on forgiveness to reevaluate their understanding about the relationship between forgiving and forgetting. In fact, a few years after Boleyn-Fitzgerald’s essay, Jeffrey Blustein developed a similar view, expanding on the idea of forgetting as the

virtue of avoiding to dwell on emotionally damaging memories.

In the 2014 book, *Forgiveness and Remembrance: Remembering Wrongdoing in Personal and Private Life*, Jeffrey Blustein demonstrates a need to rethink the relationship between forgiving and forgetting. Similar to Boleyn-Fitzgerald, he is aware of the philosophical literature regarding the exclusion of forgetting from taking part in forgiveness. He writes:

> The consensus within the philosophical literature on forgiveness is that remembering the wrong and the wrongdoer and remembering them accurately are necessary parts of the process, though not of the end-state. Forgetting may be a consequence of forgiving, it is said, but it cannot promote forgiving. One is not engaged in the process of forgiveness if, for example, one chooses to ignore the wrong, or allows oneself to be distracted from it, or represses it, or redescribes it in such a way that it is no longer wrong. One must retain the judgement that it is wrong and that the wrongdoer is responsible for it in one's memory for the duration of the process, and the impression that is usually conveyed is that the required memory is all or nothing: one either remembers or one forgets (Blustein 99).

In this lengthy passage, Blustein elucidates the common philosophical agreement that insists forgetting cannot play a role in the process of forgiveness. The forgiver must be able to remember the wrong, the wrongdoer, and be able to rely on an accurate memory of the details to qualify within the frame of forgiveness. Any aspect of forgetting has been described in terms that are associated with distraction, repression, excuse, condonation, compromise, and so on. While these terms help inform the meaning of forgiveness, they do not actually represent forgiveness proper. On the contrary, they hover beyond the boundaries of forgiveness. Subsequently, with such boundaries in play, the demand for the injured to remember carries much more weight.

Suddenly, the injured has a major responsibility to preserve and maintain a fixed memory of the past. In other words, to diverge from the strict and rigid responsibility of memory could inevitably lead the injured outside of the very meaning of forgiveness.

The stakes of memory are high. The injured either remembers accurately, and forgives, or they do not remember, and they have forgotten. In the case of the latter, forgiveness has been disqualified from being a viable option for the injured. With this consensus laid out, Blustein demands a reconsideration about the role of forgetting. Along with Boleyn-Fitzgerald, Blustein supports the view that forgetting is compatible with forgiving. In fact, he briefly recognizes Boleyn-Fitzgerald for attempting to reconsider the importance of forgetting. As Blustein writes, "Patrick Boleyn-Fitzgerald, in a rare acknowledgement by a contemporary North American philosopher of the importance of forgetting for forgetting" (Blustein 124) describes it as an important means for individuals to cool down their anger. While Blustein mostly accepts Boleyn-Fitzgerald's view of aligning forgetting as a virtue demonstrated by avoiding to dwell on the past, he prefers to identify *rumination* as the more proper term. In particular, Blustein relies on cognitive psychologists who prefer to examine the meaning of rumination.[12]

In a nutshell, Blustein argues:

> One important and very common impediment to a person's ability to forgive is what I call *dwelling* on the wrongs that she has suffered, or what cognitive psychologists refer to as rumination. In order to be able to forgive, therefore, a person must not dwell on what

[12] Blustein provides references to two essays from cognitive psychologists: (1.) J. Joorman and T.B. Tran, "Rumination and Intentional Forgetting of Emotional Material," *Cognition and Emotion*, vol. 23, no. 6 (2009): 1233-1246, at 1234. (2.) R.D. Ray, F.H. Wilhelm, and J.J. Gross, "All in the Mind's Eye? Anger, Rumination and Reappraisal," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 94, no. 1 (2008): 133-145, at 133.

> was done to her, and if like most people she could succumb to this, at least when the wrong is serious, she must be able to influence how she experiences the negative emotions with which she responds to wrongdoing (Blustein 100).

In this regard, the injured needs to be able to demonstrate a technique for cooling down their negative emotions with respect to the wrongdoing. Emotion regulation consists in lessening or dampening distressing emotional impact derived from the experience of being wronged. To put it another way, emotion regulation serves to cool down, or to help control, a person's reactions to the wrongdoing, "in such a way that it does not become the focus of ruminative thinking" (Blustein 100). As a result, a person who disengages from the past can move forward with their life without being dominated by memories of ill-treatment.

According to cognitive psychologists Jutta Joorman and Tanya B. Tran, "Rumination is characterized by repetitive thinking that is difficult to control and difficult to terminate" (Joorman and Tran 1234). In this regard, rumination does not concern individuals who may occasionally reflect on negative emotional memories, but rather, on reflecting *excessively* about negative emotional memories. Rumination poses a mental health risk of leading people into a state of depression or intensive anxiety. Rather than taking steps to relieve their distress, the ruminator tends to reflect on past events in a repetitive style. Subsequently, rumination can often incline individuals to regulate their emotions in more severe, challenging, and unhealthy ways. With this in mind, Blustein carries a similar approach when dealing with the problem of rumination and forgiveness.

Blustein's account of forgetting does not serve to completely annihilate a person's memory of a wrongdoing. In other words, he does not argue for an account of forgetting that serves to eradicate the memory of wrongdoings and the culpability of the wrongdoer; however,

he wants forgetting to help regulate a person's emotions in a way that they do not ruminate on the past. His intent is to examine forgetting as a way to make it more difficult to access memories of a past wrongdoing. To further clarify his position, Blustein writes:

> To be sure, forgetting in the sense of regulating one's emotions so as not to dwell on the past makes it more difficult for an individual to access memories of wrongdoing. But it does not prevent memory and retrieval altogether, and it does not exclude belief in the culpability and wrongness of the offense or negative emotional responses to it. It is rather a mode of forgetting that enables individuals to retain memories of wrongdoing without being consumed by them (Blustein 100).

The method of forgetting, in other words, obliges the injured to avoid intensively negative memories. They need to be able to practice and develop a technique of avoiding rumination; that is, thinking repetitively about their emotionally negative past. Blustein does not aim to motivate the injured to annihilate their memories. He does not demand them to take that specially designed forgetting pill, as mentioned earlier from Hieronymi and Allais' accounts of forgiveness. Rather, Blustein obliges people to find a way to render their negative memories more difficult to access, or rather, to reduce the repetition of emotionally negative memories.

To further develop his account on forgetting, Blustein turns to Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical text, *Untimely Meditations*, originally published serially between 1873 and 1876. Blustein's reading of this text encouraged him to reexamine the relationship between remembering and forgetting. In particular, Blustein studied this relationship in Nietzsche's second essay, *Untimely Meditation, On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, which was published in February 1874.

According to Daniel Breazeale, editor of the 1997 Cambridge edition, one of Nietzsche's main goals in this text was to construct "a new account of our relationship to time in general and to the past in particular" (Nietzsche *UM* xv). Nietzsche conceded that human beings cannot *entirely* escape from the histories of human existence; however, they can still affirm creative ways to overcome and transform these histories. As a result, human existence is not necessarily conditioned solely by history. Many people, for example, spend too much time dwelling on the past, particularly in ways that constrict their ability to express creatively, or more precisely, to be able to look forward to the future. The past can become so overwhelming that it can cloud a person's motivation or ability to even look forward. Thus, Nietzsche tries to solve this problem—of excessively dwelling on the past—by discussing an "unhistorical" accompaniment to history.

Nietzsche writes, "With the word 'the unhistorical' I designate the art and power of *forgetting* and of enclosing oneself within a bounded *horizon*" (Nietzsche *UM* 120, his emphasis). The art of forgetting is a way to live in the present by forgetting to be constrained by the past. Forgetting does not necessarily annihilate the past, but rather, it allows human beings the capacity to be life-affirming in the present. He finds that animals generally have a greater ability to live 'unhistorically' than human beings. Hence, human beings have a difficult time forgetting the past. Furthermore, too much dwelling on the past may lead to unhappiness, both individually and collectively. As Nietzsche writes, "He who cannot sink down on the threshold of the moment and forget all the past, who cannot stand balanced like a goddess of victory without growing dizzy and afraid, will never know what happiness is – worse, he will never do anything to make others happy" (Nietzsche *UM* 62). On an individual level, the inability or unwillingness to forget the past can therefore lead to a person's personal unhappiness, and

moreover, their inability to make others happy. On a collective level, the inability to forget the past can cause a community, village, municipality, or even nation, to become too bombarded by past events that crush the positive spirit of the collective from looking forward to new creations, improved cities, cleaner neighborhoods, mitigated crime, improved education standards, and so on. Hence, too much collective memory could stymie the willingness to grow and improve the community.

Blustein finds Nietzsche's ideas appealing because they affirm the view that remembering, in general, is not an unqualified good. Many people think remembering is always a good thing, and subsequently, forgetting is a bad thing. Nietzsche is quick to point out, though, that it would be altogether impossible to live at all without some contributions of forgetting. Indeed, Blustein finds Niezsche's views alluring, primarily because they do not acquiesce to the standard view—derived from the consensus philosophical debate on forgiveness—that remembering is good and forgetting is bad.

In *On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life*, located in his *Untimely Meditations*, Nietzsche even comes close to determining forgetting as a virtue. Although Blustein is aware Nietzsche does not explicitly make this point, it is implied in one specific passage from this second *Untimely Meditation*. Nietzsche examines how to determine the degree and boundary at which the past has to be forgotten. A person, or more emphatically, a culture, would need to have the capacity to develop and actively create, in a way that incorporates history and transforms or overcomes history. This active development and creativity would lend forth to a healthy or renewed confidence. Furthermore, Nietzsche writes, it depends "on one's being just as able to forget at the right time as to remember at the right time; on the possession of a powerful instinct for sensing when it is necessary to feel historically and when unhistorically" (Nietzsche

UM 63). This passage motivates Blustein to determine that Nietzsche was arguing, at least by implication, for a virtue of remembering and forgetting. Virtues of character entail someone to act in the right time, in the right circumstances, or in the right manner. Nietzsche's description here sounds similarly Aristotelian concerning the virtues of character. Even though Nietzsche does not explicitly identify forgetting as a virtuous character, it is still these ideas that helped to motivate Blustein to develop his own account of the virtue of forgetting. Moreover, Nietzsche was quite dismissive of the moral value of forgiveness, and Blustein is also aware of this (Blustein 121). As a result, Blustein carries forth some of Nietzsche's ideas about forgetting, but differs from Nietzsche because he intends to develop a virtue of forgetting that plays a role in the moral value of forgiveness.

Before examining the determination of forgetting as a virtue, does Blustein expand further about his understanding of forgetting? First of all, Blustein writes, "forgetting cannot be equated with disregarding either in the sense of paying no attention to something—which may have no judgmental component or not be purposeful at all—or in the sense of treating something as not meriting regard or notice" (Blustein 115). For example, a professor gives an in-person lecture about Kant's Categorical Imperative. During the lecture, the professor sees a student not paying attention to the class, and texting someone on their smartphone. Seeing this student not paying attention to the lecture causes the professor discomfort. Instead of calling out the student to put the smartphone away, however, the professor decides to avoid thinking about it. They look in the opposite direction of where the student is seated and proceed to explain Kant's Categorical Imperative. In this example, the professor disregarded the actions of the student as something not meriting further regard or notice. In so doing, the professor's discomfort could have actually have become more enhanced. In any case, as Blustein clarifies his point, disregarding is not

forgetting. He writes, “When one forgets, by contrast, it seems that there should be some significant impediment to the recovery of one’s memories, or some difficulty in bringing material to consciousness that consists in more than one’s not currently thinking about it or even one’s intentionally suppressing thoughts about it” (Blustein 115). Thus, forgetting involves some impediment or difficulty to the recovery of memories. To disregard looking at the student, or even the effort to avoid thinking about the student texting in class, is not the same thing as forgetting. If it was the same thing, then, as Blustein concludes, it “would be too capacious to use the term interchangeably with disregarding or covering up” (Blustein 115). Therefore, forgetting should not be an all-encompassing term for covering up something that is not due to the suppression of an unwanted thought.

Non-pathological or normal forgetting does not occur because information in memory storage has been destroyed, but rather, because learned content becomes inaccessible for conscious retrieval. As a result, this general assessment on forgetting depends on a distinction between the availability and accessibility of memories.[13] Information about past events could be available and highly accessible. For example, while a student drives to school, the memory of their favorite coffee drink is available to their memory storage. If they choose to, they could consciously access the memory of that coffee drink. Or, the student’s favorite coffee shop could be available; however, they cannot access the name or location of the place. In this regard, the coffee shop name and location is “on the tip of their tongue,” but they still cannot quite access it. Finally, information about the student’s favorite coffee drink and shop may be neither available nor accessible. As Blustein puts it, “When information about past events falls into the last

[13] In developing this distinction, Blustein relies on E. Tulving and Z. Pearlstone, “Availability Versus Accessibility for Information in Memory for Words,” *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, vol. 5 (1966): pgs. 381-391.

category, the event is clearly forgotten on anyone's definition" (Blustein 117). The kind of forgetting Blustein is interested, in particular, concerns information about past events that is available for retrieval, but also, inaccessible for conscious retrieval. In other words, forgetting has to do precisely with *accessibility*. By investigating forgetting as it pertains to accessibility, Blustein relies on many studies—including those written by Jefferson Singer and Martin Conway, and also by Paul Connerton--in collective examples of induced forgetting and cognitive studies on forgetting in regard to emotion regulation.

Blustein prefers to maintain use of the term "forgetting" rather than get rid of the term completely. If a memory is still available for conscious recall, even while an individual has difficulty accessing it, then is it still accurate to describe it as forgotten? For example, in the 2008 essay, "Should we forget forgetting?" Jefferson Singer and Martin Conway prefer to replace "forgetting" with "degrees of accessibility" (Singer and Conway 280). In their view, it may be best to avoid discussing forgetting because there may be few instances of information that get into memory without being available for recall. Subsequently, they prefer to adopt the idea of degrees of accessibility. But Blustein disagrees with their removal of forgetting as a category. He insists on maintaining the usage of forgetting, "as long as at the same time we acknowledge that there is no bright line dividing forgetting from remembering; that we need to be precise in specifying what is being forgotten" (Blustein 118). Furthermore, judgements of forgetting may depend on personal, psychological, social, cultural, and even moral, considerations. The accessibility of memories might concern expectations regarding what ought to be remembered or forgotten.

Cultural factors may play a role in inducing a kind of collective forgetting. Blustein

briefly explains an example, relying on what Paul Connerton identifies as "repressive erasure."[14] A totalitarian regime may, for example, remove objects that incite memories of political institutions or leaders that do not support the policies of that regime. One example to demonstrate this goes back to the Roman Empire. Roman criminals were declared to be "enemies of the state." As a result, "images of them were destroyed, statues of them were razed to the ground, and their names were removed from inscriptions, with the explicit purpose of casting all memory of them into oblivion" (Connerton 60). In this way, a political regime would attempt to cast aside any object that could help cue the memory of a criminal who did not support their political regime or way of living.

Blustein provides at least two examples concerning forgetting as it pertains to cognitive emotional regulation. The first example concerns "mindfulness literature" in an attentional process called "reperceiving."[15] Blustein summarizes, "Reperceiving or mindfully attending to one's memories and emotional states separates the self from them, and allows an individual to stand back from them, and teaches her that they are not to be feared or avoided" (Blustein 125). Reperceiving allows individuals to dis-identify from the view that any thoughts, emotions, or body sensation *is* their identity. In this regard, reperceiving enables people to become aware that identity is *more* than the contents of their consciousness. Reperceiving—similar to Boleyn-Fitzgerald's assessment—is a method for forgetting to avoid dwelling on the past.

The second example Blustein offers, concerning the cognitive emotional regulation of forgetting, is "cognitive reappraisal." This "involves revising the story one tells about events in

[14] Paul Connerton, "Seven Types of Forgetting," *Memory Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2008): 59-78.
[15] Shauna Shapiro, Linda Carlson, John Astin, and Benedict Freedman, "Mechanisms of Mindfulness," *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 62. No. 3 (2006): 373-386.

ways that alter their meaning and significance for the storyteller" (Blustein 126). One way of revising a story is to attach different, more positive, or less negative meanings associated with emotions that were cued from a memory. Instead of an injured person declaring that the wrongdoer is at fault, and that their resentment is justified, they replace such judgments with more positive features, such as "She is going through a stressful time in her life," or, "She was brought up by emotionally difficult parents, and I was brought up in better circumstances, so why should I continue to maintain my resentment for her?" The goal of cognitive reappraisal is "to enable individuals to moderate the intensity of their angry feelings so that angry thoughts do not cause unmanageable emotional distress or maladaptive behavior" (Blustein 126). Thus, cognitive reappraisal applies positive emotional content in order to replace the intensity of negative emotions associated with past memories.

Going back to the earlier discussion of Hieronymi and Allais, even though cognitive reappraisal may help to lessen emotional negativity, this appears too close to judgments of excuse or condonation, rather than a method towards expressing forgiveness. The main goal of cognitive reappraisal is to consciously replace negative emotions with positive emotions. In other words, "Be positive!" This strategy intends to forget to dwell on painful emotions associated with a wrongdoing and the culpability of the wrongdoer. My concern, however, is that forgetting to dwell on painful emotions may also, perhaps inevitably, lead the injured person to neglect or even refuse to forgive. Even more crucially, it could call into question the need to forgive. If the injured is able to virtuously forget to dwell on painful emotional memories, for example, then there may no longer be a need to address an injury where forgiveness is still in play. The injured may simply forget in a manner that no longer requires attention to forgiveness. The injured simply moves forward by forgetting *without* forgiving. In this way, an excellent forgetter may

simply be able to move past the injury. Subsequently, forgetting may take us too far from the arena of forgiving. This is my worry with Blustein and Boleyn-Fitzgerald's account—derived from the writings of Nietzsche—on the virtue of forgetting and its contribution to forgiving. It may simply allow the injured to forget in a way that renders forgiveness pointless, obsolete, or even, meaningless. Is there another way to consider forgetting in a different way? Or rather, does forgetting involve more complexity than merely avoiding dwelling on painfully emotional memories?

Indeed, these concerns draw from a similar point made by Murphy and Hieronymi. Seeking therapy—by avoiding to dwell or ruminate on painfully emotional memories—may allow someone the ability to overcome their resentment for the wrongdoer; however, this overcoming of resentment may occur successfully *without* forgiveness. If the memories are not entirely annihilated—as Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein insist in their accounts—then is the forgiveness they encourage the injured to express really genuine or meaningful?

To sum up, by relying on more cognitive psychological studies, Blustein's account of forgetting is much more extensive than Boleyn-Fitzgerald's; however, they both agree on two key points. First, both thinkers agree that forgiveness is the overcoming of resentment. Forgetting to dwell, or ruminate, about the past is a significant method for overcoming resentment. Secondly, they both identify forgetting as a virtue. For Boleyn-Fitzgerald, the virtue of forgetting entails the injured to avoid dwelling on painfully negative emotional memories. Blustein accepts a similar view and develops it further.

According to Blustein, "The virtues of remembrance and forgetfulness, similarly, consist in dispositions to remember and forget as appropriate, and what makes remembering and forgetting appropriate will vary according to the context and the ends promoted by them"

(Blustein 104). Ruminating or "dwelling on" past wrongdoings is, therefore, a vice because they pertain to repetitive thinking that is difficult to control and difficult to terminate (Blustein 110). Blustein and Boleyn-Fitzgerald do not classify dwelling on past wrongdoings as virtuous specifically because it has too much of a tendency to increase a person's anger and resentment. As Blustein summarizes, "Usually when one ruminates, one's attention is to some degree focused on one's negative moods or emotional responses to some event, especially if it is distressing, and to the extent that this is the case, rumination is emotion-focused, self-directed thinking" (Blustein 111). In this regard, ruminating or dwelling *could* lead to an increase of anger and resentment, and consequently, forgiveness may become more difficult to express. Or, more succinctly, dwelling and ruminating do not contribute to forgiveness as the overcoming of resentment.

As long as a person remembers and forgets appropriately, then they may be identified as virtuous. What does it mean to remember and forget appropriately? Blustein answers this question by providing a series of conditions that must be met to forget appropriately, or rather, to forget virtuously. Blustein writes:

> The person who possesses these virtues accepts that there are good and bad reasons for remembering and reasons for remembering different events in different ways, and his behavior reflects his acceptance of these reasons. He knows that sometimes he is better off forgetting unpleasant recollections rather than holding on to them, and he is able to differentiate between circumstances on this basis and to modulate his memories accordingly. And his emotions are properly engaged as well, in the sense that he is inclined to remember past events with emotions that are appropriate and fitting to them,

> whether the emotions are positive or negative or both, and to manage them in the right way (Blustein 108).

In this passage, Blustein provides a series of conditions that must be met for a person to be virtuous at remembering and forgetting. Those who possess these virtues are able to manage their emotional responses to past wrongdoings appropriately, and this involves regulation of the emotions derived from memories. The primary emphasis here is, similar to Boleyn-Fitzgerald's account, to praise others for not dwelling on negative emotions in a way that can enhance emotional distress. Insofar as negative emotions cause distress that becomes intense, a person's memories are not being regulated in accordance with the virtue of forgetting. A person demonstrates the virtue of forgetting by not dwelling on unpleasant recollections, understanding good and bad reasons for remembering, and managing to modulate memories accordingly. For all of these conditions, therefore, *not* dwelling or ruminating on the past is a method of forgetting that is compatible with forgiveness as the overcoming of resentment. In this way, Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein accept Murphy's traditional reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness; however, they disagree with the indicated distinction that separates forgetting from playing a contributing role in the course to forgiveness.

In sum, Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein maintain that there is a virtue to forgetting. To forget virtuously, several demanding conditions must be met to do so. The agent needs to be able to demonstrate excellence in forgetting unpleasant memories that elicit negative emotions. In a similar vein, Charles Griswold argues that the virtue of forgiveness requires extensive conditions to be met as well.

THE VIRTUE OF FORGETTING: A "HIGHLY DEMANDING" AND "OBSESSIVELY CONDITIONAL" ACCOUNT

In 2007, Charles Griswold published the book *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration*. In this work, Griswold offers a strict list of six conditions that must be satisfied by the wrongdoer in order to merit the virtue of forgiveness. Until this list of conditions is met, the injured cannot properly overcome their resentment directed at the wrongdoer. The conditions are established to justify forgiveness by showing that the resentment is no longer warranted. For Griswold, a candidate of forgiveness must:

> 1. Acknowledge that she was the responsible agent. 2. Repudiate her deeds (by acknowledging their wrongness) and herself as their author. 3. Express regret to the injured at having caused this particular injury to her. 4. Commit to becoming the sort of person who does not inflict injury; and show this commitment through deeds as well as words. 5. Show that she understands, from the injured person's perspective, the damage done by the injury. 6. Offer a narrative accounting for how she came to do wrong, how that wrongdoing does not express the totality of her person, and how she is becoming worthy of approbation (Griswold 149-150).

This list of conditions is quite demanding to merit the virtue of forgiveness. In a similar vein, Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein's account of the virtue of forgetting could be equally, if not more, demanding. Somehow, the injured needs to be able to demonstrate the virtue of forgetting the right intensively negative memories, at the right time, in the right way, in the right set of circumstances, and so on. The failure to meet any of these standards tends to lead to a failure to appropriately demonstrate virtuous character. In her 2021 essay, "Frailty and Forgiveness: Forgiveness for Humans," Allais describes Griswold's account of forgiveness to be "an extreme example […] according to which the conditions necessary for forgiveness are a series of reasons for giving up resentment" (Allais 2021 261 n.10). Later on in the essay, Allais describes

Griswold's account of forgiveness as "obsessively conditional" (Allais 2021 269). These obsessive conditions imply the view that the human being is flawed. In order to address the flawed human being, there are several conditions to be met in order to fix them. As if the individual were a broken automobile, Griswold's account offers a kind of full service repair station, so to speak, in demonstrating the virtue of forgiveness.

Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein's virtue of forgetting entails knowing that sometimes individuals are better off forgetting unpleasant recollections rather than holding on to them, are able to differentiate between circumstances on this basis and to modulate their memories accordingly, and that their emotions are properly engaged and appropriately fitting to remember past events, and thus, having the praiseworthy ability to manage emotions in the right time and in the right manner (Blustein 108). Shortly after providing this highly demanding set of conditions, Blustein writes, "We should not expect, however, that it is possible to specify exactly what combination of remembering and forgetting makes a person's life go well. These virtues, as Aristotle tells us about others, are not susceptible to such precise specification" (Blustein 108). The best someone can do, therefore, is to consider how well a person's life is going with respect to how they relate to the past; that is, their plans and projects, relationships and attitudes towards the future, and whether the remembering overwhelms their ability to enjoy valuable activities.

Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein's account of the virtue of forgetting appears to resonate with what Allais critically identifies as "empirical causal outcomes of complicated empirical systems" (Allais 2021, 269).[16] This means that a person must constantly be reviewing their past

[16] Allais identifies this phrase with Griswold's virtue of forgiveness. In her 2021 essay, "Frailty and Forgiveness," she writes, "Understanding human agency in terms of this kind of empirical causal explanation is one way in which obsessively conditional accounts of forgiveness, such as that of Griswold, can be understood" (Allais 2021, 269).

actions in a rigid manner, determining even the minutest flaws in regard to the way emotions are modulated, forgetting unpleasant recollections, engage in proper emotions if and when an unpleasant memory is cued, and so on. Furthermore, even if a virtuous individual is able to successfully pinpoint all of these empirical flaws, then there will be the problem concerning how to rig the system successfully in the future (Allais 2021, 269). By connecting this highly demanding and obsessively conditional concern to Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein, it is hard to imagine how the virtue of forgetting could actually be routinely practiced.

As Allais points out, "being well-ordered virtuous agents in the sense of classical virtue theory—agents who do the right thing easily and with pleasure and for whom virtue is not a struggle—is not a possibility for humans in the actual human condition" (Allais 2021, 276). On the one hand, human beings, attempting to demonstrate the virtue of forgetting, could succumb to growingly intensive doubts or hesitations about whether or not they are avoiding to ruminate on the right memories, at the right time, in the right manner, and so on. On the other hand, if the injured *are* able to virtuously avoid ruminating or dwelling on painful memories, then does this necessarily lead them to forgive their wrongdoer(s)? Perhaps the injured is able to avoid dwelling on painful memories, and thus, overcome their resentment. But does forgiveness necessarily follow? Going back to Murphy, Hieronymi, and Allais's point about therapy as a means to overcome resentment, perhaps the forgetting of intensively negative memories would cause forgiveness to become pointless. Given these results, then, is this the only way to reflect on forgetting and its relationship to forgiveness? Is there another way to reset an understanding of their relationship? Is there more complexity to forgetting than these accounts maintain? These questions will be addressed more specifically, especially in chapter three, when Butler takes the time to call attention to "inadvertency," another way to consider the meaning of forgetting.

A CRITICAL RESPONSE TO MURPHY'S READING OF BUTLER: INTRODUCING THE CONTEMPORARY BUTLERIANS

This chapter set out to explain three main issues primarily within the North American discourse on forgiveness. First, I investigated Jeffrie Murphy's account of forgiveness within the 1988 text, co-authored with Jean Hampton, *Forgiveness and Mercy*. Much of their discussion about forgiveness relies on Murphy's reading of Joseph Butler's definition of forgiveness. From this definition, according to Murphy, Butler indicates that he wants to make a distinction between forgiveness (which happens for a reason and is a morally commanded virtue) and forgetting (which just happens). So, even though forgetting is a way to overcome resentment, the identification of forgetting as "just happening" does not qualify it with forgiving. In other words, forgetting is not compatible with forgiveness. Second, I relied on many other contributors, including Hieronymi, Allais, Hughes, Novitz, Lang, and others, to show that Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness, and the distinction between forgiving and forgetting, has largely been accepted without question. Thirdly, I examined Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein's account of forgiveness because they offer a different interpretation about the meaning of forgetting and forgiveness than Murphy's traditional account. Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein both draw from Nietzsche's view of forgetting as a life-affirming phenomenon. Forgetting is life-affirming because it motivates individuals not to become overwhelmed by past events. Nietzsche therefore offers an account of forgetting that serves a positive meaning.

Although Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein accept the idea that forgiveness is the forswearing of resentment, they disagree with the distinction between forgiving and forgetting. Instead, Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein insist that forgetting *is* compatible with forgiving. Not dwelling on the past is a method of forgetting that serves to forswear resentment so that

forgiveness can be expressed. Blustein helps to support this idea by appealing to cognitive psychological studies regarding the negative impact of rumination on the mental health of individuals. By obliging human beings to avoid dwelling or ruminating on painful memories, Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein determine there to be a virtue of forgetting. This virtue should help individuals overcome their resentment, and subsequently, forgive those who have wronged them.

In spite of their opposition to Murphy's traditional distinction between forgiving and forgetting, Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein still accept the traditional narrative derived from Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness. Indeed, they both insist that forgiveness cannot take place unless the injured is able to overcome their resentment. Given such an extensive debate, two important questions are to be posed: First, was Murphy's reading of Joseph Butler correct? And second, would the debate be enhanced by returning directly to its primary source?

After demonstrating that Murphy's reading of Butler has had an impact within the philosophical debate on forgiveness, it also needs to be shown that not everyone has accepted this reading. In fact, some philosophers—whom I call the Contemporary Butlerians—have challenged Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness. In doing so, they have proceeded to directly investigate Joseph Butler's eighth and ninth sermons of his published work, *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*. The next chapter, therefore, proceeds to examine the findings of the Contemporary Butlerians.

CHAPTER TWO

OPPOSITION TO MURPHY'S TRADITIONAL ACCOUNT OF FORGIVENESS AMONGST THE CONTEMPORARY BUTLERIANS

INTRODUCTION

Before diving into an analysis of Butler's *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*, in this chapter, I want to show that Paul Newberry, Charles Griswold, Ernesto Garcia, and Karen Pagani, in particular, have *not* merely accepted Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness. These thinkers have stressed the importance of Butler scholarship within the contemporary debate on forgiveness. As a result, I identify these thinkers as the "Contemporary Butlerians."

To be clear, some of their writings have already been recognized[17] for drawing out criticisms in Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness. As will be examined in this chapter; however, the Contemporary Butlerian research is still flawed for not reading Butler's ninth sermon thoroughly enough. Even though they have come to challenge Murphy's traditional reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness, they have all *retained* Murphy's traditional distinction between forgiving and forgetting.[18] As will be investigated in later chapters, this distinction is not an accurate representation of Butler's account of forgiveness.

The first essay that disputes Murphy's traditional reading of Butler's account of forgiveness was written by Paul Newberry. Published in 2001, his essay, "Joseph Butler on

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[17] Brandon Warmke, Dana Kay Nelkin and Michael McKenna (editors) acknowledge Garcia's essay in *Forgiveness and its Moral Dimensions* (Oxford University Press, 2011) on page 8 n.16. Lucy Allais also footnotes Garcia's essay in a contribution to this same text, page 260 n.9.

[18] Newberry explicitly retains this distinction (Newberry 241). Pagani largely accepts Newberry's reading of Butler. Griswold and Garcia fail to address the distinction.

Forgiveness: A Presupposed Theory of Emotion," has helped push the Butlerian debate on forgiveness forward. In other words, Newberry's essay helped to establish a debate that directly addresses Butler's writings. Griswold, Garcia and Pagani *all* make reference to Newberry's essay. Pagani agrees with Newberry's historical evaluation of Butler, especially when it comes to his analysis regarding the eighteenth-century theories of emotion. Griswold and Garcia have also acknowledged Newberry's essay as an important contribution to the debate. They disagree, however, with Newberry's determination of the theory of emotions presupposed in Butler's *Fifteen Sermons*. Finally, Lucy Allais' 2008 essay, "Wiping the Slate Clean: The Heart of Forgiveness," has recognized Newberry's essay in a footnote. For Allais, Newberry "argues that the contemporary commentators misrepresent Bishop Butler's position as a result of wrongly attributing to him the cognitive account of emotion prevalent today" (Allais 2008, 9 n.21). Although Allais does not dive into the specifics within the Contemporary Butlerian debate, she is aware that Murphy's traditional reading of Butler's account of forgiveness *has* been challenged.

This chapter therefore serves as a middle link between Murphy and Hampton's influential text and a direct analysis of Butler's *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*. Beginning with Paul Newberry, the Contemporary Butlerians have put more of an emphasis on understanding what exactly Butler wrote on the topic of forgiveness. Their publications help to show that Murphy's view has been challenged, and in so doing, they motivate a clearer path to take the time to inquire into Butler's writings themselves.

SETTING THE HISTORICAL RECORD STRAIGHT: NEWBERRY'S CRITICISM OF MURPHY'S TRADITIONAL READING OF BUTLER

Paul Newberry aims to set the historical record straight in his 2001 essay, "Joseph Butler on Forgiveness: A Presupposed Theory of Emotion." He poses two main questions, writing,

"First, why did Butler define forgiveness only in terms of how one is to act, therefore paying no attention, apparently, to how one feels? Second, how do Murphy and the others incorrectly attribute this view to Butler?" (Newberry 233). Both of these questions motivated Newberry to historically analyze the different theories of emotions in Butler's *Sermons* versus Murphy and Hampton's text. Newberry is critical of Murphy, and others, for supposing that Butler would have carried the same views about the emotions, in the eighteenth-century, as the late twentieth-century had largely accepted.

Newberry devotes five pages of his essay to directly analyze sermons eight and nine of Joseph Butler's *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel*. This text was first published in 1726, and then, a second edition followed with a preface written by Butler three years later, in 1729. In sermon eight, Butler discusses two different kinds of resentment that play a role in his ninth sermon on the forgiveness of injuries. Newberry writes, "An understanding of Butler's definition of forgiveness properly begins with his sermon on resentment in which he distinguishes between two different kinds of resentment" (Newberry 234). Hence, rather than merely accepting Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness, Newberry demands the reader to first take a look at sermon eight, "Upon Resentment" because it serves as a bridge to sermon nine.

The first kind of resentment is described by Butler as "hasty and sudden," and the second kind is called "settled and deliberate" (*S* 8.4).[19] Hasty and sudden resentment is an instinctive response to sudden hurt or violence. Deliberating the fault is not a necessary function of this kind

[19] When I cite Butler's *Fifteen Sermons*, I will provide the sermon number along with the paragraph number within that sermon. For example, in this passage, I have cited from sermon eight, paragraph four.

of resentment. For example, a person is walking across an intersection and is suddenly pelted with a snowball. The walker looks up to see three teenagers, on the other side of the street, giggling and reaching for another snowball to throw at the walker. The walker suddenly braces for the ensuing of more snowballs, holds up their hands to the face, and swiftly moves away from the teenagers. Thus, Butler determines hasty and sudden resentment to equate to an instinctive defense against a hurt or violence. In fact, Butler equates hasty and sudden resentment as something adult human beings share with infants and animals.

Settled and deliberate resentment arises when the injured person is able to properly direct fault to the wrongdoer. The deliberative aspect implies a longer period of time for resentment to develop. Subsequently, settled or deliberative resentment can pervade and transform into hatred, malice, or spite. In this regard, settled resentment concerns a more thoroughly examined emotion concerning a moral injustice against oneself, or against others. On the one hand, resentment is usually identified with respect to moral injustices or injuries against oneself. Butler typically identifies resentment "in cases of personal and private injury" (*S* 9.2). On the other hand, indignation is usually identified as the term concerning injustices or injuries felt on behalf of someone else (or others). This is typically associated with impersonal and public injuries. Newberry points out, however, that Butler "does not hold strictly to an absolute division of these two emotion labels" (Newberry 235). For example, Newberry points to a passage in sermon nine where Butler writes, "Let this be called anger, indignation, resentment, or by whatever name anyone shall choose" (*S* 9.2). Even though there are times when Butler clarifies the division between resentment and indignation, he also sometimes uses these terms interchangeably. Nevertheless, as Newberry writes, "In the sermon on forgiveness Butler uses the term "resentment" only to indicate settled and deliberate resentment" (Newberry 235). Thus, given

Newberry's assessment of Butler, forgiveness is not on the table when it *only* concerns sudden and hasty resentment.

Newberry acknowledges that Butler's eighth sermon, "Upon Resentment," opens by questioning how a benevolent God would instill the emotion of resentment in human beings because it is something that clearly undermines, or goes against, benevolence. Butler is quick to inform his readers, however, that he does not wish to proceed by following lengthy rabbit trails in trying to determine *why* God created human beings in this way. Rather, given Butler's acceptance that resentment *is* a natural passion of human nature, he wants to understand its proper use, and subsequently, its improper abuses.

According to Newberry's assessment of Butler, since the passions of resentment and indignation *are* a natural aspect of human nature, insofar as they are justified, both passions are proper responses. In other words, Butler acknowledges the moral significance of human beings to endure in resentment and indignation. They are not unworthy passions that must be put aside or avoided. As Newberry points out, "This clearly shows that Butler did not consider forgiveness to be the overcoming of resentment *simpliciter* since the emotion is morally justified when it serves to protect us from injury" (Newberry 236). In other words, as long as these passions are properly used, human beings are not required to forgive only to the extent that they overcome resentment *simpliciter*. Resentment, therefore, *can* still be an enduring passion, even when forgiveness is expressed. From this point, Newberry proceeds to examine Butler's analysis of the abuses of resentment.

In regard to the improper abuses of resentment, Newberry provides five instances that Butler identifies. Newberry writes, "First, imagination of an injury done to ourselves when there is none; second, the exaggeration of the size of the injury; third, resentment towards someone

who intended us no injury; fourth, resentment out of proportion to the injury; and fifth, infliction of pain or harm of any kind" (Newberry 236). Though Newberry does not explicitly state this, for Butler, all five of these instances are grounded "from partiality to ourselves" (*S* 8.11). The third instance of resentment, "resentment towards someone who intended us no injury" indicates the category of inadvertency that will be examined more in the following chapter. Hence, other than from partiality to ourselves, none of these instances of resentment are justifiable. For example, a person may fictionalize an injury directed at another person. Sometimes, human beings invent injuries that others never committed. Other times, an injury may be imagined—either intentionally or unintentionally—to be worse than it really was. Some people carry an injury into being a monstrous event, calling to mind the phrase, "making a mountain out of a molehill." Consequently, the wrongly accused wonders why they are being accused of a wrongdoing they did not commit. From partiality to oneself, the so-called injured person may hope that their declared wrongdoer will attend to the injury, apologize for it, and finally, grant them forgiveness. Indeed, the resentment here is fictional, and therefore, not proper grounds for forgiveness. Subsequently, the process of forgiveness would be derived from a fraudulent injury.

Since these kinds of resentment are so absurd and disproportionate, Newberry writes, "Resentment may be justifiable, but these abuses of resentment never are" (Newberry 236). The way Newberry demonstrates this point suggests that Butler was aware of these abuses of resentment, identified them as absurd, and then moved onto examine more important matters, particularly concerning the problem of revenge.

In Newberry's reading of Butler, "Revenge is unjustifiable because it does not fulfill the purpose for which the emotion of resentment exists (or was raised), namely, to protect against injury" (Newberry 236). Revenge has too much of a tendency to propagate itself, and

consequently, it only serves to increase injury. Therefore, granting that Butler has no problem with identifying a proper moral use of resentment (that is, to prevent or remedy an injury), he insists that revenge is never morally justifiable. As Newberry writes, "So forgiveness is not the forswearing of resentment (contra Murphy) but the overcoming or forswearing of abusive or excessive resentment. That is, forgiveness is the checking of revenge, or forbearance" (Newberry 238). It is, therefore, *not* necessarily resentment that has to be overcome in order to forgive, but rather, it is *revenge* that must be overcome.

For Newberry, the first four instances of the abuses of resentment are emotional states; however, the fifth instance, revenge, is an *action* brought forth from an emotional state. In this regard, Newberry maintains the view that Butler determined revenge to be more of a point of emphasis versus the other four instances as emotional states. He writes, "One of the synonyms he uses for 'revenge,' 'malice,' is likewise ambiguous but seems unclear whether it labels what might most properly be called an emotion or an attitude. 'Retaliation,' the other synonym, is clearly a word that labels an action, not an emotion. Butler's use of the terms relieves the problem of ambiguity, however" (Newberry 237). From this passage, Newberry determines Butler's ambiguous use of the term, "retaliation," means that his account of forgiveness stresses the importance of *action*. In this regard, forgiveness entails the management of resentment insofar as the injured does not commit the action of revenge.

Newberry is eager to point out that resentment is *still* compatible with Butler's account of forgiveness. The injured person must be able to manage their resentment in an appropriate way; that is, by deviating from the excessive abuses of resentment by means of revenge. In further supporting this idea, Newberry examines Butler's ninth sermon, "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries." In this sermon, Butler writes, "Resentment is not inconsistent with good-will: for we often see

both together in very high degree; not only in parents towards their children, but in cases of friendship and dependence, where there is no natural relation" (Butler *S* 9.13). Here, Butler maintains that resentment is not necessarily something that an injured person must resolutely overcome, and Newberry recognizes this point. As Newberry writes, "In Butler's view, the only thing that stands between us and love of all of our neighbors, even those who have harmed us, is the excess and abuse of resentment. The command to forgive and love our enemies forbids only that" (Newberry 238). Henceforth, the point of forgiveness is *not necessarily* for the victim of an injury to resolutely overcome their resentment, but rather, for the victim to manage or check their resentment away from the action of revenge. In other words, the obstacle of forgiveness is not resentment proper, but rather, it is the *excessive* action from resentment: revenge.

NEWBERRY'S APPEAL TO THEORIES OF EMOTION AGAINST MURPHY'S TRADITIONAL READING OF BUTLER

After setting the historical record straight about Butler's definition of forgiveness, Newberry proceeds to examine why Murphy and others held onto an inaccurate reading of Butler. As Newberry writes, "The main reason that Murphy and others misinterpret Butler's definition of forgiveness is due, I suspect, to a lack of attention to the theory of emotion presupposed by their own and by Butler's definition of forgiveness" (Newberry 238). For Newberry, on the one hand, Murphy and others defined Butler's account of forgiveness as the forswearing of resentment because it was presupposed by a cognitivist theory of emotions. On the other hand, Newberry insists that Butler defined forgiveness as the checking or management of resentment because it was presupposed by a feeling theory of emotions. Even though Newberry proceeds to explore different theories of emotion, he agrees with Murphy on the view that, for Butler, "forgiveness is an *action* of moral import" (Newberry 241). Newberry only

differs, though, by maintaining that the agent has more control of the emotions, within the cognitive theory of emotions versus the feeling theory of emotions.

Since Newberry puts great emphasis on the different theories of the emotions, between Butler and Murphy, we need to briefly turn to this analysis, particularly because it will be something Griswold and Garcia criticize him for doing. To better understand their criticism, we now turn to Newberry's brief investigation into "feeling" versus "cognitive" theories of emotion.

Based on Newberry's brief sketch, crucial differences between alternative theories of emotion are ascertained by their response to two primary questions. Newberry writes:

> In what respect is an emotional state different from a non-emotional state, and what, if any, control do agents exhibit over their emotions? A feeling theory of emotion, the prominent emotion theory during Butler's time through the nineteenth century, and a cognitive theory, prevalent in the latter half of the twentieth century, give quite different answers to these questions (Newberry 239).

Based on Newberry's analysis, the feeling theory of emotion holds that beliefs (or perceptions, evaluations, or judgments) are the cause of an emotion proper. Moreover, desires (along with their linked actions) are the effect. The manner of differentiating one emotion from another relies on each emotion's distinctive feeling. Moreover, since each emotion is identified by a distinctive *feeling*, the emotions "are involuntary and thereby outside of our control because we are passive recipients of feelings. However, agents do possess some degree of control over the causal chain of emotion" (Newberry 239). To historically support this interpretation, Newberry turns to

Descartes's *The Passions of the Soul* (published in 1650).[20] For Descartes, the passions are not caused from the will. On the contrary, the passions are caused by involuntary excitations of the body. The body is naturally programmed to maintain its survival. When a passion arises, the body temperature rises, blood circulates faster, sweat forms on the forehead, and so on. These bodily excitations occur naturally in response to some external stimulus. For example, a hiker comes across a mama bear and her cubs. The awareness of danger elicits the hiker's heart to pound faster and lungs to breathe heavier. While these bodily excitations are described as involuntary, the actions following from these excitations (e.g. whether to run, play dead, or stand still) are within control of the agent, and therefore, are voluntary. To be clear, the passions are involuntary and the active responses from them—on behalf of the agent(s)—are voluntary.

Newberry summarizes Descartes's view, "Descartes suggests that our passions simply happen to us (how we feel is not within our control) but the actions resulting from emotion are distinguished from the emotion itself and are within our control" (Newberry 240). Every passion arises involuntarily; however, it is up to the agent to take subsequent action. In regard to possessing some degree of control over the cause of an emotion, Descartes writes:

> The most that the will can do while this disturbance is at its full strength is not to yield to its effects and to inhibit many of the movements to which it disposes the body. For example, if anger causes the hand to rise to strike a blow, the will can usually restrain it;

[20] Newberry insists that Descartes's theory of the passions was prevalent throughout Butler's time. This view, however, will be challenged in chapter four. Based on historical insight, to the contrary, Descartes's theory of the passions was not actively engaged with, especially in Britain, during the first quarter of the eighteenth-century. In fact, Malebranche's theory of the passions carried much more weight during the time Butler wrote and preached. Chapter four will examine these historical accuracies much further.

> if fear moves the legs in flight, the will can stop them; and similarly in other cases (Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, article 46, AT, XI, 364).

The agent is not responsible for the causes of the passions, but rather, they are responsible for the actions derived from the passions. In Descartes's example of anger, the passion could accelerate the subject's impetus to raise up their hand to strike the object of anger. Although this gesture arises involuntarily, the agent still has a moral responsibility to apply reason and mitigate this specific effect. Reason ought to help manage this involuntary gesture, and subsequently, motivate the subject to avoid striking a blow onto the object of their anger.

Since the passions simply happen to us, as Newberry writes, "the actions resulting from emotion are distinguished from the emotion itself and are within our control. Feeling theory thus relegates our control only to effects of the emotion, not to the emotions we have" (Newberry 240). The will can only take action from an involuntary emotion, and subsequently, this is why Newberry emphasizes the importance of *action* in Butler's account of forgiveness. The emotions are not the key aspect in Butler's account of forgiveness. On the contrary, coming from Newberry's analysis of Descartes's feeling theory of emotions, the key feature to stress is the *action* of forgiveness. As a result, according to Newberry, the emphasis on action (via the feeling theory of emotions) differs greatly from the cognitivist theory of emotions whose account is presupposed in Murphy's reading of Butler.

Newberry admits there are many kinds of cognitivist theories of emotion. Despite their internal conflicts, however, "they are alike in that they consider 'some aspect of thought' as central to the definition of the emotion" (Newberry 240). This aspect of thought is often described as a belief, judgment, evaluation, appraisal, perception, or a thought. In order to distinguish one emotion from another, the cognitivist does not rely precisely on feeling. Instead,

the cognitivist refers to a distinctive cognitive element of an emotion. The emotional state of resentment is distinguished, due to the agent already possessing a set of beliefs, judgments, evaluations, appraisals, or perceptions that are already entangled with the emotion. Relying on the same example listed earlier, if a hiker spots a mama bear with three cubs near where they stand on the trail, the emotion of fear equates with rational content that indicates,, "This is not a safe place to be! I need to get away from here!" The emotion is already imbued with rational content. Appealing to the emotion of resentment, Newberry writes, "In the case of resentment the agent presumably would believe that he or she had been harmed by a wrongdoer and that the wrong was intentional and unwarranted" (Newberry 240). Therefore, although the feeling theorist maintains a *distinction* between an involuntary emotion and the agent's rational action derived from the involuntary emotion, the cognitivist theorist does not maintain any such distinction.

For Newberry, Butler's presupposed feeling theory of emotions does not require the agent to resolutely overcome resentment to forgive. This is why Newberry criticizes Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness as the forswearing of resentment. Based on the feeling theory of emotion, it is not necessary to resolutely overcome an emotion to forgive. Rather, it is only crucial for the agent to manage the emotion by means of the *actions* carried out from emotions that "simply happen to us." It is precisely the *actions* which are culpable or praiseworthy, and hence, this is why Butler identifies forgiveness to be a virtue. For the cognitivist, however, the agent carries much more rational control of the emotions. The agent's rational control ought to extend even further to resolutely overcome resentment as a condition for forgiveness. Thus, Newberry criticizes Murphy for not putting in the historical work to detect this theory of emotions in Butler's account of forgiveness. Given Descartes's predominant

influence during his time, Newberry argues that Butler's writings accepted—or presupposed—the feeling theory of emotions.

To be clear, the only main difference Newberry can establish between these different theories of emotion is that the feeling theory of emotion entails *less* rational control over the emotions than the cognitivist theory which emphasizes much more rational control over the emotions. Newberry criticizes the cognitivists—represented by Murphy—for putting too much emphasis on an injured person being able to rationally overcome their resentment in order to forgive. Since Butler operated within a feeling theory of emotions, a theory that gives less rational strength to the agent controlling emotions, Newberry justifies this to be the primary reason why Butler never defined forgiveness as the resolute overcoming of resentment. An injured person only needs to manage their resentment, making sure not to accelerate their resentment into acts of revenge.

Even though Newberry criticizes Murphy for failing to take account of the different theories of emotion, he realigns with Murphy's traditional reading of Butler concerning three specific points. First, Newberry maintains "that for both Butler and Murphy, forgiveness is an action of moral import" (Newberry 241). Newberry accepts this reading because moral attributions of right and wrong are properly directed to actions. The forgiver is one who manages or checks a resentment that has the capacity to become abusive, via revenge. Therefore, the sticking point is for the forgiver to turn away from the action of revenge.

Second, Newberry agrees with Murphy's reading of Butler for identifying forgiveness as a virtue. Since forgiveness is a virtue, people are culpable or praised for actions in ways we are not for things which merely happen to us. Indeed, it is true that Butler never explicitly dismisses the view that forgiveness is a virtue. Nevertheless, throughout many passages of *Fifteen*

Sermons, he also examines problems concerning people who may rely too heavily on virtue as an excellence in theoretical ability rather than an excellence in applying thought to appropriate action(s). In other words, a person may be excellent in thought; however, they may be incapable of transferring what they know to the appropriate action. This is more explicitly discussed throughout sermons seven and ten of *Fifteen Sermons*. In these sermons, Butler examines the problem of self-deception, relying on some biblical figures who were once recognized to be virtuous (e.g. Balaam and Nathan), and yet, both acted in heinous and nefarious ways.

The third point, where Newberry realigns with Murphy, however, concerns the distinction between forgiving and forgetting. While Newberry has a problem with Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness, he has no problem with Murphy's distinction, between forgiving and forgetting, derived from this definition. Newberry writes, "As Murphy says, forgiving is not the same as forgetting because the latter "just *happens* to us, that is, it is totally non-voluntary."[21] If forgiveness is something that merely happens to us, neither Butler nor Murphy would consider it a proper source of praise (Newberry 241). Forgiveness is an action that happens for a reason. Forgetting, on the contrary, simply happens to us. It is too far removed from moral agency to count as a virtue. So, if we take away Newberry's emotional theory criticism of Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness, both thinkers are actually quite compatible in their interpretations of Butler.

On the one hand, Newberry agrees with two points about Murphy's reading of Butler. First, forgiveness is an *action* of moral import. Second, the action of forgiveness cannot be committed by means of forgetting. On the other hand, he disagrees with Murphy's reading on

[21] Newberry quotes from *Forgiveness and Mercy*, p.23.

two other points. First, since Butler accepted the feeling theory of emotions, forgiveness only demands the injured to mitigate their resentment, at least insofar as they are able to commit to the *action* of forgiveness rather than revenge. Second, as Newberry writes, "what seems to be the most striking aspect of Butler's definition of forgiveness is the lack of concern about the way that the victim is to *feel* about the wrongdoer after forgiveness has taken place" (Newberry 242). For Newberry, Butler's account of forgiveness does not concern the way the victim should *feel* about the wrongdoer. On the contrary, Butler's account only requires the injured to replace the action of revenge with the action of forgiveness. The responsibility of the injured, therefore, is to be able to manage their emotions appropriately. They could still experience *some* degree of resentment, directed at the wrongdoer. But, they must simply be able to harness that resentment by being sure not to commit vengeful actions.

While Murphy reintroduced Butler into the contemporary debate on forgiveness, Newberry went further to demand a better understanding of Butler's historical context, along with an effort to reexamine his writings more directly.. For quite some time, Murphy's reading of Butler was simply acquiesced to as *the* traditional reading of Butler's account of forgiveness. Instead of picking up and reading Butler's writings, many thinkers simply accepted or assumed that Murphy's reading of Butler is correct. Newberry's essay, therefore, helped to motivate some thinkers to investigate Butler's eighth and ninth sermons ("Upon Resentment," and "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries"). In spite of Newberry's efforts to dispel Murphy's reading of Butler's account of forgiveness, however, there arrived another school of thinkers who argued against Newberry's assessment of Butler's account of forgiveness as well. In particular, Griswold and Garcia came to question Newberry's position that Butler was only concerned about forgiveness as an act, and thus, paying no attention to how the forgiver feels (Newberry 233).Much

disagreement arose through their reexamination as to what theory of emotions Butler's account of forgiveness best aligned. Was Butler's account presupposed by a feeling or cognitivist theory of emotions? Two main thinkers who argue against Newberry's assessment include Charles Griswold and Ernesto V. Garcia. As a result, this investigation now moves to Griswold and Garcia's interpretations of Butler. Both thinkers acknowledge Newberry's importance for setting the historical record straight about Butler's definition of forgiveness, and yet, they have *also* criticized Newberry for justifying Butler's account of forgiveness as something presupposed by a feeling theory of emotions.

GRISWOLD'S ACCEPTANCE OF NEWBERRY'S READING OF BUTLER

To begin to unpack a tipping of the hat and a wagging of the finger—both directed at Newberry—let's first turn to Charles Griswold, as the second major "Contemporary Butlerian" thinker who has scrutinized Murphy's reading of Butler's account of forgiveness. Griswold examines Butler's account of forgiveness in his 2007 book, *Forgiveness: A Philosophical Exploration*. He also links Butler's influence to modern discussions concerning resentment and forgiveness. For example, Griswold is aware of the puzzlement Hampton describes after Murphy advocates the view that forgiveness is the overcoming of resentment. To recapitulate her puzzlement, if resentment is a significant passion to defend—especially because it helps support an individual's self-respect—then why should it be overcome in order to forgive? In other words, why overcome an emotion that aids in defending the standard of self-respect? Indeed, Griswold's text draws heavily from the discourse between Murphy and Hampton.

Even though Griswold does investigate Butler's *Fifteen Sermons* (sermon eight, "Upon Resentment" and sermon nine, "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries"), his aim is not to carry out a thorough investigation of resentment and forgiveness that contributes to Butler's overall

philosophy. Griswold writes, “My aim here is primarily conceptual; and I make no claims about Butler’s philosophy as a whole” (Griswold 20). Thus, in a similar vein with Newberry, Griswold also takes a look at Butler’s eighth and ninth sermons to scrutinize Murphy’s reading of Butler within the contemporary debate on forgiveness. In this way, Butler’s text *is* taken off the shelves, opened and examined; however, it is only sermons eight and nine that are investigated.

Returning to Newberry’s view, he writes, “He [Butler] did not define forgiveness as the overcoming of resentment but rather as the checking of revenge, or forbearance” (Newberry 233). Griswold carries forth a similar interpretation when he writes, “Butler is regularly misquoted as defining forgiveness as the ‘forswearing of resentment.’ Butler actually claims that forgiveness is the forswearing of *revenge* (not that resentment is always left just where it was)” (Griswold 20). In this regard, Griswold tips his hat to Newberry for demonstrating that it is only the excesses and abuses of resentment that are forbidden, rather than the overcoming of resentment in its entirety. As long as the victims of wrongdoing can refrain from the abuses of resentment, they can still make use of resentment in a morally responsible and effective way; that is, to remedy or defend against a personal injury, and to administer justice. Of course, the injured *may* resolutely overcome their resentment to forgive. Indeed, Butler, Newberry, Griswold and Garcia never dispute this point. The resolute overcoming of resentment, simply put, is not *the* standard in Butler’s account of forgiveness. Subsequently, the dispute concerns an overemphasis that resentment *must* resolutely be overcome to forgive. In fact, the injured may still hold onto some level of resentment, and yet, still forgive. They simply must manage their resentment in ways that do not lead to excessive *actions* such as revenge. At this point, though, Newberry *only* stresses a reading of Butler’s account of forgiveness as something strictly concerned with taking *action*. This is where Griswold begins to turn away from Newberry’s reading of Butler.

GRISWOLD'S CRITICISM OF NEWBERRY'S READING OF BUTLER'S "PRESUPPOSED FEELING THEORY OF EMOTIONS"

Although Griswold agrees with Newberry's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness—as the checking or management of resentment—he briefly disagrees with Newberry's justification that Butler's account of forgiveness was presupposed by a "feeling theory of the emotions." Griswold disagrees with this justification by appealing to some passages from Butler's *Fifteen Sermons*. In sermon eight, as was already described earlier in Newberry's analysis, Butler examined *hasty and sudden* resentment. For Butler, this response does not necessarily imply any degree of reason. Griswold points out, however, that the distinction between hasty and sudden resentment, on the one hand, and settled and deliberate resentment, on the other hand, hinges on a rational ability to raise anger derived from an injury or contempt. In this regard, resentment could be provoked voluntarily. This distinction contributes to Griswold's opposition to Newberry's view that Butler's ideas were presupposed from a feeling theory of the emotions.

To help demonstrate this, Griswold provides a passage from Butler's *Fifteen Sermons*. When discussing the different kinds of resentment, Butler writes, "I say, *necessarily*: for to be sure *hasty*, as well as *deliberate*, anger may be occasioned by injury or contempt; in which cases reason suggests to our thoughts that injury and contempt; which is the occasion of the passion" (*S* 8.5). Hasty and sudden resentment *could* largely be caused from a human being's involuntary reception to the behaviors or actions of others. But, it does not *necessarily* have to be involuntary or passive. Moreover, Butler clearly shows that the other kind of resentment—settled and deliberative—has a more rational capacity to raise anger in a proactive way. Here, Butler recognizes that anger may be caused by reason coming to grips with an injury and contempt.

From this important passage, Butler does *not* insist that anger is always involuntary, and as a result, it contributes to Griswold's criticism against Newberry's interpretation of Butler.

In the same paragraph, Butler writes, "The only way in which our reason can raise anger, is by representing to our mind injustice or injury of some kind or other" (*S* 8.5). In this passage, Butler demonstrates that reason *can* raise anger from a reflexive point of view. The agent rationalizes an injustice or injury done to them. This would be similar to someone staring at themselves in a mirror. The agent must be able to comprehend the idea of an injustice or injury of some kind. Perhaps, the agent was cheated or manipulated by another. Consequently, the agent detects that it is *they* who have been subject to the injustice or injury. Looking at oneself in the mirror, the agent can detect a feature of a suffered injury. The effects of this rational exercise could, therefore, aggravate resentment. Indeed, this further solidifies Butler's view that anger *can* be caused by reason, and this further contradicts Newberry's view.

According to Griswold, "It would not make sense for Butler to commend something which it is not in an agent's power to do, viz. subdue an emotion by changing his [the agent's] understanding of its appropriateness, proportionality, or what have you" (Griswold 37). While the anger may be caused from the representation of an injury or contempt, it could also be the case that anger could be caused from an injury done to ourselves when there was none. The anger could be prompted by the thought of an injury where no actual injury occurred. Butler was also aware of this possibility. Even though Butler does not accept this as something properly compatible with forgiveness, it is still something a human being could rationally bring. In Newberry's view of Butler, however, resentment is *never* caused by reason. In other words, resentment "just happens to us." The only control a resenter has, therefore, is the action derived forth from the passive emotion of resentment. But the fact that Butler was aware of the potential

abuses of resentment—whether they are inappropriate or disproportionate degrees of resentment—conflicts with Newberry's interpretation of Butler's account of forgiveness being presupposed by a feeling theory of emotions.

Newberry too quickly maintained that Butler dismisses all of the abuses of resentment, with the exception of revenge. He appeals to a passage from Butler to help support this point. In sermon nine, Butler writes, "the chief instances of which excess and abuse have likewise been already remarked; and all of them, excepting that of retaliation, do so plainly in the very terms express somewhat unreasonable, disproportionate, and absurd, as to admit of no pretense or shadow of justification" (*S* 9.2). In this way, the first four abuses of resentment, "imagining an injury done to ourselves when there is none; second, exaggeration of the size of the injury; third, resentment toward someone who intended us no injury; fourth, resentment out of proportion to the injury" (Newberry 236) are *never* morally justified. To this, Newberry's assessment is correct. But again, even if Butler did not *qualify* these as morally proper expressions of resentment, he still admits that these kinds of resentment *could* arise by *reason*, even if it is regarded as inappropriate. To be clear, if an abusive kind of resentment arose for inappropriate reasons, then they were still derived from reasons, and not, on the contrary, born from passivity (i.e. it just "happens to us."). Newberry's mistake, therefore, is to dismiss something Butler identified as a problem concerning how resentment *can* arise due to the abuses of reason.

In Griswold's view, it would be best to identify Butler for supporting a "quasi-cognitive" theory of emotions (Griswold 37). Although he chooses not to analyze this idea in great detail, Griswold briefly explains the quasi-cognitive emotion of resentment to include beliefs (whose content can be stated propositionally). An agent can, for example, affirm or deny that they have experienced an injury or injustice. Moreover, as Griswold writes, "But it also is an affective,

bodily state" (Griswold 37). Rapid heart beating, sweating, hands shaking, or eye twitching may accompany Butler's "quasi-cognitive" view of reason-raising anger caused from the representation of an injury or contempt.[22] Even though Griswold finds these connections intriguing, given the breadth of the literature, he decides to examine the problem of narrative.

GRISWOLD'S ANALYSIS OF BUTLER ON NARRATIVE

Griswold is interested in the significance of narrative in forgiveness. In particular, he maintains that narrative involves diachronic and perspectival dimensions of forgiveness (Griswold 98). He acknowledges the literature on narrative is vast and complicated. As a result, Griswold writes:

> The interpenetration of narrative and perspective on and understanding of one's life is no doubt multi-layered; which is not to say, that human life *is* a narrative. My concern here is only with narrative as it arises in the context of human lives that suffer or inflict injury and consider the seeking or granting of forgiveness in response (Griswold 98).

Griswold goes into much more detail on the narrative of forgiveness later on in his book. In this section, however, I will confine his discussion on narrative in relation to his chapter on Butler.

The emotion of resentment may evaporate rapidly, or escalate quickly, considering the narrative. In Butler's view, an injured person may be mistaken about being injured, or, they may be mistaken about the severity of the injury, and also, they may be mistaken about the judgments directed at the wrongdoer derived from the injury. Anticipating a thought that Kant would later develop, Butler maintained the view that human beings are unable to perfectly assess injuries in

[22] The discussion about Butler's "quasi-cognitivist" view will be developed further in chapter four.

themselves (*S* 9.22). To be clear, Butler still recognized that the injured can accurately judge that they have been injured; however, it is unlikely that they will be able to perfectly assess everything. These imperfections are often associated with the narrative that elicits resentment. Perhaps the injured person came to realize that the injury suffered was not as bad as they thought it was. Or maybe, the resentment was not proportionate to the response (e.g. "I made a mountain out of a molehill"). As Griswold writes:

> Resentment is a story-telling passion. Resentful people create narratives about their injuries, the injury, and their victimization. The classic formal elements of narrative are normally present—a beginning, middle, end, plot structure, conflict and resolution, vividly drawn characters who learn (in this case) through suffering, and a 'moral' to the story. A person in the grip of resentment often demands that the narrative be heard, and yearns that it be published, so to speak (resentment loves company)" (Griswold 30).

The narrative of resentment could calcify in legitimate or illegitimate ways. For example, three regular customers visit a restaurant once a week, and they typically have the same server. During a conversation, one of the regulars says something that insults the server. After the regulars finish their meal and leave, the server tells the story about the insult to the hostess. Upon hearing the story, the hostess cannot believe someone would say such an insulting thing, and this exasperation further enhances the server's resentment. Thus, the indignation of the hostess contributes to accelerating the resentment of the server. In this example, the hostess believed the server's narrative to be legitimate. Or, in an illegitimate example, the hostess may not be convinced of the server's narrative. Perhaps, she is making up a story to get more tables and earn more tips. Or maybe, she tells the story to boost her ego so that people are paying more attention to what is going on with her at work than with others.

According to Griswold, “The irrepressible need to narrate is most obvious when one is injured; people typically tell their story vividly and repeatedly, in some cases compulsively. Re-framing your perspective on the offender, and eventually yourself, means that your resentful “stories,” which have perhaps expanded to the point of characterizing the offender as a “monster” or “animal,” must be revised” (Griswold 184). This point indicates that the narrative can often shift, especially as time goes by, and also, when it comes to telling the story over and over, or even, to many different people. At one time, the narrative may justify that the wrongdoer was a monster. At another time, however, the narrative may justify that the injured was mistaken, or perhaps, acted inadvertently, even if it was still wrongful. The narrative, therefore, contributes to aggravating, quelling, or even, transforming resentment.

In Griswold’s view, the content of a narrative depends on many factors, including the type of injury and type of resentment derived from the injury. His interest in narrative is subsequently applied to an analysis of Butler. Griswold appeals to the way Butler considers different perspectives concerned with narrative. The narrative of the server, for example, provided a beginning, middle and end of the events that corroborated with the justified resentment. Subsequently, the narrative of the hostess may take on another tune, so to speak. They might explain the story to a manager, detailing features that would not be described the same way as the server elucidated to legitimate the narrative. Or, the server may speak to the manager, in private, but roll her eyes, speak and gesture sarcastically, to indicate that the server’s narrative is illegitimate. In any case, the story can transform from many different perspectives.

In Griswold’s view, as long as the narrative of the injury is relevant or warranted, the person resented ought to be punished. Sometimes, however, the resentment—directed at another—is not warranted. With these considerations in mind, Griswold emphasizes that

resentment needs to be checked. An unchecked resentment could be damaging, especially when the assumed perpetrator was not responsible for the injury. Butler was keen to address the ways that resentment could be properly checked or improperly unchecked. As a result, speaking to the abuses of resentment, Griswold writes:

> It comes as no surprise that Butler underlines, as one of the greatest abuses of resentment, the *partiality* of perspective the emotion can engender in its owner. He is committed to the view that one can feel resentment wrongly (in the wrong way, or to the wrong degree, or toward the wrong person), and so to the view that there is a standpoint, other than that of the agent at the moment, from which such an assessment can be made (Griswold 31).

In opposition to Newberry's interpretation, Griswold insists that Butler was committed—not dismissive—to the view that one can feel resentment in the wrong way, or to the wrong degree, or toward the wrong person. These considerations of checked or unchecked resentment—derived from narrative about the injury—indicate a great importance to the way the injured feels and thinks. In other words, contrary to Newberry's assessment, Butler paid great attention to the way the injured feels. Again, Newberry maintained that Butler's account of forgiveness only concerned the action of forgiveness, not the feelings associated with forgiveness. But Griswold is quick to point out that Newberry's position is flawed. Butler did, in fact, pay attention to the significance of feeling resentment appropriately or properly; that is, to be sure not to feel resentment in abusive ways, and thus, he devoted great attention to the feelings of the forgiver.

Given his view that feelings were a pivotal feature in Butler's account of forgiveness, Griswold poses the following question: What are the criteria for making sure resentment is

appropriate and proportionate to the offense? To answer this question, Griswold proceeds to examine two criteria within Butler's *Fifteen Sermons*.

CRITERION #1 FOR THE PROPORTIONALITY OF RESENTMENT: THE OBJECTIVE THEORIST PERSPECTIVE

The first criterion for the proportionality of resentment, according to Griswold, is identified as coming from "the detached "objective" or theorist's standpoint" (Griswold 35). The standpoint of the detached objective theorist emphasizes a normative standard that resentment must always be made use of, and only to produce, some greater good. Butler's appeal to an objective theorist encourages the injured to understand that forgiveness is "in truth the law of our nature" (*S* 9.18). The objective theorist represents a moral authority figure—like a preacher—to whom the injured ought to pay heed.. Forgiveness is the law of our nature, insists the objective theorist. Griswold detects the theorist's standpoint in sermon nine. In regard to making use of resentment in the proper way Butler writes, "Thus then the very notion or idea of this passion, as a remedy or prevention of evil, and as in itself a painful means, plainly shows that it ought never to be made use of, but only in order to produce some greater good" (*S* 9.6). The passion of resentment is a painful remedy for personal injuries. Furthermore, it is a painful remedy with respect to public injuries; that is, to society administering justice to wrongdoers. In these ways, the passion of resentment can contribute to the private and public good. To be clear, for Butler, resentment is "in itself a painful means" (*S* 9.6). In other words, resentment is not something people take abusive pleasure in carrying out, and thus, the best way to express resentment would be to make sure that it aims to defend moral goodness.

Since Butler maintained that resentment *ought* never to be made use of, but only to produce goodness, according to Griswold, the achievement of that goal requires the injured to

make sure that their resentment is made use of properly and appropriately. For Griswold, "the achievement of *that* goal falls first and foremost on restraining designs for *revenge*" (Griswold 35). Indeed, Griswold is accurate in this reading because one of Butler's goals, stressed in sermon nine, was to show "*the absolute unlawfulness*" (*S* 9.3) of revenge. The objective theorist's standpoint, therefore, helps contribute toward imposing a prohibition of revenge, considering "the pitch of the passion best suited to the given passion's doing its job in the whole – in this case, contributing to self-defense, deterrence, and punishment" (Griswold 35). Going back to a previous example, the resentment of the restaurant server—applied to the rude regulars—would have to appeal to the perspective of the objective theorist, in a way that motivates the view that the resentment must not lead to revenge. The server would be obliged to understand that forgiveness is the law of human nature. The server needs to appeal to that objective perspective—that moral authority—to help elicit forgiving the regulars.

After addressing Butler's appeal to the emotions—by obliging the injured to appeal to the perspective of the objective theorist—Griswold proceeds to examine a second perspective to convince the injured to forgive: the "disinterested spectator." By appealing to this second perspective, contrary to Newberry's reading, Butler is still trying to find a way to oblige the injured to *feel* a certain way that will help encourage them to forgive.

CRITERION #2 FOR THE PROPORTIONALITY OF RESENTMENT: THE SYMPATHETIC SPECTATOR PERSPECTIVE

Griswold briefly examines the proportionality of resentment by appealing to the perspective of a sympathetic and disinterested spectator. In this way, the injured person is obliged to place themselves, at a due distance, from the injury. By taking on this perspective of the injury, the intensity of the resentment can be managed insofar as it does not proceed into

abuses. As Griswold puts it, "Unlike the perspective of the detached theorist, this second perspective—that of the disinterested spectator—is fundamentally social" (Griswold 35). Here, the disinterested spectator is not equated with an objective moral theorist. They are not regarded to be a moral preacher or any other wise authority on morals. Rather, they are only regarded as an average civilian with the ability to judge when an injury has or has not occurred. In other words, the perspective of the disinterested spectator is as a morally responsible person; however, they do not exude the status of a moral authority (e.g. preacher).

To elaborate on this second perspective, Griswold appeals to a passage in sermon nine. Butler writes:

> But suppose the person injured to have a due, natural sense of the injury, and no more; he ought to be affected towards the injurious person in the same way any good men, uninterested in the case, would be; if they had the same just sense, which we have supposed the injured person to have, of the fault: after which there will yet remain real good-will towards the offender" (*S* 9.19).

Griswold is quick to point out that the sympathetic spectator perspective is not *disinterested* in terms of becoming morally careless about the wrongdoer. Rather, they are disinterested in the sense that they play the perspective of someone not personally affected by the wrongdoing. As a result, the injured is obliged to take on this outsider's perspective as a way to help them to rationally or deliberately lessen their resentment derived from the injury. This perspective is *still* able to judge that a fault has occurred, and such a fault is still able to elicit indignation from the spectator's point of view; however, this perspective should mitigate the intensity of the resentment. For example, at a grocery store, a bagger briskly walks past a shopper, and steps on their foot. They also knowingly grin at the stepped-on shopper, expressing that the incident was

intentional. According to Griswold's analysis of Butler, even though the shopper's resentment arises from this injury, Butler would oblige the victim to take on the perspective of a sympathetic spectator so that their resentment can be lessened. In spite of the shopper's warranted resentment, they ought to see it from the perspective of another shopper passing by. From their perspective, the fault of the injury is still accurately judged; however, the emotion is not as intensely felt.

By taking on this second perspective, the victim is still able to maintain that a wrongdoing took place; however, their resentment (or rather, their indignation) would be determined to be less intense or personally felt than it would if they continued to take on injury from their own victimized perspective. In other words, turning away from one's own perspective of the injury would be another worthy criterion concerning the proportionality of resentment accrued from the injury.

As will be investigated in the following chapter, Butler's understanding about human nature motivates him to add further reflections that precisely return to the perspective of the injured. Even though a person may be convinced that it would be a good idea to appeal to a theorist's standpoint about an injury, or to experience the wrongdoing as though they were a sympathetic spectator, this does not necessarily mean that forgiveness successfully runs its course. At some point, the perspective needs to return to the injured person. For it is the injured who is in the position to forgive, not the objective theorist and not the sympathetic spectator.

Before examining Butler's further reflections, let's unpack Griswold's reading of Butler's account of the virtue of forgiveness, especially because it helps assess the way he advances the relationship between managing revenge and forgiveness in a more thorough way than Newberry does. Griswold is aware that the mere management or checking of resentment does *not* always lead to forgiveness. People can manage or check their resentment, making sure not to react in

vengeful ways; however, they may still refuse to forgive the wrongdoer. According to Griswold, the virtue of forgiveness "enters when Butler turns to the most dangerous abuse of the passion, viz. *revenge*" (Griswold 31). For Butler, the proper end of resentment is to prevent or remedy an injury. Such a prevention or remedy, however, still equates to a form of retaliation. Even though Butler discourages revenge, he also commends the utility of revenge via the administration of justice. In Griswold's interpretation, therefore, Butler's account of forgiveness not only requires the injured person to appropriately manage their resentment, but it also encourages the injured person to appeal to a form of appropriate, impartial revenge.

AN APPROPRIATE, IMPARTIAL REVENGE

Griswold admits that Butler did not quite explain revenge clearly enough. Nonetheless, he writes, "by 'revenge' he means retaliation by an individual as he or she judges to be appropriate" (Griswold 32). While there is an appropriate kind of revenge that Butler considers as the administration of justice (e.g. sentencing the guilty to prison), inappropriate revenge concerns the matter of natural propagation. Inappropriate revenge has a natural tendency of accelerating and multiplying, between the wrongdoer and the injured, in a reciprocal manner. With this distinction in mind, Griswold asserts that this solves a paradox in Butler's account, "namely that he commends the utility of resentment because it helps 'prevent or remedy' injury, and yet prohibits revenge" (Griswold 32). For Griswold, the passion of resentment naturally follows the path of retaliation. But the retaliation must not be acted out in excessive or abusive ways. Insofar as reason steps in to quell the abuses of resentment, the moral command of resentment is "accomplished when expressed impartially through the administration of justice" (Griswold 32). By appealing to a kind of resentment that administers justice, however, the injury ascends beyond the frame of the private, and into the public (i.e. the community, city or nation).

The injured can then rely on the public to demand or administer justice in response to the wrongdoer's injury. As Griswold writes, "This in turn opens up the possibility that the wronged person can forgive, while also insisting that the wrong-doer be judicially punished" (Griswold 32-33). But, if the injured person relies on the public to administer justice, then what is left for the injured person to do in terms of forgiving the private injury? To answer this question, Griswold appeals to Butler's principle of natural benevolence.

According to Griswold, forgiveness is brought forth in Butler, he writes, by "reintroducing the idea that we are to love our enemies: 'this supposes the general obligation to benevolence or good-will towards mankind; that is, to keep clear of those abuses before mentioned" (Griswold 33).[23] The general obligation to benevolence is demonstrated with the same epigraph for sermons eight and nine. Indeed, sermons eight and nine both open with the same passage from Scripture (Matthew 5:43, 44; "love your enemies…").[24] The emphasis on "loving your enemies" appeals precisely to a general obligation to benevolence. Since both sermons appeal to this general principle of benevolence, Griswold asserts, "They are meant to be read together, for an important reason: resentment and forgiveness are on his account intimately tied to one another" (Griswold 20). Therefore, in Griswold's reading, the appeal to a *general obligation to benevolence or good-will* is a key component of Butler's account of forgiveness.

To unpack Butler's appeal to general benevolence, Griswold poses the question, "How can one simultaneously love and resent the same person?" (Griswold 33). Butler can alleviate this tension by stating that the injured person ought to carry forth an impartial perspective of the

[23] Griswold quotes from *S* 9.12.
[24] Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew v.43, 44).

injury by means of an appeal to a general obligation of benevolence. To support this, Griswold quotes from Butler's ninth sermon, "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries." Butler writes:

> It cannot be imagined that we are required to love them with any peculiar kind of affection. But suppose the person injured to have a due, natural sense of the injury, and no more; he ought to be affected towards the injurious person in the same way any good men, uninterested in the case, would be (*S* 9.19).

Griswold relies on this passage to stress the importance of loving the wrongdoer by appealing to a general principle of benevolence. Instead of loving the wrongdoer by requiring the relationship to be reconciled or rekindled, the injured is only required to love them as a fellow benevolent being. As he interprets it, Butler understands love to be a general recognition that human beings ought not to be treated unjustly. Griswold identifies the love for the wrongdoer—even the most heinous human beings—in terms of recognizing that they are still human beings capable of happiness or misery. He clarifies this point, writing, "The obligation to recognize him or her as such prevents the resentful victim from taking a step that it is very easy to take, vic., of *demonizing* the wrongdoer" (Griswold 33). The injured is only obliged to recognize the wrongdoer as a fellow human being, not an immoral person. This recognition serves to reframe the wrongdoer as someone who is *not* totally reducible to the judgements of their injurious behavior. Subsequently, Griswold concludes, "Forgiveness is 'love' in the sense that it affirms our commonality, as human beings, with the morally worst among us. Butler infers that nobody is in principle unforgivable" (Griswold 34). By appealing to the wrongdoer as someone *more* than the reduction of their wrongdoing, this recognition inevitably re-humanizes them, taking them beyond the confines of being an immoral person. As a result, forgiveness is expressed based on this affirmation of commonality supported by the principle of general benevolence.

For Griswold, Butler's appeal to the principle of general benevolence obliges the injured to recognize that the wrongdoer is capable of feeling passions such as happiness, misery, or compassion. Thus, the injured is obliged to recognize the wrongdoer as a fellow human being. This appeal to general benevolence, therefore, *is* the move Butler makes to oblige the injured person to express forgiveness. We see a similar appeal to general benevolence in Ernesto Garcia's interpretation of Butler as well.

GARCIA'S READING OF BUTLER: THE VIRTUE MODEL OF FORGIVENESS

In the 2011 essay, "Bishop Butler on Forgiveness and Resentment," Garcia—similar to Newberry and Griswold—analyzes Butler's two sermons, "Upon Resentment" and "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries." Accepting Newberry and Griswold's assessment, Garcia also criticizes the traditional reading of Butler derived from Murphy. He identifies this traditional reading as the "Renunciation Model of Forgiveness." Summarizing this model, Garcia writes:

> This commits Butler to two theses: first, that resentment is a negative vindictive response to wrongdoing which is incompatible with goodwill; and second, that it is only insofar as we forswear or renounce our negative feelings of resentment towards our wrongdoers that we can truly be said to forgive them (Garcia 2).

The Renunciation Model demands the injured to resolutely overcome their resentment directed at the wrongdoer. Since resentment is capable of accelerating into vindictiveness, the injured is obliged to manage this resentment by appealing to the principle of general benevolence or goodwill to others. The only way to replace vindictiveness with goodwill, therefore, requires the injured to forswear or renounce negative feelings of resentment. In doing so, forgiveness may be properly expressed in a virtuous manner.

By contrast, the interpretation Garcia aims to develop is what he calls the "Virtue Model of Forgiveness." This model rejects both claims made by the Renunciation Model. In his interpretation, Butler argues that resentment of a wrongdoing is fully consistent with goodwill towards others. Moreover, "forgiveness for Butler does not require that we entirely forswear resentment at all. Rather, it just demands that we be resentful in the right kind of way" (Garcia 2). Here again, Garcia is clearly in agreement with Newberry and Griswold's reading of Butler.

Although Garcia acknowledges Newberry to be "one of the few commentators to recognize the key distinction being drawn between 'forswearing resentment' and 'forswearing the vices of malice and revenge," (Garcia 6) he disagrees with Newberry's view that the justification for insisting on the latter is due to Butler's presupposed feeling theory of emotions. On this point, Garcia sides with Griswold for arguing against Newberry.

According to Garcia, "In contrast to his [Newberry's] central thesis that Butler presupposes a 'feeling' as opposed to a 'cognitivist' theory of emotion, Butler seems to explicitly endorse the view here that our emotional responses *are* in some sense cognitive and thus amenable to rational criticism" (Garcia 11). He points out that Butler urged human beings to acknowledge why people are entitled to forgiveness because, broadly speaking, wrongdoings do not arise from pure ill-will, but rather, from a person's concern for self-love that has gone awry. Although the principle of general self-love is naturally flawed, this is something that operates for all human beings. From this general recognition, Butler instructs human beings to humbly recognize that all human beings are wrongdoers who are in need of forgiveness (Garcia 12). Therefore, since emotions are capable of being rationally criticized, Butler's account of forgiveness runs much closer to the cognitivist theory of emotions than the feeling theory of emotions.

The capacity for rational criticism of emotions (e.g. resentment) is another point Garcia argues in support for Butler's account of forgiveness as a virtue. For Garcia, human beings ought to be *virtuously resentful* by avoiding the excessive abuses of resentment via malice or revenge. Due to this balancing of excessive and deficient resentment, the injured person is able to maintain a recognition of the principle of general benevolence for all human beings. Going too far in one extreme or the other could have the consequence of extinguishing this principle. Moreover, Garcia commends Butler for appealing to general benevolence because it conveys the idea that victims *can* forgive wrongdoers, without having to reintegrate them back into their personal lives. To support this, he refers to another passage where Butler writes:

> From hence it is easy to see, what is the degree in which we are commanded to love our enemies, or those who have been injurious to us. It were well if it could as easily be reduced to practice. It cannot be imagined, that we are required to love them with any peculiar kind of affection (*S* 9.19).

What Butler is conveying here is that, at the very least, victims may love their enemies in a way that, at a bare minimum, reintroduces a *civil* relationship. Connecting with Griswold's view—identified as the perspective of the sympathetic spectator—the principle of general benevolence, therefore, contributes to transform the way the victim identifies the wrongdoer. Garcia emphasizes this point, writing:

> What Butlerian forgiveness demands is that we reaccept or readmit such wrongdoers—whether they be close friends, total strangers, or even hated enemies—back into minimal normalized moral relationships with us by exhibiting basic moral consideration and disinterested benevolence towards them despite their morally offensive wrongdoing

> against us. To deny that we are obligated to forgive them in this way amounts to refusing to treat them as fellow moral agents (Garcia 15).

At a bare minimum, the forgiver is obliged to reaccept wrongdoers as mere fellow moral agents. Somehow, the victim has to rationalize an identity of the wrongdoer as "just another fellow human being." Forgiveness, therefore, is to cease to have any personal interest in the injury.[25] To be clear, Garcia does not pitch for the victim to completely annihilate their memory of the wrongdoer. The sympathetic spectator is *still* able to maintain that an injury occurred and that the wrongdoer is blameworthy of it; however, to identify the victim as a mere fellow human being inevitably encourages an attitude closer to indifference, directed at the wrongdoer. At the very least, the injured should be able to establish a civilian relationship with the wrongdoer. To be clear, this civility does not demand reconciliation or rekindling of the relationship.

Although Garcia goes a bit further than Griswold to elucidate Butler's account of forgiveness as a virtue, both thinkers share the same degree of emphasis about Butler's appeal to the "sympathetic spectator" perspective. In other words, the obligation to see things from the sympathetic spectator's perspective is largely the crux of Butler's account of forgiveness. As Garcia writes:

> He [Butler] denies that forgiveness ever requires us to have any 'peculiar kind of affection' towards them, such as what is typically found in more partial relationships such as friendships, familiar ties, marriage, etc. He does require, however, that we must

[25] Garcia also appeals to a quotation by Anne Minas from her 1975 essay, "God and Forgiveness," to help clarify this point. Minas writes, "To forgive is just to cease to have any personal interest in the injury. It is to regard it as if it had happened to someone else in whom we have no special interest, other than the general interest we have in all human beings" (Minas 145, Garcia 6.n.15).

> display towards them a kind of universal disinterested goodwill that is owed to everyone in general (Garcia 14).[26]

From this passage, Garcia clarifies Butler's account of forgiveness to only require the display of disinterested goodwill that is owed to everyone. This means that the forgiver only needs to establish a civil relationship with the wrongdoer, nothing more. In so doing, the principle of general benevolence is *the* method par excellence to engage in the precepts, "forgive" and "love our enemies." The injured is morally obliged to see the injury from a perspective beyond themselves; that is, from the perspective of the sympathetic bystander.

Griswold and Garcia directly investigated passages from Butler's ninth sermon to support their interpretations. As Karen Pagani argues in her 2010 essay, "The Uses and Abuses of Joseph Butler's Account of Forgiveness: Between the Passions and the Interests," however, their arguments (she argues against Griswold's view in particular) reduce Butler's account of forgiveness to be rather impersonal. In other words, Griswold and Garcia overemphasize the appeal to the sympathetic spectator's perspective as *the* core of Butler's account of forgiveness. This obliges the injured to cast aside their "private" passions and replace them with "public" passions, a distinction that plays an important role in the fourth and final Contemporary Butlerian, Karen Pagani.

As the discussion now turns to examine, Pagani argues against Griswold's view that Butler supports the cognitivist theory of emotions.[27] In so doing, she aims to restore and defend Newberry's historical understanding that Butler's account adheres more closely to the feeling

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[26] Garcia quotes from *S* 9.19.
[27] By extension, this also puts her at odds with Garcia's reading of Butler.

theory of emotions.

PAGANI: ON BUTLER'S DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC PASSIONS

Unlike Griswold and Garcia, Pagani is in agreement with Newberry's reading of Butler. As she writes, "I am certainly not the first to argue that Butler's account of forgiveness is merely actional. Paul Newberry maintains as much in his article" (Pagani 15). Since forgiveness is actional, it is not constituted by any particular emotions of the injured. Pagani is willing to acknowledge the times when Butler discussed how resentment *could* sometimes be derived from reason. For example, Pagani writes, "As Griswold points out, within the *Sermons* there is a strong cognitivist component to the variety of resentment that is experienced as "settled and deliberate anger," a response that is produced by reflection" (Pagani 17). In spite of this concession, however, Pagani still agrees overall with Newberry for establishing the view that Butler's account of forgiveness is presupposed by the feeling theory of emotions.

From this assessment, Pagani argues against Griswold's view that forgiveness requires the injured to appeal to the principle of general benevolence. Although she acknowledges the importance of benevolence, as an important principle in Butler's overall philosophy, she criticizes Griswold for making this the primary motivation of his account of forgiveness. According to Pagani, "I am not so sure that compassion can properly be considered as being the ultimate *motivation* behind forgiveness, at least not in the way that Griswold claims" (Pagani 19, her emphasis). As a result, she disagrees with Griswold—and implicitly Garcia—for relying on the perspective of the sympathetic spectator to motivate the injured to forgive the wrongdoer. Indeed, she is aware that Butler described this perspective, within sermon nine; however, she

contends that Griswold put too much emphasis on this passage to be the real core of Butler's virtue of forgiveness.

Pagani's opposition to Griswold is supported from a distinction between private and public passions. Resentment is a private passion concerned with a response to a personal injury, injustice or oppression. Compassion is a public passion concerned with attending to the injury, injustice or oppression of others. These passions operate in different ways or purposes. In so doing, they do not inform one another. Pagani writes:

> This distinction necessarily involves a strict, though often overlooked, separation between the private and public spheres and thus between the emotions and actions that may be deemed applicable and appropriate within each of these spheres respectively. And, whereas both compassion and forgiveness as Butler understood them were indeed associated with the individual acting in his/her social capacity, I shall argue that this does not mean that they mutually inform one another (Pagani 14).

While compassion contributes to attending to the distresses of others, Pagani stresses the point that this is not forgiveness. On the contrary, forgiveness is wholly motivated by self-interest. In opposition to Griswold's reading, Butler's account of forgiveness is not informed by the appeal to the perspective of the sympathetic spectator. Since compassion is only directed at a social capacity, it does not therefore contribute to forgiveness.[28] In fact, Pagani aims to retain some of Murphy's traditional reading of Butler, arguing, "with Murphy that Butler believed that the sole function of forgiveness is to forestall the pursuit of vengeance" (Pagani 14). This means that Butler's account of forgiveness only requires the avoidance of acting vengefully towards the

[28] The distinction between private and public passions will be examined further in chapter four.

wrongdoer. As a result, Pagani argues that Butler makes no appeal to forgiveness that places any emphasis on the way the forgiver feels.

In this regard, Pagani aligns with Newberry's reading of Butler's account of forgiveness. She adds to the discussion by bringing forth the distinction between private and public passions. This distinction is a strict one that separates compassion from forgiveness. With this distinction developed, Pagani accepts Newberry's view (a view that Murphy also accepts) that Butler demonstrated forgiveness to be an *action,* not about the way human beings *feel* about one another.

SUMMARY OF THE CONTEMPORARY BUTLERIANS' OPPOSITION TO MURPHY'S TRADITIONAL READING OF BUTLER, AND THEIR INTERNAL DISPUTES

In summation, the Contemporary Butlerians all agree—against Murphy—that Butler never demonstrated an account of forgiveness that demands for the resolute overcoming of resentment. With the insight of Newberry, Griswold, Garcia, and Pagani, Butler's account of forgiveness demands that resentment *must* be appropriately managed. Although an injured person *can* resolutely overcome their resentment to forgive, it is not a *necessary* step for forgiveness to occur. In other words, forgiveness and resentment could be compatible. It was Murphy's fault, therefore, to emphasize the idea that resentment and forgiveness held no compatibility in Butler's account. As Garcia confirms, in this revised reading, "Butler argues both that we forgive our wrongdoers, by avoiding excessive resentment and displaying disinterested goodwill towards them, and still maintain a healthy degree of resentment which is needed to promote our own safety and well-being" (Garcia 9). So, even though Murphy is acknowledged for bringing in Butler as a major source within the contemporary debate on

forgiveness, the Contemporary Butlerians have further called attention to the need to get back to reading Butler's text.

Examining Newberry's essay is important for at least four reasons. First, it offers a valuable critique of Murphy's traditional reading of Butler. It clearly demonstrates the fact that not everyone has accepted Murphy's reading of Butler. Second, his insights have contributed to the contemporary analytic debate on forgiveness. To be clear, Newberry was not only aiming to set the record straight regarding Butlerian scholarship. He was also trying to apply these revised insights into the debate on forgiveness. Third, he has clearly motivated readers (Griswold, Garcia, and Pagani) to *return* to investigate Butler's *Fifteen Sermons*. Fourth, he has motivated philosophers to examine the theories of emotion that underpin the accounts of Butler, Murphy, and others.

Griswold and Garcia both dispute Newberry's view that Butler's account of forgiveness was presupposed by a feeling theory of emotions. Newberry insists that the feeling theorists maintained that the "emotions (as feelings) are involuntary and thereby outside of our control because we are passive recipients of feeling. However, agents do possess some degree of control over the causal chain of emotion" (Newberry 239). Griswold and Garcia criticized this assessment. One main reason pertains to Butler's awareness that resentment could arise from reason alone. For Griswold and Garcia, to emphasize the importance of begetting the right temper of mind *already* implies a way reason may aggravate or subdue resentment. In this way, it would not be accurate to maintain that Butler recognized the emotions as entirely passive states.

An injured person may succeed to manage their resentment in ways that are neither excessive nor deficient; however, this effort may still not necessarily lend forth to forgiveness.

Consequently, another step needs to be taken to forgive. For Griswold and Garcia, the further step is to reintroduce the idea that human beings are to love their enemies. To support this step, Griswold quotes from Butler, who writes, "As to that love of our enemies, which is commanded; this supposes the general obligation to benevolence or good-will towards mankind: and this being supposed, that precept is no more than to forgive injuries; that is, to keep clear of those abuses before mentioned" (*S* 9.12). From this passage, Griswold demonstrates that forgiveness does not require forswearing resentment *simpliciter*. Rather, it entails managing or checking resentment in an appropriate way. The step to forgiveness concerns Butler's idea about what it means to "love our enemies." Indeed, both thinkers detect, in Butler, a view whereby the injured person does not have to love their enemy in any peculiar way. As they both point out, Butler writes, "It cannot be imagined, that we are required to love them with any peculiar kind of affection" (*S* 9.19). Consequently, the injured ought to appeal to the principle of general or disinterested *benevolence*[29] as the key move to forgive the wrongdoer. They ought to take on the standpoint of a "theorist," or a "sympathetic bystander," whereby the victim maintains "a due, natural sense of the injury, and no more" (*S* 9.19). After taking on these perspectives, the injured would be able to reestablish good-will towards the wrongdoer. In other words, the general principle of disinterested benevolence can once again be appealed to. Thus, the management or checking of resentment merges the injured back to a disinterested affection to the wrongdoer—via general benevolence—and this move allows forgiveness to occur. The management of resentment, in other words, allows general benevolence to remain within the victim's purview.

[29] Garcia identifies the principle of general benevolence as "disinterested benevolence" (Garcia 7). Both of these terms convey the same thing (i.e. a general principle concerning the happiness of the greater good).

Finally, Pagani's contribution to the debate aims largely to reestablish Newberry as the more accurate reading of Butler. In supporting Newberry, she draws from some larger themes in Butler's work. Relying on the separation between the private and public passions, she helps recapitulate the view that Butler's account of forgiveness is self-interested. In other words, forgiveness is an action that does not concern the way people feel.

Although the Contemporary Butlerians *do* offer an effort to draw from some tenets in Butler's overall philosophy—and amongst the theories of emotion he adhered to during that historical period—is there a way to investigate further? Indeed, a more thorough investigation would help clarify many of the internal disputes discussed between the Contemporary Butlerians and their debate against Murphy's traditional reading of Butler. With this in mind, it is now time to take off from the shelf, open-up, and investigate Butler's *Fifteen Sermons*. What motivated Butler to preach and publish these sermons? Who was he preaching to and why was he trying to motivate his congregation to take moral action? After answering these questions, the investigation will then inquire into Butler's account of forgiveness.

CHAPTER THREE

A HISTORY OF BUTLER'S TIME PREACHING AT THE ROLLS CAHPEL AND THE APPEAL TO INADVERTENCY AS THE MEANING OF FORGETTING IN HIS ACCOUNT OF FORGIVENESS

INTRODUCTION

In chapter one, it was demonstrated that Murphy's reading of Joseph Butler's account of forgiveness has had a substantial influence for many philosophers, especially those within the North American debate. Murphy was aware that Butler acknowledged the positive role of resentment: to reinforce the rules of morality and to protect against those who act in opposition to them. Resentment is important in defending against a personal injury, and it also protects against injuries committed to the collective. Without resentment, it would be hard for a collective to commit to administering justice against perpetrators of injustice. In these ways, resentment serves a positive function, both for the individual and for the collective.

Resentment could also, however, serve a negative function. This function occurs, writes Murphy, "when allowed to range beyond this useful function, as human weakness and vanity typically allow it to, it becomes counterproductive and seriously harmful to the social fabric" (Murphy and Hampton 15). In this regard, the injured is morally responsible for making sure to direct their resentment in proper ways, and thus, avoiding the abuses of resentment.

One way to avoid the abuses of resentment, Murphy admits, could be for the injured to simply forget the injury. In Murphy's view, forgetting entails the fading away or boredom of vivid memories, and this occurs outside of the agent's rational control. Forgetting just *happens* to us. Forgetting is too passive of a phenomenon to play a role in forgiving wrongdoers for a

reason. In other words, forgiveness *must* be expressed within the control of reason, especially if it is to count as a moral virtue. Therefore, forgiveness is the overcoming of resentment for moral reasons that do *not* include forgetting. To sum up, Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness does not only emphasize the importance of overcoming resentment for moral reasons, but it also underlines a vital distinction between forgiving and forgetting. As was already shown, this distinction has resonated with many theorists within the debate on forgiveness.

Boleyn-Fitzgerald accepted Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness; however, he challenged Murphy's exclusion of forgetting from playing a pivotal role in forgiveness. To be clear, Boleyn-Fitzgerald did not examine Murphy's *reading* of Butler. In so doing, he acquiesced to Murphy as an authority of Butlerian scholarship. Instead, he refused to accept the meaning derived from this distinction. Thus, if Murphy was wrong by insisting on the distinction between forgiving and forgetting, then by proxy, Butler was wrong for instituting it.

According to Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein, forgetting is a virtue that serves as a way to *avoid* the rumination of intensively negative emotions. Ruminating on negative memories is detrimental to forgiveness because it entails an inability to overcome resentment. The repetition of painfully negative memories may even accelerate or enhance resentment, directed at the wrongdoer(s). Subsequently, forgetting *can* serve as a way to avoid ruminating on intensively negative memories. For Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein, the virtue of forgetting means that the agent must be able to forget in the right way, at the right time, in the right manner, for the right purposes, and so on. The rational effort to avoid ruminating on negative memories, therefore, allows human beings to overcome their resentment, and thus, forgive wrongdoers. In this regard, Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein *do* agree with Murphy's definition of forgiveness; however, they

disagree with the distinction drawn from the definition of forgiveness as the forswearing of resentment. In their view, forgetting—precisely as a means of avoiding to dwell or ruminate—*is* a meaningful way to forgive as the overcoming of resentment.

In chapter two, it was demonstrated that some philosophers were encouraged to reexamine Murphy's traditional reading of Butler. In particular, Newberry, Griswold, Garcia and Pagani—whom I identify as "Contemporary Butlerians"—published writings that challenged Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness. They have all come to challenge Murphy's reading—by investigating some of Butler's writings—contending that Butler *never* defined forgiveness as the resolute overcoming of resentment. In particular, by consulting Butler's eighth and ninth sermons, they demonstrated that a healthy degree of resentment *can* be compatible with forgiveness, but only insofar as the resentment does not become abusive. For Newberry and Pagani, on the one hand, the injured must avoid the abuses of resentment (i.e. revenge) in order to carry out the *action* of forgiveness. Thus, forgiveness is the act of avoiding taking revenge on the wrongdoer. This action does not require an analysis into the way the injured feels. In Griswold and Garcia's view, on the other hand, the injured must be sure to *avoid* the abuses of resentment because such abuses may lead to extinguishing the natural principle of general benevolence that was instilled in all human beings by God. Hence, forgiveness relies on a crucial reminder that human beings are obliged to be compassionate and to love their enemies.

Even though the Contemporary Butlerians took *some* glimpses into Butler's work, it is necessary and timely to make a greater effort into investigating Butler's *Fifteen Sermons*, and the circumstances that motivated his writing and preaching of this text. As a result, this chapter begins with an investigation into Butler's historical circumstances. He preached the sermons in downtown London, England, located at the "Rolls Chapel." Butler's association with this

historical site raises many questions. Why was Butler appointed to preach at the Rolls Chapel? Who was his audience? What were his views on virtue? Was he an empiricist or a rationalist? Did he take philosophical skepticism seriously? Investigating these historical and philosophical contexts will give support for a more proper investigation of Butler's account of forgiveness.

SIR JOSEPH JEKYLL, MORAL REFORM, MORAL DECAY, AND THE APPOINTMENT OF JOSEPH BUTLER TO PREACH AT THE ROLLS CHAPEL

Before delving into Butler's philosophical background, I want to explain some of the controversies going on in early eighteenth-century England, particularly within the equity courts. Butler was appointed to preach at the Rolls Chapel by Joseph Jekyll, the Master of the Rolls. The duty of the Master of the Rolls was primarily to keep and organize the records of the Court of Chancery. The Court of Chancery was a court concerned with equity law. The Master of the Rolls, thus, contributed to serving the higher authority of the Lord Chancellor. The Rolls Chapel was located on Chancery Lane, in the heart of London. As Aaron Garrett describes it:

> The Rolls Chapel was so called because it was a repository of Charters, Patents, Commissions, and other Matters, made up in Rolls of Parchment. The Chapel had regular services 'every *Sunday* Morning in Term Time at 10' and we can presume that this is when Butler gave many of his sermons. By the time they were published in 1726, he had moved to Stanhope where he served as rector for fifteen years (Garrett "Reasoning about Morals from Butler to Hume" 178).

Although Butler was officially appointed to preach near the end of 1718, he actually began preaching at the Rolls Chapel, between 1719 and continued until 1726. The majority of his congregation were well-educated men. They primarily consisted of lawyers, judges, clerks, and

other highly ranked political individuals. Since the Rolls Chapel was located in the same building as the repository for the Master of the Rolls—working under the Lord Chancellor—the majority of Butler's parishioners would have been affiliated with the equity courts. At the time of Butler's preaching, however, the courts of equity were facing a great deal of controversy for corruption, bribery, and other scandals. Many high-ranking individuals—several who once had been honored for their passion in developing theories of equity reform—were formally impeached for corrupt practices. As will be demonstrated, many individuals were accused of unfair practices, notably, going beyond the jurisdiction of the equity courts. Such growing scrutiny filtered into the press, and subsequently, into critical debates going on within coffee houses throughout London. With this in mind, many of Butler's parishioners would likely have been either subject to corruptive practices, or perhaps even, contributors to corruptive practices. We can infer, therefore, that there would have been significant moral tension within the walls of the Rolls Chapel where Butler preached.

Throughout the eighteenth-century, some of the greatest British intellectuals were devoted to the significance of moral reform. The English stock market was becoming a more focal point of culture, from the most elite all the way down to the more modest pockets of the Quakers. The exchange of debt for equity was a common practice during, and even before, Butler's time. In the 2001 essay, "Rational Equity Valuation at the Time of the South Sea Bubble," Paul Harrison writes, "Even in 1720, […] equity valuation was not a new phenomenon and neither were questions about fundamental value. Equity shares date back to the incorporation of the East India Company in 1602, and shares were actively traded and sold, in both Amsterdam and London, long before the advent of the South Sea Bubble in 1720" (Harrison 270). The accruing economic culture of England—and much of Europe—inevitably gave rise to intensive

legal debates, with particular attention on the scope of equity law.

Simply put, equity means, "The quality of being equal or fair; fairness, impartiality; even-handed dealing" ("equity").[30] This branch of law—deriving as far back as the fifteenth-century—played a role in mitigating the constraints of common law (i.e. the law of the land). Going back to fifteenth-century England, there were concerns that juries could be bribed or intimidated within civil or criminal cases. As a result, a citizen or party might complain about a judgment, derived from the common law courts, by submitting a writ directly to the King or one of the King's judges. Thus, in spite of the established common law courts, citizens might petition—directly to the King's conscience—in dispute of common law court judgments. For some time, the King—or his counselors—would deal with the petitions themselves. As cases continued to grow, however, the King proceeded to pass petitions onto his Chancellor (that is, the keeper of the King's conscience). The Chancellor was a trusted advisor who was learned in civil and canon law. This eventually assembled what is known as the Court of Chancery, a separate court from the King's Court.[31]

The Chancellor dealt with petitions in a different way than the common law precedents. The Chancellor would give or withhold relief by appealing to equitable maxims. He would examine matters of fairness or moral rightness in light of the case circumstances. Petitioned cases of equity typically concerned issues of fraud, trusts, final wills and testaments, and the moderating of the severity of punishments. If the Chancellor was convinced that someone

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[30] "Equity." *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, 2002. https://www-oed-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/view/Entry/63838?redirectedFrom=Equity#eid

[31] "2 7 Common Law and Equity," *Youtube*. Course lecture by Dame Hazel Genn at University of London. Uploaded by Jieun Jeong, 5 July 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhlnReSIsTQ

suffered a wrong, then the Court of Chancery would grant a remedy to right the wrong derived from the judgments of the common law courts.

As petitioned cases continued to accumulate over the years, legal theory also developed further, particularly concerning the relationship and jurisdiction between common law and equity law. Many legal theorists published texts examining equity law. Richard Francis published *The Maxims of Equity* in 1734. Shortly after, Henry Ballow published *A Treatise on Equity*, in 1737. As Julia Rudolph sums up, in her 2013 published book, *Common Law and Enlightenment in England, 1689-1750*, "Ballow's treatise on equity begins as a treatise on contract; it then moves to consider trusts as a form of contract, and elaborates the trustee's responsibilities and beneficiaries rights in the performance of the terms of the trust" (Rudolph 173). In Ballow's view, equity served to fulfill the just intentions of the common law, particularly "in those exceptional cases where common law provided no remedy, or where strict adherence to the common law would produce injustice" (Rudolph 172). In this regard, equity aimed to *accompany* common law, particularly to fill-in any potential loopholes that common law may have left open. Although equity, ideally, aimed to help contribute to common law, it also sparked internal debate, contention, and competition amongst each of these respective legal branches.

As the courts of equity continued to develop as a separate branch of English law, there were also growing controversies regarding the handling of equity cases, and subsequently, public demands to investigate systemic practices of corruption. As Rudolph points out:

> Public political debates about the effects of commercial prosperity frequently led to a critique of monied interests, national debt and big government. Controversy also, at times, centered specifically on Chancery procedures, personnel and jurisdiction as part of contemporary reflection on the jurisprudence and jurisdiction of equity" (Rudolph 186).

People began to complain about the judgments of the Court of Chancery. Even though the standard of Chancery was the King's Conscience, many petitioners had to wait long periods of time before final judgment was made. In many other circumstances, people complained that the Chancellor's judgment was arbitrary, perhaps even subject to bribery.

Judge John Somers (1651-1716) was a high-ranking individual who became Lord Chancellor in 1697. Shortly before earning this position in 1693, he published *A Discourse Concerning Generosity*. This text aimed to motivate people to express sincere love and the practice of demonstrating virtue and goodness to each other. In his view, generosity was a key component to moral living. Somers's writings became popular for engaging in moral, philosophical, and political debate. According to Rudolph:

> As fore-most equity judge Somers would have been preoccupied with questions regarding natural law and moral obligation which are the central issues of this text. The *Discourse Concerning Generosity* aims to 'engage Men to the sincere Love and Practice of Vertue and goodness' by exploring principles of nature through the little-studied concept of generosity (Rudolph 194).

Even though principles of virtue may be known to rational men, Somers emphasized the importance of virtuous actions within social contexts. He was deeply committed to advancing the public good personally, without relying solely on his publications to do the moral reform work he promoted. In this way, as a legalist who demonstrated extensive expertise in natural law, he also exuded a pragmatic style that permeated his public demeanor.

Once regarded as a man of virtue, legal mastery, and moral excellence, the reputation of Somers, however, began to wane. In 1701, Somers was formally impeached for "charges that

were strongly political in nature and he was clearly held accountable, along with other government ministers, for the perceived failures of Williamite foreign policy" (Rudolph 199). He was linked to receiving unfair monetary benefits that enriched him and his associates. Moreover, his equity court judgments were attacked for breaching the Exchequer's jurisdiction. In other words, Somers was criticized for pushing equity law beyond its jurisdictions. Even though Somers was eventually acquitted, he still garnered much unpopularity, particularly with the King, and was removed from the bench for several years (Rudolph 200). The Somers family connection, however, continued to play a role within the Court of Chancery. Somers' brother-in-law, Joseph Jekyll, would become Master of the Rolls, a position of equity law only one step down from the Lord Chancellor.

Lord Cowper (1714-1718) appointed Joseph Jekyll as Master of the Rolls in July, 1717, and he would preside in the Court of Chancery until he died in office in August, 1738. As Master of the Rolls, Jekyll was responsible for maintaining the records of the Court of Chancery. According to W.H.D. Winder's essay, "Sir Joseph Jekyll, Master of the Rolls," Jekyll was a respected and well-mannered judge and legislator of equity law. Throughout his tenure as Master of the Rolls, however, Jekyll had to deal with much controversy and corruption going on within the Court of Chancery. This controversy occurred from people both above and below Jekyll's rank. He spent much time taking part in committees that aimed to rehabilitate the court of equity as a morally reputable institution.

The second Lord Chancellor, during Jekyll's tenure as Master of the Rolls, was Lord Macclesfield. Jekyll worked under him between 1718 and 1725. Similar to Somers, Macclesfield was also a strong legal intellectual. He took the reins of the Court of Chancery in 1718, less than one year after Jekyll presided as Master of the Rolls. According to Rudolph, Macclesfield had a

library filled with several texts concerning legal thought, moral philosophy, and the movement for moral reform. He was also active in many groups or societies, debating about the importance of moral behavior: the Religious Societies, Societies for the Reformation of Manners, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (Rudolph 203). With such a vast library and active social involvement, Macclesfield solidified a reputation for being one of the greatest British legal minds of his time. Rudolph writes, "His attraction to both empirical and axiomatic demonstration is indicated by his friendship with, and patronage of, men like Edward Halley, Isaac Newton and William Jones; by his election to the Royal Society; and by his impressive collection of books on mathematics, science and natural history" (Rudolph 202). Such an esteemed individual should have helped bolster the reputation and public trust within the equity courts.

In spite of his impressive moral and legal background, however, in 1725, Macclesfield was publicly accused of financial misconduct. Shortly thereafter, twenty-one articles of impeachment were sent to the House of Lords. The articles included charges of extortion, abuse of trust, embezzlement, encouraging risky investment of court funds by his subordinates, orchestration of a cover-up, perjury, and deceit (Rudolph 203). Before the official impeachment proceedings began, though—especially due to the mounting social and political pressure—Macclesfield officially resigned from office.

Shortly after Macclesfield resigned, Rudolph writes, "[Jekyll] became the first commissioner of the great seal, taking on this responsibility along with fellow commissioners Geoffrey Gilbert and Robert Raymond, until a new chancellor could be appointed" (Rudolph 204). The commission of Jekyll—and others—had the duty to "look narrowly into the behavior of all officers under their jurisdiction and to make regulations to guard the property of the suitors

for the future" (Winder 522-523). Macclesfield's subsequent impeachment trial ended with a unanimous vote:

> Macclesfield was found guilty of 'taking of several of the Masters in *Chancery* very great and exorbitant Sums of Money, for their Admission into their respective Offices.' Moreover, it was found that not only did Macclesfield frequently sell the office of Chancery master, but he also allowed unfit men – men who could not afford the price of office – to pay for their places out of suitors' assets held by their predecessors in office (Rudolph 204).

On the heels of the South Sea Bubble (1720-1721), Macclesfield was trying to make up the difference accrued from massive financial losses, and thus, to enrich himself and his associates. The South Sea Bubble was a tremendous stock market crash primarily involving debt for equity swaps. To briefly detail these circumstances, the English government was in massive debt—as much as forty-eight million by the year 1714—caused from their participation in the Nine Years War (1688-1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714).[32] Although the South Sea Company, established in 1711, was primarily a trading company—with participation in the slave trade in South America and the Caribbean Islands—they eventually became interested in the practice of taking on government debts in exchange for company equity. This was a practice that the Bank of England employed earlier on, toward the end of the seventeenth-century. The Bank of England, along with the East India Company, were largely run by the Whigs. The man who

[32] Source: BBC In our Time Podcast (20 December 2012). Interview with Anne Murphy Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Hertfordshire, Helen Paul Lecturer in Economics and Economic History at the University of Southampton, and Roey Sweet, Head of the School of History at the University of Leicester https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01pcs5g

helped found the South Sea Company, Robert Harley (Queen Anne's chief minister), was a Tory. Thus, Harley was anxious to contribute to stimulating the financial markets, from the side of the Tories. Indeed, political partisanship—grappling between the political conflicts of the Whigs and the Tories—was a significant issue during this time.

According to Richard Dale's 2004 book, *The First Crash: Lessons from the South Sea Bubble*, "Towards the end of 1719, the South Sea Company, led by John Blunt and the Government, represented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, John Aislaibie, entered into long discussions about the possibility of a massive debt conversion plan" (Dale 74). On 21 January 1720, a proposal was offered, and eventually agreed on, between the English Treasury and the South Sea Court of Directors. In the proposal, the South Sea Company would take on substantial government debt in exchange for South Sea company stock. "The South Sea Company would acquire claims against the government equivalent to the securities exchanged on which interest would be paid at a rate lower than that paid on the original securities" (Dale 75). For several months, this agreement made both sides happy. The government decreased their debts, and furthermore, the South Sea Company was growing into a massive stock market player. People were excitingly buying and selling their company stock shares, particularly as the shares kept going up in price. The South Sea Company would even allow individuals to purchase shares of the company, even if they did not yet have the money to purchase the shares. As a result, not only were scientists, like Isaac Newton, major players within the South Sea Company, but "mechanisms permitted even the poorest, who could not allowed to own shares, to speculate small sums" (Dale 29). Men, women, and even slaves were purchasing shares of the South Sea Company, and thus, contributing to the stock market. By around September 1720, however, the financial bubble of the South Sea Company burst.

The share prices of South Sea Company shares became destabilized. This led to a growing shareholder rebellion and a liquidity crisis. As Dale writes, "the eventual collapse of the South Sea share price exposed the massive wealth distribution that had occurred between original shareholders and latecomers who had subscribed at prices up to 1000. There were now clear winners and losers and the latter were in an ugly mood" (Dale 140). Thousands of people were affected by the bursting of the South Sea Bubble. Finally, as Dale elucidates, "the losses incurred by investors were the result of a debt conversion scheme sponsored by the government and endorsed by Parliament. As the evidence of bribery, corruption and mismanagement began to emerge, the public outcry demanding official remedial action became irresistible" (Dale 142-143). Indeed, Macclesfield was not officially impeached until 1725; however, the circumstances of his impeachment can be navigated from the economic dealings associated with the South Sea Bubble.

Of course, Macclesfield was not the only high-ranking person to be accused of corrupt transgressions during this time. Moreover, even though he had already resigned from the bench prior to formal impeachment, the legal proceedings still served as a symbolic gesture for the growing public outcry of institutional reform. As Rudolph explains:

> One important outcome of Macclesfield's impeachment was the implementation of new procedures, and the creation of an enhanced role for the Bank of England in its relationship with Chancery. Henceforth, when masters deposited suitors' monies and securities at the Bank of England the records of these transactions were to be held at the Bank as well as the Chancery Report Office (Rudolph 206).

Jekyll's activities—as Master of the Rolls—also contributed to the demand for moral and legal reform. He pushed for thorough investigations concerning ministerial corruption after the South

Sea Bubble. In this regard, Jekyll was passionately motivated to restore order within the Court of Chancery. Moreover, as Rudolph emphasizes, "Jekyll was also motivated by an antipathy to wickedness and vice, and by a growing sympathy for Country critiques of the corrupt financial and political practices of court Whigs" (Rudolph 208). In spite of the growing public scorn, Jekyll was legitimately determined to repair the reputation of the equity courts.

With all of this legal turmoil occurring, it is easy to understand that Jekyll's appointment of Butler to the position of preacher at the Rolls Chapel—in 1718—would not have been a frivolous decision. It would have been *crucial* for Jekyll to appoint someone who could motivate the congregation—equity judges, lawyers, and clerks—to act in morally righteous ways. Jekyll was well aware that many equity judges, lawyers, and clerks were associated with corruption. This deep concern pervaded throughout Jekyll's entire time spent as Master of the Rolls (1717-1738). Indeed, since the courts of equity were already philosophically trained, the problem did not concern a failure in theoretical understanding. Rather, the concern pertained to a failure of active routine moral practice. In other words, many of the greatest moral reformers of the eighteenth-century had also contributed to the practices of moral decay. They were not living up to their moral training. Therefore, Jekyll was committed, not only in words but also—more importantly—in actions, to rehabilitate the equity courts. The appointment of Butler, to preach at the Rolls Chapel, is no exception to Jekyll's commitment. In the 2012 essay, "Reasoning about Morals from Butler to Hume," Aaron Garrett writes:

> Jekyll reformed the corrupt and arbitrary practices of the equity courts, stressing that they engaged in careful scientific reasoning, not arbitrary judgment. In addition Jekyll had strong dissenting sympathies and was noted for his support of legislation for moral reform. Butler's *Sermons* can be seen as continuing Jekyll's vision of the role of the

> equity courts and the ideal of the equity lawyer and judge at the level of philosophy (Garrett *PRE* 180).

With Jekyll's demand for moral reform in mind, this would imply that Butler recognized the importance of his appointment. He was not in need of morally reforming those who had no previous education in morality, theology, or legal precedent. On the contrary, he was asked to morally reform those who were already regarded to be the most legally and morally trained minds in England..

Butler's *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel* was dedicated to Jekyll. The dedication reads, "To the Right Honourable Sir Joseph Jekyll Master of the Rolls, Etc. The following sermons, preached in his chapel are, with all humility, dedicated by his most dutiful and most obedient servant, Joseph Butler" (xii). Now that the circumstances of Jekyll's appointment of Butler are understood, and the state of affairs of his congregation have been elucidated, we proceed onwards to ask the following question: Why was Butler morally fit, at least according to Jekyll's judgment, to preach at the Rolls Chapel? To answer this question, we need to examine Butler's character.

BUTLER'S MORAL FITNESS TO PREACH AT THE ROLLS CHAPEL

Before becoming preacher, Butler was a student studying at a dissenting academy in Gloucester, and then, at Tewkesbury, run by a man named Samuel Jones. Having grown up in a Presbyterian family, it appeared that Butler was aiming to be ordained in the Presbyterian ministry. According to White and Maranda's book, *Bishop Butler and Logic, Love, and the Pursuit of Happiness in the Age of Unreason,* dissenting academies were "educational establishments serving Protestants who had separated from the Church of England and were not

welcome at Oxford or Cambridge" (White and Maranda 24). Dissenting academies tended to provide a broader education than Oxford and Cambridge. They included logic, mathematics, science, modern philosophy, history, and the classics. In this regard, Butler received a strong education.[33] One of his classmates, Thomas Secker, would go on to become Archbishop of Canterbury. During his time studying at Tewkesbury, Butler began to correspond with Dr. Samuel Clarke, a leading Anglican theologian. Clarke was so impressed with Butler's intellectual curiosity, and his rigorous style of writing, that he included this correspondence in a published text in 1716.[34] As Bob Tennant writes, Clarke sought to introduce *"a priori* metaphysics into his account of the divine nature and its expression in the created universe" (Tennant 23). Samuel Clarke embraced the position that the moral faculties are a natural function of human nature. The aim, though, was to be able to act on these *a priori* moral principles in appropriate ways. Clarke, therefore, supported the theoretical position known as rationalism. This view runs counter to many of the British empiricists, including George Berkeley, who appealed only to experience, rather than *a priori* principles of human nature, in order to comprehend moral action.

In the 2009 book, *Women and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Karen O'Brien helps to summarize Clarke's position further, particularly as she sums up Clarke's role in the movement of Latitudinarian Anglicanism.[35] O'Brien writes:

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[33] "Joseph Butler by Christopher Cunliffe." *Youtube*. Uploaded by Timeline Theological Videos, 20 September 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OU6Iy8gkWD0

[34] Clarke, Samuel. *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God … The Fourth Edition, Corrected. There are added in this Edition, Several Letters to Dr. Clarke from a Gentleman in Glocestershire,* London, James Knapton, 1716.

[35] As a brief aside, in this book, O'Brien provides some interesting details about Butler's influence within the Bluestockings Group. For example, according to O'Brien, "Catharine Talbot and Elizabeth Carter had close personal ties to Butler, indeed, the Bluestockings as a group

> Clarke expounded a theology that was to have a huge impact on eighteenth-century Latitudinarian Anglicanism. He argued that the truths of Christianity were scientifically demonstrable propositions, including the proposition that the eternal principles of right and wrong do not depend upon the fiat of God, but are antecedent to his will and law, and accord with the order of creation (O'Brien 53).

Clarke's theology made several connections with the ideas of John Locke. Indeed, Butler was aware of Locke's philosophy through the instruction of Samuel Jones at the Dissenting Academy.[36] Locke and Clarke tended to view natural and revealed religion as separate entities. They both believed in the freedom of the will, and they both advocated for the advancements of science. Such advancements, moreover, did not discourage their religious views. From the influences of Locke's philosophy, and the published writings of Samuel Clarke, Latitudinarian Anglicanism began to establish an identity.

Latitudinarian Anglicanism formed a bridge between the established Church and Dissent. On the one hand, the Latitudinarian Anglicans endorsed religious toleration, free rational religious inquiry, an undogmatic, non-mystical faith based in reason and scripture and salvation open to all. On the other hand, they were not open to deism and free thinking that concerned forms of unbelief (O'Brien 36). To help further understand this period, O'Brien relies on the writings of J.G.A. Pocock. In his 1989 essay, "Conservative Enlightenment and Democratic

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might plausibly be termed the female Butlerians" (O'Brien 57). As a result, this group helps to support the fact that Butler's writings had tremendous impact within various intellectual circles.

[36] According to Bob Tennant's summary of Butler's education at the Dissenting Academy in Gloucester (though it moved to Tewkesbury shortly after Butler joined), he writes, "Students were required to translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek, read Isocrates and Terence and, a clear reminder of Jones's Leiden days, study the logic of Heereboord as well as mathematics and Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*" (Tennant 21).

Revolutions: The American and French Cases in British Perspective," Pocock describes the Anglican English Enlightenment as a "force, designed in the defense of the magisterial and clerical elites against the subversive claims of the spirit; designed, that is, in defense of law against grace" (Pocock 85). The Latitudinarian Anglicans tended to steer a middle-path. They were politically and theologically conservative and defended the Church. At the same time, though, they avoided strict traditionalism and defended religious toleration. They also welcomed the growing advancements of natural and experimental science. Pocock writes:

> What was new, though instantly recognized and welcomed, was the conjunction between what was happening in natural and experimental science and their desire to associate skepticism with submission to authority; to say that since the human mind was not capable of perceiving real essences and presences, all human doctrines of real presence were intellectually false and could not be used to make claims against clerical or magisterial authority. They were interested in a self-limitation of the mind's enterprises which at one and the same time made it conformable to an authority whose claims it in turn limited, and formed part of the Enlightenment proposal that the mind increased its powers by limiting its scope and making its objective method, rather than system (Pocock 87).

In this regard, the Latitudinarian Anglicans sought to embrace many of the exciting discoveries derived from the scientific revolution, while also remaining keen to address the limitations of the mind. They accepted the view that reason *can* ascertain many things about the nature of reality; however, they did not go so far as to maintain that free thinking has no boundaries. Hence, human reason was accepted only insofar as boundaries or limitations of reason were also laid.

Given the tug and pull of these boundaries, the Latitudinarian Anglicans carried forth a more cautious optimism, especially concerning the breadth and boundaries of human reason.

While investigating much of his writings, and even examining some of his biography, it makes sense to align Butler with the character of a cautious optimist regarding the limits of reason. As will be seen, especially in sermon nine, "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries," Butler takes the sceptic attitude seriously; however, he adamantly refrains from surrendering to this attitude. In particular, he expresses concern about the sceptic refusing to adhere to the human precept of forgiveness. For Butler, the limitations of reason ought not to deter the moral importance of forgiving and loving our enemies. On the contrary, the limits of reason should actually help to bolster the moral obligation to forgive wrongdoers.

Butler's cautious optimism can be detected several years before he even began to preach at the Rolls Chapel. His correspondence with Samuel Clarke sheds further light about Butler's preference for leaning on probable reasoning, especially when it concerned the inquiry into deep, metaphysical questions. David White's edited collection of Butler's writings, *The Works of Bishop Butler*, provides some of the correspondence between Butler and Clarke. For example, in his fifth letter addressed to Clarke, written on February 13th 1713, Butler writes:

> I must add one thing more; that your argument for the *omnipresence* of God seemed *always* to me *very probable*. But being very desirous to have it appear *demonstrably conclusive*, I was sometimes forced to say what was *not altogether my opinion*: not that I did this for the sake of *disputing*, (for, besides the particular disagreeableness of this to my own temper, I should surely have chosen another person to have trifled with) but I did it to set off the objection to advantage, that it might be more fully answered (*WBB* 25).

Butler reached out to Clarke because he found something profound and worthwhile about his metaphysical account. To this extent, Butler praises Clarke for demonstrating a "very probable" argument for the omnipresence of God. And yet, Butler was never able to fully embrace Clarke's argument either. The argument was still in need of a conclusive demonstration. Of course, Butler's hesitations did not motivate him to give up and turn his back on Clarke's arguments. It was precisely Butler's erudite reluctance that helped to establish a meaningful friendship between them. Indeed, Butler took Clarke's reasoning seriously; however, he was simply not a thinker who was easily convinced to acquiesce to the authority of another's arguments. The scrupulous challenges that Butler brought forth to Clarke, therefore, contributed to the founding of a meaningful intellectual friendship.

Butler was often intrigued by what the well-informed sceptic would say in response to an argument. Throughout *Fifteen Sermons*, he considered the skeptic point of view quite seriously. To be clear, Butler did not embrace a sceptic philosophy. On the contrary, Butler maintained the stance that many arguments demanded a consideration from the point of view of the thoughtful sceptic. As will be seen later on, for example, Butler took seriously the sceptic of virtue in order to be convinced of following through on the precepts, "Love your enemies" and "Forgive." In this way, attending to the perspective of the sceptic should help to challenge—and eventually enhance—an argument. Even as their correspondence continued over the years, as Tennant sums up, Butler "submitted, cautiously but definitely, to Clarke's authority" (Tennant 37). This correspondence would subsequently play a pivotal role in the trajectory of Butler's career.

Between 1714 and 1715, Butler decided to conform to the Church of England, with the intention of becoming an Anglican priest. From there, he went onto continue his studies at Oriel College in Oxford, earning a B.A. in 1718. During his time there, he became friends with

Charles and his brother Edward, both sons of William Talbot, Bishop of Salisbury. William Talbot officially ordained Butler to become priest in 1718. In the following year, he was appointed to preach at the Rolls Chapel. Therefore, Jekyll would have likely received valuable recommendations—both from Talbot and Clarke—demonstrating Butler as philosophically, theologically, and finally, morally fit to preach at the Rolls Chapel.

Sermons played a significant cultural role throughout the eighteenth-century. According to Christopher Cunliffe's essay, "The 'Spiritual Sovereign': Butler's Episcopate," located in the book, *Joseph Butler's Moral and Religious Thought: Tercentenary Essays*, many institutions, from Parliament to local hospitals, invited a distinguished divine to preach sermons. As Cunliffe writes, "Sermons, many of which were published, still formed an important part of the literary culture of the time and Butler's preaching developed during the period of the greatest vogue for ethical preaching" (Cunliffe 48). In this way, sermons contributed to furthering discussions about the relationship between society and religion. Sermons *also* played a role that went beyond the confines of religious matters. In the book, *The Eighteenth-Century Pulpit: A Study of the Sermons of Butler, Berkeley, Secker, Sterne, Whitefield and Wesley*, James Downey discusses how the sermons also contributed as a vehicle for daily journalism. Downey writes:

> Whereas the sermon to-day has a strictly religious character and is expected to do nothing more than provide a suitable concomitant to other aspects of public worship, two hundred years ago it had firm and conscious ties with secular society. Politics, education, philosophy, and literature all made demands for, sermons (Downey 10).

Sermons even contributed to instilling a sense of national pride. Many individuals, for example, would declare English sermons to be of higher quality than German sermons, and vice versa. The

style of a written sermon was scrutinized by many readers, journalists and groups, regardless of social rank.

The demands for preaching, publishing, and reading sermons filtered into almost every aspect of society. The majority of sermons did not even explicitly address arguments for the existence of God. Instead, eighteenth-century sermons typically aimed at demonstrating the importance for moral action. Butler's *Fifteen Sermons* are no exception. Throughout the majority of the text, Butler supposes that his readers (and congregation) already accepted the tenets of Christianity. Butler's primary focus, therefore, concerns virtuous action. In particular, Butler was interested in investigating problems with a particular emphasis on moral psychology. With this in mind, the analysis now turns to examine Butler's methodology, and subsequently, his account of virtue.

BUTLER'S METHOD AND ACCOUNT OF VIRTUE

Butler's methodology, in *Fifteen Sermons*, largely encompasses the role of a moral moderator. In this way, he tries to understand both sides of the argument, particularly concerning the way to treat the subject of morals. He tends to moderate between the theoretical frameworks supported by the Moral Rationalists, on the one hand, and the Moral Empiricists, on the other hand. The method Butler prefers to follow—at least for the most part—derives from the Moral Empiricists. In the Preface, written for the second edition published in 1729, Butler writes:

> There are two ways in which the subject of morals may be treated. One begins from inquiring into the abstract relations of things: the other, from a matter of fact, namely, what the particular nature of man is, its several parts, their economy or constitution; from

> whence it proceeds to determine what course of life it is, which is correspondent to this whole nature (*S* P.12).[37]

As Butler understands it, those who inquire into the abstract relations of things are known as *a priori* moralists (i.e. moral rationalists). On the one hand, these theorists were optimistic about the limits of human reason, and aimed to establish an understanding of moral principles without *only* appealing to proofs dependent on experience. On the other hand, the empiricists (those who appealed only to matters of fact) were much more pessimistic about the limits of human reason. Instead of grounding morality upon principles known *a priori*, the empiricists preferred to examine subject of morals derived only from human experience. In spite of their differences, however, Butler believed both ways of inquiring into morals aimed for the same goal. As Butler writes, "Thus they both lead us to the same thing, our obligations to the practice of virtue; and thus they exceedingly strengthen and enforce each other" (*S* P 12). Although Butler preferred to examine the subject of morals from an empirical lens (i.e. from 'matters of fact'), he did not vehemently oppose the method of the moral rationalists. Terence Penelhum helps to elucidate this point in his book, *Butler*:

> It is very important to notice, at the outset, that when Butler tells us of his preference for a more empirical method, he does not say that no valuable results can be achieved through more abstract arguments. Just as in philosophical theology he does not reject *a priori* proof, but merely prefers to work in a different way himself, so in ethics his empirical stance is not intended to exclude *a priori* investigations (Penelhum 10).

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[37] *S* P.13 is a citation from *Fifteen Sermons*, "The Preface," along with its paragraph number. Butler wrote "The Preface" for the second edition (1729) of *Fifteen Sermons*, and this is the edition McNaughton edited for the 2017 Oxford publication.

In this regard, Butler *preferred* to advance the subject of morals by means of the empirical method. However, there were some *a priori* arguments that Butler never extinguished from his analysis. For example, he advocated for some important *a priori* proofs concerning the metaphysics of Christianity—including the existence of a divine creator, the acceptance of the Fall, and the probability of a life after death. Furthermore, when he examines the passion of resentment, in sermon eight, he begins with an attempt to demonstrate the passion *in itself*, a phrase typically appealed to by the rationalists. After demonstrating resentment—*in itself*—as a passion that operates in self-defense of being hurt, Butler proceeds to unpack its usage in two further steps. First, he wants to understand how to practice resentment in a virtuous way. Second, he wants to demonstrate the abuses (or vices) of resentment. These steps proceed from within the framework of empiricism. As a result, although Butler was attracted to many of the ideas from the rationalists, his analysis generally adheres to the standards of moral empiricism.

In the Editor's Introduction to the 2017 Oxford edition of Butler's *Fifteen Sermons*, David McNaughton elaborates on Butler's method, identifying it as a "moral phenomenology—to the precise nature of, for example, what it is to recognize a moral obligation, or to experience moral emotions, such as pity, indignation, guilt, or compunction" (McNaughton xiv). For Butler, the emotions are a major contributor to morality. Throughout the text, Butler deliberated about the importance of distinguishing one emotion from another, and in so doing, examined how each emotion could contribute to living a life of virtue. Given his view that the emotions were instilled by God—a benevolent creator—each emotion *must* have a way to be applied in virtuous ways. He would distinguish, for example, envy and jealousy, or resentment and indignation (xiv). These are passions that are experienced by human beings on a regular basis. Clearly, Butler was not speaking and writing in opposition to the emotions.

According to White and Maranda, Butler's account of "virtue is derived from Aristotle, St. Thomas Aquinas, the Stoics, and, of course, the Bible" (White and Maranda 83). In Butler's view, the world is a place where human beings are able to know some things; however, they are also incapable of knowing everything. Human ignorance is something Butler consistently reminded his readers and congregation to pay heed to. He believed this world was probationary to another world that followed, in the afterlife. He was simply unable to establish this with absolute certainty. Instead, the strength of Butler's argument relies on rigorous probabilities. In spite of the awareness of human ignorance, Butler believed virtue was still worth the effort to cultivate, and the emotions were no exception. As White and Maranda put it, "Some who experience a problem become angry and resentful and complain. Others remain calm, see the difficulty as a test of skill and of character, and get to work addressing the issue, whether intellectual or moral" (White and Maranda 83-84). The challenge for human beings, according to Butler, concerned the virtue of living in accordance with nature. Butler demonstrates this point, for example, in the Preface to the 1729 second edition of *Fifteen Sermons*. He writes, "That the ancient moralists had some inward feeling or other, which they chose to express in this manner, that man is born to virtue, that it consists in following nature, and that vice is more contrary to this nature than tortures or death, their works in our hands are instances" (*S* P.13). Thus, Butler accepted the view that the life of virtue obligated human beings to follow their nature. In other words, following nature—as it was instilled in human beings by God—is the proper guide for living a virtuous life.

In sermons one, two, and three, Butler breaks down the principles of human nature into several distinct parts that contribute to a hierarchy of authority. By relying on the highest principles of authority, he maintains, human beings are acting in accordance to following their

nature, and hence, acting naturally. Moreover, to neglect or avoid the higher principles of authority would be to act unnaturally. The emphasis on the higher principles of authority; however, does not imply that the lower principles should be ignored or avoided. Rather, the lower principles *still* inform the higher principles, and therefore, *do* play a vital role in acting virtuously (i.e. following their nature).

The lowest rung of the principles of human nature are categorized together: appetites, passions, and affections. As McNaughton elaborates, according to Butler, this category involves the desire "to attain some particular object (McNaughton xvi). Hunger, for example, seeks the particular object of food. Compassion aims to minimize the pain that another is enduring. Resentment pursues a remedy against another's injury or injustice, and so on. Some passions are private, including resentment. Other passions are public, including compassion. The passions and affections can also benefit the public and the private good, at the same time. The several passions and affections, writes Butler, "do in general contribute and lead us to *public* good as really as to *private*" (*S* 1.7). Although Butler describes the passions and affections, both private and public, as *distinct*, contrary to Pagani's view[38], he never describes them as *separate*. In other words, the private passion of resentment, for example, can help to inform the public passion of indignation. These passions are distinct from one another but not separate.

Butler briefly examines passions and affections that are distinct from benevolence and self-love. He lists the "desire of esteem from others, contempt and esteem from them, love of society as distinct from affection to the good of it, indignation against successful vice" (*S* 1.7) as distinct public affections or passions. While these have an immediate regard for others, they also

[38]Pagani's view is briefly examined in chapter two.

require individuals to regulate their behavior in a particular manner. In so doing, these public passions are *also* "tending to private good" (*S* 1.7). To desire the esteem from others, for example, requires the individual to comport their behavior in such a way that they provoke others to grant them approval. As a result, the appetites, passions, and affections tend to preserve the good of the individual and the public good.

In sermon five, Butler examines compassion as an affection that aims to relieve the distresses of others. He consider the view of a sceptic who disputes the need to be compassionate for others in distress. Taking this view seriously, Butler obliges by posing the question they would ask, "Has not each man troubles enough of his own? Must he indulge an affection which appropriates to himself those of others? Which leads him to contract the least desirable of all friendships, friendships with the unfortunate? (*S* 5.3). From this perspective, the implied argument is that compassion is a public passion that misleads human beings to indulge too much in the affairs of the unfortunate. By relieving the distresses of the unfortunate, says the sceptic, these passions and affections are misleading. Therefore, the passions and affections must be avoided because they provoke too much weakness in human beings.

The breadth of the sceptic's argument pertains to the view that the passions and affections are human weaknesses. Butler's immediate response, "Perhaps so" (*S* 5.3). Indeed, he acknowledges that the sceptic view could be correct; however, he quickly dispels from the following view that the passions and affections ought to be avoided. In spite of the possibility that the passions and affections demonstrate human weakness, they are still a crucial function for living a good moral life. Butler writes:

> [It] is mankind I am speaking of; imperfect creatures, and who naturally and, from the conditions we are placed in, necessarily depend upon each other. With respect to such

> creatures, it would be found of as bad consequence to eradicate all natural affections, as to be entirely governed by them (*S* 5.3).

Clearly put, Butler does not believe virtue entails an eradication of the emotions. The virtuous human being needs to operate with the emotions in morally responsible ways. Generally speaking, Butler also does not regard it to be virtuous to be *entirely* possessed by the emotions either. To only appeal to the emotions would reduce the individual from appealing to the more authoritative principles of human nature that were instilled by the Creator. Furthermore, to only appeal to reason would also reduce people from making use of the moral contributions of the lower principle of human nature. As a result, the virtue of reason must work in tandem *with* the virtue of the emotions.

Butler emphasizes a moral demand for a reciprocal relationship, between reason and the appetites, passions and affections. For example, in sermon five, he calls attention to the problem of reducing virtue only to the highest authority of reason, writing, "Reason alone, whatever anyone may wish, is not in reality a sufficient motive of virtue in such a creature as man; but this reason joined with those affections which God has impressed upon his heart" (*S* 5.3). Clearly, Butler is willing to admit that reason has its limits. He does not want the reader (or his congregation) to assume that reason, and reason alone, is what guides the demonstration of virtue. For Butler, "Neither is affection itself at all a weakness; not does it argue defect, any otherwise than as our senses and appetites do; they belong to our condition of nature, and are what we cannot be without" (*S* 5.3). Similarly with reason, the emotions are a part of the constitution of human nature. They belong to our natural condition, and therefore, to get rid of them—or try to eradicate from them—would be a violation of virtue. From this lesson, Butler goes on to examine the general principles of human nature.

Moving up the hierarchy of human nature, as Butler writes, "There is a natural principle of *benevolence* in man; which is in some degree to *society*, what *self-love* is to the *individual*" (*S* 1.6). The principle of benevolence seeks to attain the *general* happiness of human beings. In this way, the aim is much higher than that of a particular object. Benevolence aims for a general happiness of the greater good irrespective of any particular object. Since there is a general principle concerned with the happiness of others, there is *also* a general principle concerned with the happiness of the self, and Butler identifies this as "self-love." To elaborate on the differences between the general principles of benevolence and self-love, Butler writes:

> I must however remind you, that though benevolence and self-love are different; though the former tends most directly to public good, and the latter to private: yet they are so perfectly coincident, that the greatest satisfactions to ourselves depend upon our having benevolence in a due degree, and that self-love is one chief security of our right behavior towards society. It may be added, that their mutual coinciding, so that we can scarce promote one without the other, is equally a proof that we were made for both (*S* 1.6).

In this passage, Butler maintains that benevolence and self-love are distinct principles of human nature; however, they are also perfectly coincident. The happiness of an individual may be accumulated from the happiness of the collective. For example, a spectator is attending a baseball game and rooting for their favorite team. A player on this team hits a homerun that scores three runs. In spite of this action, however, the spectator was not paying attention to the play. Upon seeing the home team spring up for joy from the dugout, though, the spectator is suddenly filled with excitement, and looks at the scoreboard to see that three runs were scored for his team. In this regard, the happiness of the collection of players—in the team dugout—gave rise to the spectator's happiness.

Although Butler never disputed the importance of the principle of general benevolence, he also maintained that human beings generally care more about themselves than they do about others. In so doing, self-love typically resonates more for people than benevolence. As Butler writes, "From the very constitution of our nature, we cannot but have a greater sensibility to what concerns ourselves" (*S* 9.2). When someone is injured, for example, the initial resentment—derived from the injury—often minimizes the principle of benevolence. In other words, benevolence never entirely dissolves from human beings; however, self-love usually pervades to a higher degree than benevolence. Thus, the general principles of self-love and benevolence exist side-by-side; however, self-love tends to command more authority than benevolence.[39]

Finally, human nature is constituted with the most authoritative faculty of *conscience*. Butler sometimes calls conscience "a principle of reflection" (*S* 1.8). Conscience is a faculty that surveys a person's desires, aversions, passions, and affections, as well as the respect for such objects and the consequences for attaining or diverting from objects. As Butler writes, "In this survey it approves of one, disapproves of another, and towards a third is affected in neither of these ways, but is quite indifferent. This principle in man, by which he approves or disapproves his heart, temper, and actions, is conscience" (*S* 1.8). Conscience may judge an action to be bad. For example, at a coffee shop, a patron orders seven coffees to bring back to their co-workers. They insist that the baristas make the coffee orders as soon as possible and verbally ridicule them

[39] The placement of the principle of general benevolence has been a topic of much debate. To avoid taking the discussion into a long digression, I chose to maintain it as a general principle of human nature. Throughout Butler's *Fifteen Sermons*, he often wavers between identifying benevolence as a general principle, and, in other passages, aligning it with the appetites, passions, and affections. For more information, please see: Sturgeon, Nicholas L. "Nature and Conscience in Butler's Ethics." *The Philosophical Review*, July 1976, Vol. 85, no. 3. Duke University Press, pgs. 316-356. Also see: Akhtar, Sahar. "Restoring Joseph Butler's Conscience." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 14 (4). Published by Routledge, 2006, pgs. 581-600.

for not adhering to their demands. Any onlooker—including the baristas—are clearly able to judge the patron's actions to be bad, insensitive, inappropriate, and so on. Thus, conscience judges the patron's actions to be morally wrong. In a second example, a patron orders a small coffee. They only have a twenty-dollar bill to pay for the drink, however. The barista takes the bill and begins counting the cash and change in return. However, the patron holds up their hand, and cheerfully says, "No change please. This is your tip." The baristas, and any onlookers, are going to judge this to be a good act. As a result, conscience judges this to be a morally good act. Finally, a third patron visits the coffee shop, and they order a cappuccino. In this example, the baristas and onlookers will be morally indifferent to this coffee choice. Indeed, not every action elicits a moral judgment that it be either good or bad. Many choices and actions are those that concern another's taste in coffee, choice of clothing, chosen menu items at a restaurant, and so on. Thus, when people make these kinds of choices, it will usually render conscience indifferent to judge it as morally righteous or wrongful. Without conscience, human beings would be unable to reflect on their decisions and live in accordance with a moral guide. Conscience was instilled in human beings, from their creator, in order to live virtuously. This is the objective standard or guide for the moral excellence of human beings.

Butler also describes conscience as an administrative office. As he puts it, "that this faculty was placed within to be our proper governor; to direct and regulate all under principles, passions, and motives of action. This is its right and office: thus sacred is its authority" (*S* 2.15). The faculty of conscience, therefore, functions as an authoritative administrative office, implanted in all human beings from God, and subsequently, it serves as *the* moral guide. On the one hand, conscience is the highest and most authoritative faculty of human nature. This faculty offers human beings a moral guide towards living virtuously. On the other hand, conscience is

not necessarily regarded as the most powerful or strongest faculty. Indeed, many human beings refuse, avoid, or neglect conscience. Sometimes, the passions, affections, or appetites, step in and overpower conscience. As Butler writes, "And how often soever men violate and rebelliously refuse to submit to it, for supposed interest which they cannot otherwise obtain, or for the sake of passion which they cannot otherwise gratify; this makes no alternation as to the *natural right* and *office* of conscience" (*S* 2.15). From this passage, Butler still regards conscience to be the highest and most authoritative moral office that human beings have been granted; however, human beings may violate or refuse to acquiesce to its moral authority. To be clear, the most authoritative faculty of human beings is *not* necessarily the strongest.

As a faculty for moral guidance, conscience allows human beings to pursue a life of virtue. Generally speaking, pursuing the life of virtue is aligned with the accumulation of happiness. Butler, however, did not accept this view. In so doing, he opposed some tenets of a famous writer, Anthony Ashley Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713). Butler's insistence that conscience is authoritative, but not the strongest faculty, is a critical response to Shaftesbury's view on virtue contributing to the harmony of the universe. As a result, the analysis carries on to briefly consider Shaftesbury's view, and Butler's criticism.

CONSCIENCE AS AN AUTHORITY OF VIRTUE BUT NOT NECESSARILY FOR A GREATER HARMONY

In 1711, Shaftesbury published the text, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*. This work examines the importance of reflecting on the mind's inner workings, including the passions or affections. According to Jacqueline Taylor's analysis of this text, in her essay, "Moral Sense and Moral Sentiment," she writes, "It is because the mind can reflect on its inner workings, surveying our affections and resolutions, and direct toward them a higher-order

affection of approbation or scorn, that we are capable of virtue" (Taylor 422). In this way, the mind's reflections indicate the reality of a Platonic truth for a higher order in the universe. By reflecting on the mind's inner workings, in the appropriate way, the virtuous individual contributes to the happiness and harmony of the entire universe. In other words, virtue contributes to a higher order system of universal harmony.

Although Butler endorsed many of Shaftesbury's analyses, especially concerning the importance of examining human psychology, he did not approve of Shaftesbury's tendency to reduce the complexity of human psychology to vague and confusing concepts such as universal happiness or the overall harmony of the universe. In the essay, "Moral Sense and Moral Sentiment," Jacqueline Taylor writes:

> He [Shaftesbury] makes his case by showing that, like other creatures on earth, we are not self-contained systems, but rather are parts of a larger, harmonious whole. Our very nature, which includes both our dependence on others and our capacity for social affection, points each individual beyond himself and to a larger social system of which he is a part (Taylor 422).

For Shaftesbury, virtue is *naturally* geared toward the happiness of human beings, and vice is *naturally* geared toward the misery of human beings. He believed that virtue is always happier than the life of vice. In this regard, virtue ought to guide individuals to make the happier choices, precisely because the *strength* of the virtuous motivation is greater than the strength of the vicious motive.

In the Preface to *Fifteen Sermons*, however, Butler explicitly argues against Shaftesbury for putting too much of an emphasis on differences of *strength* concerning a person's virtuous or

vicious motives. As a result, Shaftesbury's account of virtue neglects to address considerations of *authority*. For Shaftesbury, virtue is approved based on the strength of a greater happiness, as opposed to vice being disapproved because of its association with misery. Contrary to this view, Butler argues that virtue is supported by an immediacy attributed to authority. He writes, "The not taking into consideration this authority, which is implied in the idea of reflex approbation or disapprobation, seems a material deficiency or omission in Lord Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue*" (*S* P.26). To be clear, Butler was not convinced that virtue naturally tends towards the happiness and harmony of the universe. Morality should not be conditioned from the view that actions must *only* be hinged on the expectation of happiness and its contribution to the overall harmony of the universe. As Aaron Garrett summarizes Butler's point, "if expected happiness is all that obliges us to virtue, then if someone is convinced that a vicious action will make them happy on the basis of available information, they are obliged to act viciously by the same principle that obliges the virtuous to act virtuously" (Garrett *PRE* 182). In this regard, two radically different actions—one virtuous and the other a vice—cannot be buttressed by an appeal to the very same principle.

Instead of appealing to a greater happiness of the whole (i.e. Lord Shaftesbury) to be the primary motivating factor in living virtuously, Butler argues that the determination of conscience—as an authority—is much nearer and more immediate than the consequences of overall happiness. As Butler puts it, "For the natural authority of the principle of reflection, is an obligation the most near and intimate, the most certain and known: whereas the contrary obligation can at the utmost appear no more than probable" (*S* P.26). Conscience, therefore, is an immediately recognizable moral faculty of human nature, implanted in us by God. Although Butler recognizes that conscience does not absolutely guarantee overall happiness, this is not the

main point of living a morally good life. Sometimes, human beings choose morally good actions or behaviors, and yet, happiness does not immediately arrive. Or perhaps, it might not arrive for quite some time. Or finally, it might never arrive. Thus, when it comes to the relationship between conscience and happiness, Butler is unwilling to go as far as Lord Shaftesbury. At best, the relationship between conscience and happiness is *probable*. He continues, "since no man can be *certain* in any circumstances, that vice is his interest in the present world, much less can he be certain against another: and thus the certain obligation would entirely supersede and destroy the uncertain one; which yet would have been of real force without the former" (*S* P.26). In sum, Butler prefers the faculty of conscience because it is much nearer and more immediate—as a moral guide to living virtuously—than Lord Shaftesbury's view that living virtuously guarantees the greater harmony of the universe. He is not willing to put his money on the notion that goodness must only be considered insofar as it guarantees happiness.

BUTLER ON THE ROLE OF HUMAN IGNORANCE AS A CONTRIBUTING REMAINDER OF VIRTUE

Another important aspect of Butler's view on virtue concerns its association with human ignorance. Unlike Shaftesbury, Butler was never fully optimistic about the capacity of human reason to gain deep metaphysical truths. As Aaron Garrett summarizes:

> An unquestioned optimism about our capacity to discern large-scale metaphysical, systemic structures of the world led to more and more fanciful claims about the system as such which in turn reinforced the claims about the psychology of virtue and benevolence. This was precisely the sort of questionable argument that Butler was trying to upend by centering moral reasoning on more circumspect probable reasoning and natural religion (Garrett "Reasoning about Morals from Butler to Hume" 183).

In this regard, Butler preferred to appeal to probable reasoning about the claims of the psychology of virtue and benevolence. He was not vehemently opposed to theoretical *efforts* to discern large-scale metaphysical, systemic structures of the world. Instead, he took such justifications with a grain of salt. Insofar as human beings *can* act virtuously, he still longed to figure out the best steps to demonstrate virtue. Thus, human beings are limited, and one of the limitations that plays a role in virtue is human ignorance.

Butler's fifteenth sermon is entitled "Upon the Ignorance of Man." In this sermon, he maintains that there is "great ignorance of the works of God, and the method of his providence in the government of the world" (*S* 15.1). Even the wisest and most knowing cannot comprehend the ways and the works of God, including understanding the depths of divine creation, how our being is continued and preserved, and what the faculties of the mind are. Of course, Butler was still adamant that virtue is the business and duty of human beings. Acquiring understanding, proper motives, and actions helps to demonstrate virtue. And yet, Butler was also concerned that some people could take on an arrogant attitude regarding the recognition of the truths of virtue. He writes, "I am afraid we think too highly of ourselves; of our rank in the creation, and of what is due to us" (*S* 15.10). From this reminder, Butler obliged human beings to attend to their ignorance. If a virtue theorist aimed to deny the reality of their ignorance, for example, then they were not properly demonstrating virtue.

Butler demonstrates that ignorance is something human beings can learn from. To elucidate this point further, he writes:

> He should beforehand expect things mysterious, and such as he will not be able thoroughly to comprehend or go to the bottom of. To expect a distinct comprehensive

> view of the whole subject, clear of difficulties and objections, is to forget our nature and condition (*S* 15.13).

For Butler, some people put too much emphasis on *fully comprehending* an entire subject as precedent for committing to the demonstration of virtue. The effort for such a comprehensive view of the whole subject can also pertain to forgiveness. Indeed, Butler's account of forgiveness still entails an effort to thoroughly comprehend in a manner that properly elicits forgiveness. Griswold is apt to appeal to Butler's two perspectives to help demonstrate such a difficulty (i.e. from the objective theorist or the disinterested spectator's perspectives). However, the appeal to the role of ignorance indicates another route to forgiveness. This suggests that there are multiple routes that Butler was willing to take to forgive wrongdoers (Griswold 35). If there were at least two perspectives—or routes—that Butler considered to express forgiveness, then did he consider any others? Perhaps, there are two perspectives that demand rational deliberation, and other perspectives that consider the role of ignorance to forgive wrongdoers. This would be another kind of forgiveness that lacks "a distinct comprehensive view of the whole subject" (*S* 15.13). As a result, Butler's account of forgiveness may be much more complex than first meets the eye.

As discussed in chapter two, Griswold's account of forgiveness is highly demanding.The person who forgives must meet at least six criteria to express the proper virtue of forgiveness. The forgiver *must* forswear revenge, moderate resentment, commit to let go of any lingering resentment, re-envision the wrongdoer, re-frame one's view of self, and finally, address the offender and communicate that forgiveness is granted (Griswold 174). If any one of these steps is bypassed, then the forgiver has not truly demonstrated the virtue of forgiveness. In such a highly demanding and obsessively conditional account of the virtue of forgiveness—an account that acknowledges the writings of Butler—Griswold pays no heed to Butler's sermon about the role

of ignorance. In other words, Griswold is keen to identify, with Butler, the difficulties to properly and appropriately forgive wrongdoers; however, at least with respect to Butler's account of forgiveness, there are still other ways to forgive that do not demand possessing thorough comprehensibility of the subject.

Butler's sermons are keen to draw a distinction between the importance of attaining knowledge *and* the crucial lesson of ignorance as another inevitable factor of human nature. On the one hand, Butler stressed the limitations of human knowledge. Epistemically, he adhered much more closely to the empiricist framework, as he was less optimistic about the limits of human reason. On the other hand, he was not a philosopher who embraced the mind of a sceptic either. In the essay, "Butler and Human Ignorance," Penelhum writes, "Butler does not say or imply that all our aspirations to knowledge are vain ones. On the contrary, he continually urges us to seek that knowledge of our situation and our duties that we *can* achieve, though conscience and through Scripture, for example" (Penelhum "Butler and Human Ignorance" 118). Though Butler took the sceptic point of view seriously, his sermons *also* put in a significant amount of work to try motivating the sceptic to gravitate towards living virtuously. For example, Butler opposed the sceptic position, by writing bluntly, "darkness, ignorance and blindness are no manner of security" (*S* 15.14). The sceptic is more willing to reject any claim for the evidence of truth and understanding. Butler does not want to accept this position. In other words, the effort to attain truth and understanding is still worthwhile and meaningful. He only insisted on the point that truth gives human beings *some* ingredients towards virtue but not the whole picture. Since human beings are fallible and imperfect, the full picture—of truth and understanding—is likely not going to be attained until the afterlife. Thus, for Butler, a sceptic would be unable to take seriously the proper end of actions, and moreover, they would be unable to take seriously the

dangers or abuses of actions. To sum up, Butler argues *for* the accumulating of knowledge *with* a remainder. This remainder acknowledges the limitations of human nature.

Toward the end of sermon fifteen, Butler admits that possessing deep truths about the causes and ends of the universe, is out of the reach of human beings. He even pauses to question whether or not possessing these truths would even be an advantage. Butler writes, "The economy of the universe, the course of nature, almighty power exerted in the creation and government in the world, is out of our reach. What would be the consequence, if we could really get an insight into these things, is very uncertain; whether it would assist us in, or divert us from what we have to do in this present state" (*S* 15.16). In this passage, Butler declares that it is *possible* that possessing this knowledge could be to the detriment of human beings. For example, possessing deeper truths may render people indifferent about morality. The effort to be good may become null and void. Of course, in the same breath, it is possible that this knowledge could be to the betterment of human beings as well. Butler is willing to acquiesce to that possibility as well. Instead of pushing for comprehensive knowledge on all things, however, he still finds meaning in pushing for moral improvement, even on the heels of human ignorance. He writes, "Our ignorance, and the little we can know of other things, affords a reason why we should not perplex ourselves about them" (*S* 15.16). As a result, human ignorance should not stymie the efforts to live virtuously. If anything, it should help to encourage human beings to live virtuously even more.

In spite of Butler's questioning the benefits of coming to understand the causes and trajectories of human nature, and even the universe, he is still adamant that the *effort* to make use of rules *is* meaningful. He is also, however, not a thinker who confines the reader—or his congregation—into the necessity of adhering to a specific list of rules that have to be strictly

followed in order for human beings to be effective moral agents. Appealing to the perspectives of the objective theorist or the disinterested spectator, for example, might be enough to convince the injured to forgive the wrongdoer. These perspectives are reasonable approaches to forgive; however, Butler was also willing to acknowledge that this might not be enough to convince the injured to forgive, especially on an emotional level. To emphasize the emotions, in the last paragraph of sermon fifteen, Butler insists that we "govern and regulate our passions, mind, affections: that so we may be free from the impotencies of fear, envy, malice, covetousness, ambition; that we may be clear of these, considered as vices seated in the heart, considered as constituting a general wrong temper" (*S* 15.16). According to this passage, Butler stresses the important role of governing and regulating of the passions. He took seriously the way that human beings feel. This point of emphasis helps us to transition into sermon nine, paragraph three. As will be demonstrated, the appeal to the objective theorist or disinterested spectator's perspectives *might* be enough to elicit forgiveness—at least on a rational level—it might not be enough to elicit forgiveness on an emotional level. If these perspectives do not succeed to help govern and regulate the passions, then it might be necessary to take another route to forgiveness.

BUTLER'S PRELUDE IN SERMON 9.3

In the Preface to the second edition of *Fifteen* Sermons, Butler included an editorial note explaining the sequence of sermons eight and nine, writing, "The account given of *resentment* in the eighth sermon, is introductory to the following one *Upon Forgiveness of Injuries*" (*S* P.32). The sermons *had* to be published in this order. This refutes Butler's modest advertisement to the reader, in the concluding paragraph to the Preface. In paragraph forty-five, he states that the choice of these discourses, being taken during a course of eight years, "being in great measure accidental. Neither is he to expect to find any connection between them" (*S* P.45). But, of course,

sermon eight is introductory to sermon nine, and hence, there *is* a connection between these sermons.

In the first two paragraphs of sermon nine, Butler summarizes the discourse provided from the previous sermon, "Upon Resentment." He writes, "It hath been shewn, that mankind naturally feel some emotion of mind against injury and injustice, whoever are the sufferers by it; and even though the injurious design be prevented from taking effect" (*S* 9.2). Resentment is a natural emotion that arises in human beings in opposition to being injured or treated unjustly. Although resentment is a natural emotion that helps protect human beings against injury, the precepts, "to forgive," and, "to love our enemies," do not relate to the natural emotion of resentment in itself, but rather, to the resentment "raised by private or personal injury" (*S* 9.2). In other words, natural resentment is felt by all human beings, and it is good—in itself—because it was implanted in us by God; however, forgiveness is only in play when the resentment has been caused by a private or personal injury.

Although natural resentment is good in itself, human beings are forbidden from eliciting resentment in abusive or disproportionate ways. For Butler, "in cases of personal and private injury," the instances of abuse have already been discussed in the previous sermon (*S* 8.10-11).After summarizing sermon eight, in paragraphs one and two of sermon nine, Butler proceeds to write a prelude to the sermon. In paragraph three, he acknowledges the fact that custom and false honor *do* sometimes justify retaliation and revenge, particularly when the resentment defends in the administration of justice. Given this awareness, however, he does not want to delve further into this topic. Instead, he wants to take on the position of the sceptic who is not convinced of the precepts, "forgive" and "love our enemies." For, it is here that Butler implicitly lets the congregation (and readers) know who his interlocutor is throughout the sermon. This is

an important strategic component of Butler's sermon that has been neglected by Murphy, the Contemporary Butlerians, and others.

Considering the sceptic point of view, Butler writes, "Love of our enemies is thought *too hard a saying* to be obeyed" (*S* 9.3). In this passage, Butler points out that many people clearly have reason to understand the precepts: forgive and love our enemies. As a result, the problem he proceeds to take on has nothing to do with trying to convince the sceptic to *know* the precept. Rather, the problem concerns the fact that the sceptic is unwilling to express these precepts, especially on an emotional basis. In other words, knowing the precepts is one thing, and yet, acting out on them is another. Therefore, Butler's interlocutor—the sceptic—pervades throughout the rest of the sermon. This interlocutor could imply the members within his congregation at the Rolls Chapel. Or, he may also be implying the subsequent readers upon publication of the text.

Butler then proceeds to inform the reader of the trajectory of ideas discussed throughout the sermon:

> I will shew *the absolute unlawfulness of the former*; the obligations we are under to the latter; and then proceed to *some reflections, which may have a more direct and immediate tendency to beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us*" (*S* 9.3).

The absolute unlawfulness of the former is retaliation and revenge. Those who engage in abusive resentment—by taking revenge, engaging in rage, fury, or even allowing their pride to take control of them—are not in the right moral place to forgive. Resentment is a justified passion to endure; however, it must not be allowed to exceed into the abuses that propagate revenge.

Butler's second goal was to oblige human beings to the precepts, "forgive" and "love our enemies." The principle of general benevolence obligates human beings to forgive and love our enemies. As Butler describes, in sermon nine, paragraph twelve, "As to that love of our enemies, which is commanded; this supposes the general obligation to benevolence or good-will towards mankind: and this being supposed, that precept is no more than to forgive injuries" (*S* 9.12). Butler reminds the reader—and his congregation—of the reality of the general principle of benevolence. Since human beings were naturally instilled with this principle, they are obliged to apply it amongst their relationships with others.

Butler takes the sceptic position seriously by considering a question they would likely pose to him. If human beings are obliged to forgive, he writes:

> If all this be true, what can a man say, who will dispute the reasonableness, or the possibility, of obeying the divine precept we are now considering? Let him speak out, and it must be thus he will speak. "Mankind, i.e. a creature defective and faulty, is the proper object of good-will, whatever his faults are, when they respect others; but not when they respect me myself." (*S* 9.17).

From the sceptic's point of view, they recognize that human beings are defective and faulty creatures, *especially* when it concerns judging the fallibility between others; however, when it concerns their own mistakes, or those who commit faults onto them, then benevolence no longer carries weight.

Although Butler acknowledges that human beings generally care more about themselves than they do about others, he still demands they should not become blinded by self-love. In order to oblige the sceptic to diverge from blind self-love, he appeals to the two observers'

perspectives, discussed in sermon nine, paragraphs eighteen and nineteen. Indeed, going back to chapter two, these two perspectives were identified by Griswold as the apex of Butler's account of forgiveness. The first perspective is revealed in paragraph eighteen, and Griswold calls this "the objective theorist" (Griswold 35). As Butler writes, "Thus love to our enemies, and those who have been injurious to us, is so far from being a *rant*, as it has been profanely called, that it is in truth the law of our nature" (*S* 9.17). Here, Butler obliges the sceptic to be persuaded by the authority of the moral theorist who reminds them that forgiveness and loving our enemies *are* the very law of human nature. Everyone must be able to see this *and* own it. In the first regard, human beings need to *see* forgiveness as the law of our nature. The second qualification has a proprietary aspect, something akin to a farmer attending to their land. In other words, forgiving and loving our enemies is something that ought to be seen *and* attended to.

In paragraph nineteen, Butler proceeds to the second perspective. The second perspective is a response to the question, posed by Butler acting as the sceptic, "In what degree are we to love our enemies?" Butler writes, "It cannot be imagined, that we are required to love them with any peculiar kind of affection. But suppose the person injured to have a due, natural sense of the injury, and no more; he ought to be affected towards the injured person in the same way any good men, uninterested in the case, would be" (*S* 9.19). Griswold calls this the perspective of the "sympathetic spectator" (Griswold 35). The sympathetic spectator is obliged to love their enemies by reestablishing a civil relationship with the wrongdoer. They do not have to love the enemy by reconciling the relationship. Rather, the injured is obliged to respect the wrongdoer as a fellow citizen would do while passing a stranger walking on a street. By appealing to the perspective of the sympathetic spectator, the personal resentment can be mitigated, and subsequently, forgiveness is more apt to be expressed.

For Griswold, this *is* Butler's account of forgiveness. After providing these two perspectives, he re-sums up Butler's view, "Butler has in effect defined forgiveness as (i) the forswearing of revenge, as well as (ii) the moderation of resentment as judged appropriate by a sympathetic 'good man' and the informed objective observer" (Griswold 36). His examination of Butler's ninth sermon ends here. Both perspectives are supported by the principle of general benevolence. As a result, contrary to Newberry's view, Butler's account of forgiveness *does* concern how human beings feel.

Garcia also accepts Griswold's position on these two perspectives. He only goes one paragraph further than Griswold; that is, he examines sermon nine, paragraph twenty. There, Butler writes, "Now what is there in all this, which should be thought impracticable? I am sure there is nothing in it unreasonable" (*S* 9.20). Both perspectives are, therefore, reasonable and practical efforts to convince the sceptic to forgive and love their enemies. To be clear, Griswold and Garcia are not wrong to develop these arguments. They are only shortsighted for halting their analysis here. Butler wrote another eight paragraphs, and the discussion that ensues is not frivolous.

Returning to paragraph three, Butler stated that he would discuss a third matter. After obliging the sceptic to forgive and love their enemies—via the general principle of benevolence—Butler writes that he will "then proceed to *some reflections, which may have a more direct and immediate tendency to beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us*" (*S* 9.3). This third point of discourse does not yet begin until paragraph twenty-one. As a result, closing the book here on Butler's account of forgiveness would be premature. The development of ideas still plays a pivotal role in his account of forgiveness. Subsequently, the analysis now turns to read Butler's further reflections of sermon nine.

S 9.21 – 9.28: BUTLER'S FURTHER REFLECTIONS: MAKING ALLOWANCES FOR INADVERTENCY

After acknowledging that the perspectives he offered (i.e. the objective theorist or the sympathetic spectator) are practical and not unreasonable ways to help elicit forgiveness, Butler proceeds to paragraph twenty-one. He writes:

> But since to be convinced that any temper of mind, and course of behavior, is our duty, and the contrary vicious, hath but a distant influence upon our temper and actions; let me add some few reflections, which may have a more direct tendency to subdue those vices in the heart, to beget in us this right temper, and lead us to a right behavior towards those who have offended us: which reflections however shall be such as will further shew the obligations we are under it (*S* 9.21).

In this passage, Butler is still not satisfied with convincing the sceptic to forgive and love his enemies. Although the sceptic may *accept* the reasonableness or practicality of the precepts—appealing to the perspectives of the objective theorist and sympathetic spectator—they may *still* be unwilling to have the heart to legitimately express forgiveness. Remember, Butler's congregation were mostly well-educated lawyers, clerks, and judges representing the courts of equity. Given the controversial circumstances that led to Joseph Jekyll appointing Butler to preach at the Rolls Chapel, there is a likelihood that his congregation was not only already morally educated, but also, already morally jaded. Consequently, for a preacher to remind a morally jaded congregation to forgive—precisely because the principle of general benevolence obliges them to—may not carry enough luster to win over the congregation.

To Butler's credit, though, it is likely the case that he was able to read his congregation.

He proceeds to examine an appeal to another means of forgetting as another way to convince the sceptic—and maybe even the majority of his congregation—to forgive.

Since Butler was preaching at the Rolls Chapel—once every Sunday morning—it is plausible that he might plant the seed of an idea that would not sprout until the following week's sermon. Of course, a sermon could only be preached for so long, as there are obvious time constraints, religious calendar holidays, and other circumstances to attend throughout the Sunday religious services. With regard to editorial decisions, moreover, Butler writes (in the Preface to the second edition), "The account given of *resentment* in the eighth sermon, is introductory to the following one *Upon Forgiveness of Injuries*" (*S* P.32). In any case, a thoughtful preacher, as Butler clearly was, could revisit, modify, or even extend ideas preached before. In fact, he provides his readers with some evidence that "inadvertency" was one idea that sprouted over time.

In paragraph seven of sermon eight, "Upon Resentment," Butler clarifies that the natural object of resentment is not someone who *appears*, in the eyes of the suffering person, to be the innocent cause of their pain or loss. He emphasizes this point, writing:

> This is abundantly confirmed by observing, what it is which heightens or lessens resentment; namely, the same which aggravates or lessens the fault: friendship and former obligations, on one hand; or *inadvertency*, strong temptations and mistake, on the other. All this is so much understood by mankind, how little soever it be reflected upon, that a person would be reckoned quite distracted, who should cooly resent an harm, which had not to himself the appearance of injury or wrong (*S* 8.7, emphasis added).

This is the first time Butler uses the term "inadvertency" throughout the entire *Fifteen Sermons*.

Inadvertency, strong temptations, or mistake could contribute to lessening the fault. The inadvertency might be caused by forgetting some crucial details of a memory that should not have been forgotten. Or perhaps, the inadvertency may be another kind that derives from something done unintentionally or accidentally without forgetting. It is not explicit what kind of inadvertency is being described by Butler here. There are at least considerations of inadvertent forgetting, on the one hand, or inadvertent mistakes or misunderstandings, on the other. In addition, the fact that the phrase, "strong temptations and mistake" follow "inadvertency" does not necessarily confirm that Butler is not considering a kind of inadvertency derived from forgetting either. Details inadvertently forgotten could also heighten or lessen resentment the same as inadvertent details derived from something done accidentally or unintentionally.

As Butler continues, "Men do indeed resent what is occasioned through carelessness" (*S* 8.7). Referring to the previous example, Friend B's inadvertent wrongdoing *still* warrants Friend A's resentment; however, the consideration of Friend B's wrongdoing being derived from inadvertency ought to help lessen or mitigate the resentment. Butler continues, "but then they [the injured] expect observance as their due, and so that carelessness is considered as faulty" (*S* 8.7). Thus, although inadvertency—on behalf of the wrongdoer—may help to lessen or mitigate the injury or fault, it still warrants their resentment directed at them. In so doing, forgiveness is in play. The injured expect observance as their due. The wrongdoer will need to take accountability for the injury, and apologize, even if it was caused by an inadvertency. Then, from the side of the injured, they are obliged to consider the wrongdoer's inadvertency as a way to help lower their warranted resentment to an appropriate degree, and thus, forgive. In sum, attending to inadvertency—by both the wrongdoer and the injured—plays a role in the process toward forgiveness.

On a modern appeal to the term, according to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary,*[40] "inadvertence" is defined as, "An effect of inattention: a result of carelessness: an oversight, mistake, or fault from negligence" ("inadvertence" 1139-1140). The dictionary also has an entry for "inadvertent," defined as, "Not turning the mind to a matter: heedless, negligent, inattentive" ("inadvertent" 1140). This modern definition is quite close to the definition of inadvertency, discussed earlier in the introduction, in Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding,* "When a man overlooks even that which he does know. This is an affected and present ignorance, which misleads our judgments as much as the other" (Locke 254). To overlook something that a man knows *could* indicate a forgetfulness. Things that are forgotten are those that were previously believed. Moreover, inadvertency could be caused by a carelessness not caused by forgetting. A laptop user might complain that they are unable to login to use the machine; however, they inadvertently typed the login password in all capital letters. This would indicate a kind of inadvertency more likely derived from a mistake because they never knew beforehand that the laptop keys were locked in capital letters. As a result, in many cases, inadvertency is derived from forgetting, but also, in other cases, through mistakes.

Webster's Third Dictionary defines "forget" as, first, "To lose the remembrance of: let go of the memory: be unable to think of or recall <soon *forgot* her father's warning>" ("forget" 891). This definition does not connect with inadvertency. In fact, this definition would hold for Murphy's interpretation of forgetting as the linear fading away of vivid memories. But, of course, this is not the only meaning of forgetting.

A second definition of "forget" is provided as, "To omit or disregard unintentionally:

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[40] *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*. Edited by Philip Babcock Gove, G & C Merriam Company, Springfield MA, 1961, pp. 891, 1139-1140.

neglect <I *forgot* to close the door>" ("forget" 891). Thirdly, and similarly with the second definition, the dictionary defines "forgetful" as implying "a negligent or heedless failure to keep in mind something that should be remembered" ("forgetful" 891). The second and third definitions of forgetting connects more closely with "inadvertency," and it is precisely *these* that also connect with Locke's definition of inadvertency that describes a man who overlooks even that which he does know.

What is it, then, that causes this inadvertency? Locke continues to explain that inadvertency is caused from a hastiness associated with the passions, writing, "this precipitancy causes as *wrong a judgement*, as if it were a perfect ignorance. That which most commonly causes this, is the prevalency of some pleasure or pain, heightened by our feeble passionate nature, most strongly wrought on by what is present" (Locke 254). Butler's descriptions of inadvertency connect with Locke's assessment, especially as it pertains to something known but overlooked because of the heightened passions. He links inadvertency with the passions several times throughout sermons eight and nine. In sermon eight, inadvertency can aggravate or lessen resentment derived from a fault (*S* 8.7). In sermon nine, paragraph twenty-one, he considers inadvertency with injuries that may have been aggravated from a hastiness of "indignity" (*S* 9.22). In paragraph twenty-four, he explains inadvertency in relation to "enmity" (*S* 9.24). In paragraphs twenty-five and twenty-six, he identifies inadvertency with respect to the "moderation of temper," and finally, something to be "resolved into other particular passions or self-love: principles quite distinct from ill-will, and which we ought all to be disposed to excuse in others, from experiencing so much of them in ourselves" (*S* 9.26). Here, Butler wants human beings to try to resolve their passions—resentment, enmity or indignation—from principles that are distinct from ill-will. In his view, if human beings can acknowledge that *other* people act

inadvertently, then this can help to resolve passions such as indignation, resentment, and envy. Moreover, inadvertency is something that happens on behalf of *ourselves*. In other words, if we can recognize inadvertency on behalf of others, then we ought to recognize inadvertency on behalf of ourselves.

Before making the connection between inadvertency and forgetting, there are places where Butler's further reflections might indicate a kind of inadvertency derived from mistake or misunderstanding on behalf of the wrongdoer or enemy. The following passages do not explicitly confirm what kind of inadvertency is being described. First, Butler writes, "we should frequently discern that to be in reality inadvertence and mistake in our enemy, which we now fancy we see to be malice or scorn" (*S* 9.22). Here, the inadvertence appears closer to derive from mistaken judgments of our enemy than it would to forgetting. The injured is obliged to consider the mistake, "She is malicious," is mistaken. Second, "So that to make allowances for inadvertence, misunderstanding, for the partialities of self-love, and the false light which anger sets things in" (*S* 9.25). In this passage, inadvertence is closely connected to a misunderstanding derived from the partialities of self-love. This inadvertent kind of misunderstanding then follows in the third passage, "if it be now owing to inadvertence or misunderstanding, may however be resolved into other particular passions or self-love" (*S* 9.26). In this passage, Butler considers inadvertency derived from a misunderstanding between the injury and the passions aggravated from it. Third, in paragraph twenty-four, he writes, "In general, there are very few instances of enmity carried to any length but inadvertency, misunderstanding, some real mistake of the case, on one side however, if not on both, has a great share in it" (*S* 9.24). In this passage, Butler considers a kind of inadvertency on behalf of the injured, the wrongdoer, and finally, from both the injured and the wrongdoer. Although this passage appears to connect inadvertency more with kinds derived

from misunderstanding, it does not necessarily exclude kinds of inadvertency derived from forgetting. Cases of enmity could derive from a kind of inadvertency caused by forgetting. Enmity could be caused by an inadvertent forgetting on behalf of the injured, the wrongdoer, or even both. Furthermore, these are cases involving more than one agent having a share of inadvertency. As Butler stresses in the next paragraph, the cautions of inadvertency, misunderstanding, or some real mistake of the case, "is really no more than desiring, that things may be considered and judged of as they are in themselves, that we should have an eye to, and beware of, what would otherwise lead us into mistakes" (*S* 9.25). Although human beings *desire* to consider and judge things as they are in themselves, they are unable to perfectly do so. With this in mind, Butler obliges "some real mistake in the case, on one side however, if not on both, has a great share in it" (*S* 9.24). Such mistakes may align with kinds of inadvertency derived from accidents and mistakes without forgetting, or also, from kinds of inadvertency derived from a forgetting on the side of the injured, on the side of the wrongdoer, or finally, on a forgetting from both sides.

In addition to the view that human beings are unable to fully grasp things as they are in themselves, Butler opposed the idea that enmity is carried out with direct ill-will. Going as far back as sermon one, "Upon Human Nature," he insists, "there is no such thing as self-hatred, so neither is there any such thing as ill-will on one man towards another, emulation and resentment being away" (*S* 1.12). Any ill-will emanates from a particular cause (e.g. injury or injustice) derived from an abuse of the principles of human nature (e.g. abusing the passion of resentment to a friend). In other words, there is no such thing as ill-will without an external cause. Emulation and resentment are causes that could elicit ill-will; however, they are simply not elicited from any general principle of ill-will. By preferring inadvertency over ill-will without cause, Butler

appeals more to a kind of inadvertence derived from misunderstanding, or a kind derived from forgetting.

Finally, there is another indication that Butler's appeal to inadvertency considers the kind more closely derived from forgetting than other kinds. Or perhaps, it is an inadvertent forgetting that follows from an inadvertent mistake on behalf of our enemy. After reflecting on the injured to consider inadvertence and mistake in our enemy, Butler reflects on the injured to consider "something of these latter in ourselves" (*S* 9.22). He wants the injured to attend to their own inadvertencies, too. This touches more closely with a kind of inadvertency derived from forgetting. By magnifying everything that is amiss in others, the injured tends to forget to attend to what is amiss in themselves. As Butler emphasizes, "Self-love is a medium of a peculiar kind: in these cases it magnifies every thing which is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens every thing amiss in ourselves" (*S* 9.22). The injured inadvertently forgets that *they* have committed mistakes or transgressions before (both mild, moderate or severe). When an injury occurs, this knowledge is forgotten. For Butler, self-love tends to magnify everything amiss in others in such a way that inadvertently forgets what is amiss in oneself.

After clarifying on the meaning of inadvertency—both with respect to its modern-day definition and the definition that Butler would have understood throughout his writings—we briefly considered ways that Butler's use of inadvertency may be derived from mistake or misunderstanding, and other ways that inadvertency could be derived from forgetting. With this in mind, I now want to proceed more carefully to unpack the further reflections of sermon nine, especially as it connects inadvertency as a crucial component in Butler's overall account of forgiveness.

MAKING ALLOWANCES FOR INADVERTENCE ON BEHALF OF WRONGDOERS

AND OURSELVES: ANOTHER ROUTE TO FORGIVENESS

In paragraph twenty-two, Butler begins his further reflections by examining the injury itself. He writes, "If then there be any probability of a misunderstanding in the case, either from our imagining we are injured when we are not, or representing the injury to ourselves as greater than it really is; one would hope an intimation of this sort might be kindly received" (*S* 9.22). On this point, Butler obliges the injured to consider the possibility that they were incorrect about the judgment that an injury occurred. Perhaps, they were wrong in making this judgment. If an injury never actually occurred, then forgiveness would no longer be needed. Here, not only would the resentment go away, but also, so would the need for forgiveness. Indeed, it would be strange to forgive another for an injury that they never committed. Thus, this first consideration pertains to the possibility that the injury was a fiction.

Butler then examines the severity of the injury. He writes, "people would be glad to find the injury not so great as they imagined. Therefore, without knowing particulars, I take upon me to assure all persons who think they have received indignities or injurious treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a manner certain, that the offense is not so great as they themselves imagine" (*S* 9.22). At this point, he allows for the injured to maintain judgment that an injury has occurred; however, he obliges them to consider that the injury was not as bad as they imagined it to be. Indeed, there is a normative dimension to this passage. In other words, if an injury occurs, it is important to consider that it is not as severe as we first imagine it to be. As Butler continues to emphasize, "We are in such a peculiar situation, with respect to injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce any more see them as they really are, than our eye can see itself" (*S* 9.22). Butler obliges the injured to be willing to entertain any doubt when it comes to making fixed judgments about the severity of the injury.

After obliging the injured to attend to any misunderstanding about the injury itself, he proceeds to oblige the injured to attend to inadvertency about the judgments of the wrongdoer, writing, "If we could place ourselves at a due distance, *i.e.* be really unprejudiced, we should frequently discern that to be in reality inadvertence and mistake in our enemy, which we now fancy we see to be malice or scorn" (*S* 9.22). From this passage, Butler obliges the injured to take distance from the judgments directed at the wrongdoer. When someone is injured, they have a tendency to judge the wrongdoer to be acting out of hatred, malice, or scorn. The injury could magnify to such an extent that it encourages the injured to judge the wrongdoer to be much worse than they really are. Rather than maintaining these judgments, however, Butler requests the injured to discern the possibility that the wrongdoer was acting from some contribution of inadvertency or mistake.

Up to this point, in paragraph twenty-two, Butler only considers any inadvertency on behalf of the wrongdoer. But then, he moves on to consider any inadvertency on behalf of the injured (i.e. ourselves). He continues, writing, "From this proper point of view, we should likewise in all probability see something of these latter *in ourselves*, and most certainly a great deal of the former. Thus the indignity or injury would infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come out to be nothing at all" (*S* 9.22, my emphasis). Here, the inadvertency has transferred—from the point of view of the wrongdoer—to that of the injured. Butler obliges the injured to consider *themselves* as perpetrators—sometime in the past—of malice or scorn judged by others. In other words, at some previous point in time, the injured person has been a wrongdoer toward someone else. They have committed a wrong to another person, and in response, the injured party has judged them to be malicious or scornful. Scornfulness or maliciousness is, thus, something Butler obliges the injured to consider in themselves or in their past. He prefers to argue that the

injured has more likely acted inadvertently to others, writing, “and most certainly a great deal of the former” (*S* 9.22). The former actions—on behalf of ourselves—are “in reality inadvertence and mistake” (*S* 9.22). By acknowledging that the injured has committed inadvertent wrongdoings before, Butler declares, “Thus the indignity or injury would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come out to be nothing at all” (*S* 9.22). It is interesting to see the double use of hesitation here: “almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come out to be nothing at all,” because—arguing in agreement with the Contemporary Butlerians—Butler allowed for the injured to still hold onto some degree of resentment. They did not have to resolutely overcome resentment in order to forgive properly. We see this justified in this passage. Butler clearly remains hesitant about requiring the injured to fully overcome resentment to forgive.

The normative component here is in Butler’s demand that the injured ought to consider (i.e. not forget) that they have *also* inadvertently wronged others in the past, or perhaps, will wrong others in the future. As Butler stresses in sermon eight, “All this is so much understood by mankind, how little soever it be reflected upon” (*S* 8.7). However, even though inadvertency is to be understood by all—however little it be reflected upon—it is also a function of humanity that can be forgotten. Emphasizing the passage in paragraph twenty-two once again, Butler writes, “Self-love is a medium of a peculiar kind: in these cases it magnifies every thing which is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens every thing amiss in ourselves” (*S* 9.22). When the injured is wronged, self-love tends to step-in and magnify everything that is wrong in other people. As a result, the injured forgets that they are also wrongdoers—maybe not this time—but, they have been wrongdoers before, and thus, will likely be wrongdoers once again. This is the

kind of inadvertency that connects more closely to forgetting than misunderstanding. Therefore, Butler obliges the injured to take this inadvertency into moral consideration as well.

The main reason Butler makes this last appeal to inadvertency—on behalf of the wrongdoer and on behalf of the injured—is "to beget in us the right temper, and lead us to a right behaviour towards those who have offended us" (*S* 9.3). This appeal to inadvertency is aimed to elicit an emotional response; that is, an emotional kind of forgiveness. This emotional kind of forgiveness, to be clear, comes off the heels of the rational and deliberative kinds of forgiveness he discussed in sermon nine, paragraphs eighteen through twenty. Butler never disqualifies the appeal to the objective theorist or the disinterested spectator's perspectives to convince the injured to forgive. These arguments are still worthy enough to merit forgiveness; however, Butler decided to keep going further. The appeal to the principle of general benevolence *might* work, or it might not. More specifically, general benevolence might not do enough to "beget in us this right temper" (*S* 9.22). If anything, the further reflections build off the appeal to the principle of general benevolence. They might act as an addendum to the principle of benevolence. If the sceptic is not convinced to forgive—based on the general principle of benevolence—then, they might be able to do forgive by attending to inadvertency. So, while Butler never entirely gives up on the appeal to general benevolence, I argue that he also appeals to inadvertency as an additional effort to help convince the injured to forgive. This is an important aspect of Butler's account of forgiveness that has been neglected by Murphy's traditional reading of Butler, and also, by the Contemporary Butlerians.

In paragraph twenty-three, Butler examines how inadvertency could be saturated with the passions of anger, hatred, or enmity. He asserts, "Anger also or hatred may be considered as another false medium of viewing things, which represents characters and actions much worse

than they really are" (*S* 9.23). When someone is injured, they ought to refrain from expanding their judgments of the actions and character of the wrongdoer *beyond* the parts that were offensive. In other words, this anger must be confined to the injury, and not go beyond that. When the injured expands their anger beyond the constraints of the offense, however, as Butler writes, "the whole man appears monstrous, without anything right or human in him: whereas the resentment should surely at least be confined to that particular part of the behavior which gave offense; since the other parts of a man's life and character stand just the same as they did before" (*S* 9.23). Similar to the principle of self-love, the passions can also stretch out judgments of the characters and actions of wrongdoers *more* than they ought to be. In connecting paragraphs twenty-two and twenty-three, Butler describes how self-love—anger also, or hatred—may be false mediums of viewing things. These mediums tend to magnify by representing characters and actions as much worse than they really are. For Butler, human beings ought to pay caution to inadvertency as another way to help mitigating anger instead of encouraging it to aggravate into the abusive levels of enmity or hatred.

In paragraph twenty-four, Butler sums up the relationship between the passions and inadvertency. He writes, "In general, there are very few instances of enmity carried to any length but inadvertency, misunderstanding, some real mistake of the case, on one side however, if not on both, has a great share in it" (*S* 9.24). Butler obliges the injured sceptic of forgiveness to consider any inadvertency, misunderstanding, or some real mistake of the case, to help replace passions that lead to enmity or hostility. Indeed, Butler has quite an optimistic view on human nature overall. The passions, by themselves, were implanted in us by God. Going back to sermon eight, Butler explains, "Therefore, since no passion God hath endued us with can be in itself evil; and yet since men frequently indulge a passion in such ways and degrees, that at length it

becomes quite another thing from what it was originally in our nature" (*S* 8.3). This optimism permeates sermon nine, paragraph twenty-four. Butler obliges the injured, in particular, to attend to inadvertency as a way to quell the emotions from aggravating into enmity, hostility, or even, hatred.

In paragraph twenty-five, Butler continues to call attention to the cautions of inadvertency, misunderstanding, or mistake. He writes, "If these things were attended to, these ill-humours could not be carried to any length amongst good men, and they would be exceedingly abated amongst all" (*S* 9.25). While he never requires any good men to annihilate or resolutely overcome their resentment, contrary to Murphy's traditional reading, his aim was to encourage people to manage their resentment in an appropriate way. For Butler, "all that these cautions come to, is really no more than desiring, that things may be considered and judged of as they are in themselves, that we should have an eye to, and beware of, what would otherwise lead us into mistakes" (*S* 9.25). The desire is to be able to consider and judge things as they are *in themselves*. Presumably, there is a way to grasp things in themselves. However, it is unlikely that human beings are able to fully grasp things in themselves, at least in this mortal life. And yet, the recognition of human flaws ought not to discourage people from making moral judgments either. For, such judgments could still be accurate, even if it they are likely subject to flaw.

In the following passage, Butler sums up the demand to make allowances for inadvertency. This obligation does not rely on the intellect of a virtue theorist. Instead, he points out the fact that inadvertency only demands the attention of common sense. He writes:

> So that to make allowances for inadvertency, misunderstanding, for the partialities of self-love, and the false light which anger sets things in; I say, to make allowances for these, is not to be spoken as an instance of humbleness of mind, or meekness and

> moderation of temper; but as what common sense should suggest, to avoid judging wrong of a matter before us, though virtue and morals were out of the case (*S* 9.25).

In this paragraph, Butler appeals to common sense to make allowances for inadvertency to be sure to avoid making incorrect or harsh judgments about an injury, harsh judgments about the overall character of the wrongdoer, and finally, to avoid passions of resentment from aggravating into enmity, scorn, malice, and hatred. Furthermore, a person does not have to be an expert in virtue theory to understand the appeal of inadvertency. It is essential to remember that Butler was still trying to convince the sceptic to bring about the right temper of mind towards those who have offended them. If the sceptic is unwilling to acquiesce to the perspective aligned with the authority of the objective theorist or the sympathetic spectator, then they may be more willing to acquiesce to inadvertency attributed to common sense. Butler accentuates this point, writing, "And therefore it as much belongs to ill men, who indulge the vice I have been arguing against; as to good men, who endeavor to subdue it in themselves" (*S* 9.25). Inadvertency does not only belong to ill men who indulge in the vices of revenge, rage, or fury that he had argued against, in sermon eight. But furthermore, it also belongs to "good men" who endeavor to subdue inadvertency in themselves. In this regard, Butler admonishes those who are unwilling to attend to inadvertency. Some people may regard themselves to be so morally good that they put in the effort to avoid the realities of their own inadvertence. In this way, avoiding to ruminate or dwell (as Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein put it) on these common sense features of human experience could be morally detrimental.

In Butler's view, the allowance of inadvertency is crucial for motivating people "to take notice, that the objects are not in themselves what they appear through that medium [anger and self-love]" (*S* 9.25). This is an appeal that the sceptic may be more willing to accept. Butler's

further reflections, therefore, aim to appeal to the common sense meaning of inadvertency precisely to convince the sceptic of virtue to engage in the right temper of mind to forgive offenders. Once again, Butler describes the false medium of viewing things, similarly to how he did in paragraphs twenty-two and twenty-three. This false medium of viewing things indicates the meaning of inadvertency in ways that appeal to mistakes or misunderstandings that are unintentional, careless, or even forgetful. Butler consistently reminds his readers that self-love tends to magnify things to be more than they really are. In making this point, he often discusses the fact that the eyes have more of a tendency to look outwards than inwards. In sermon ten, "Upon Self-Deceit," Butler writes, "Though a man hath the best eyes in the world, he cannot see any way but that which he turns them. Thus these persons, without passing over the least, the most minute thing which can possibly be urged in favour of themselves, shall overlook entirely the plainest and most obvious things on the other side" (*S* 10.4). Applying this passage to sermon nine, paragraph twenty-five, self-love tends to aggravate the wrongdoings of others. By doing so, it tends to overlook—or forget—the faults of oneself.

Since Butler refused to acknowledge direct ill-will as a general principle, he carries onwards to indicate a third reflection. If the indignity or injury does *not* concern the rational appeal to inadvertency or misunderstanding, then these may still be resolved by appealing to other particular passions or self-love. A subtle shift takes place here, particularly when Butler considers the meaning of inadvertency. As will be addressed at length in the following chapter, in paragraph twenty-seven Butler makes an appeal to an inadvertency of the passions. In other words, he is no longer obliging the injured to consider inadvertency from a rational perspective (e.g. the injury itself or the judgments made about the wrongdoer). On the contrary, he aims to consider an inadvertency that could take place concerning the interaction—or more precisely the

strength—of the passions themselves. Before investigating paragraph twenty-seven, however, I want to close this chapter by examining the twenty-eighth (and final) paragraph of sermon nine.

In paragraph twenty-eight, Butler reminds his readers (and congregation) that forgiving fellow human beings is likely to be more rewarding in the afterlife than not forgiving fellow human beings. In these final passages, Butler appeals to a greater judgment of equity and justice, that of our creator. He describes it as a "natural notion of equity" (*S* 9.28). Recall that Butler preached these sermons to equity lawyers, judges, and clerks. Although the legal practice of equity concerns matters of fairness, concerning frail and imperfect human beings, Butler obliges his audience to remember that there is a higher level of equity. He writes, "Now there is an apprehension and presentiment, natural to mankind, that we ourselves shall one time or other be dealt with, as we deal with others; and a peculiar acquiescence in, and feeling of the equity and justice of this equal distribution" (*S* 9.28). In an effort at foreshadowing, Butler obliges the equity judges, clerks, and lawyers—a morally jaded congregation—to remember the higher court of equity: the judgment of God in the afterlife.

In cases where the injured is still unwilling to make allowances for inadvertence to forgive wrongdoers, Butler reminds his congregation that a forgiving spirit is still important to practice, especially in light of making considerations about the afterlife. Although human beings are forgetful, the creator is not. In this regard, human beings have a relationship between forgiving and forgetting, whereas God forgives but does not forget. Perhaps, God's forgiveness is radically different, in kind, than the kinds of forgiveness that occur for human beings on Earth. Butler writes, "This natural notion of equity the Son of Sirach has put in the strongest way. 'He that revengeth shall find vengeance from the Lord, and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance. Forgive thy neighbor the hurt he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be

forgiven when thou prayest'" (*S* 9.28).[41] For Butler, the forgiving spirit towards others has a greater probability of leading to rewards in the afterlife than an unforgiving spirit. In other words, being forgiving towards others—as a mortal—will likely encourage the highest judge of equity, God, to exercise forgiveness toward you. Thus, Butler obliged his congregation to re-engage in the regular routine of a forgiving spirit that was, perhaps until Butler preached this sermon, a spirit largely forgotten, reduced in significance, or even avoided.

SUMMARY AND TRANSITION INTO CHAPTER FOUR

As has been demonstrated in chapters one and two, Jeffrie Murphy's reading of Joseph Butler has had considerable influence within the debate on forgiveness. After investigating sermon nine, however, it is not accurate to hold onto the view that "Butler indicates that he quite properly wants to draw a distinction between forgiveness (which may be a virtue and morally commanded) and forgetting (which may just happen). Forgiveness is the sort of thing that one does for a reason" (Murphy and Hampton 15). While it may be the case that forgetting *may just happen,* this does not disqualify forgetting from playing a significant role in the decision to forgive. If someone happens to forget something—either about the intensity of the injury or the judgment of the wrongdoer—then this might still play a role in carrying out forgiveness. Butler does not exclude the possibility that forgetting can happen to us in a way that lends itself to a forgiving spirit.

From his further reflections, Butler investigated more complexity about the role of forgetting than Murphy recognized. Forgetting is not only reduced to the definition of the fading away or annihilation of memories. Rather, forgetting can also be regarded as the failure to pay

[41] Butler quotes from Ecclesiastes, xxviii. 1-4.

attention to something that should have not escaped attention. Forgetting does not have to be reduced to a pathology of memory. Forgetting is a common experience of the human experience. Subsequently, it is a function of human nature that ought to be *allowed* to play a role in forgiveness. He encourages a forgiveness *with* forgetting. For, he obliges the injured to attend to anything that could have been forgotten that may help to motivate a forgiving spirit. The injured *must* make allowances of inadvertency, and this is something Butler appeals to common sense to convince the sceptic of virtue to acknowledge. As a result, Murphy's reading of Butler's distinction—between forgiving and forgetting—is dismantled by investigating Butler's further reflections in sermon nine.

Finally, going back to Murphy's footnote, he writes, "Although I am not here able to pursue the matter in any depth, I should at least note that forgetting is in fact more complex than this account [Butler's] suggests" (Murphy and Hampton 23 n. 10). While Murphy brought forth Butler's account of forgiveness—to help aid in his own account of forgiveness—he sells Butler short with regard to the fact that Butler *did*, in fact, demonstrate more complexity about forgetting. As it has been demonstrated in this chapter, Butler was quite a complex thinker overall, and, his further reflections help to elucidate how forgetting is much more complex than the determination of losing a vivid memory of old wrongs, becoming bored with our resentments, or simply forgetting as something that *just happens to us* (Murphy and Hampton 23). In fact, he seriously considered the role of inadvertency that he addressed as another crucial aspect in his account of forgiveness.

The following chapter will analyze sermon nine, paragraph twenty-seven. There, Butler makes a subtle shift into an emotional consideration of inadvertency by means of two different passions (resentment and compassion). From the interplay of resentment and compassion, Butler

indicates another way for the strength of the passions to be able to *move* the injured sceptic to forgive. On the one hand, the interplay of different passions may arise from a certain cause. On the other hand, different passions may also operate with each other, inadvertently. If Butler was willing to consider both of these possibilities, then it would appear that Butler is neither a strict "feeling theorist" nor a strict "cognitivist theorist" of the emotions. Returning to the Contemporary Butlerian debate, Newberry judged Butler to adhere to the feeling theory of emotions, derived primarily from Descartes. Pagani agrees with Newberry's historical assessment. Griswold and Garcia, on the contrary, determined Butler to adhere to a cognitivist theory of emotions. And yet, given Butler's track record of avoiding extreme philosophical positions, picking either Newberry and Pagani, or Griswold and Garcia, as the winners of the philosophical debate seems rather un-Butlerian.

Perhaps, it would be more suitable to propose the view that Butler's theory of emotions *moderates* between both extremes.[42] In order to further support this view, however, there needs to be historical evidence to help demonstrate a way for Butler to operate *between* extreme theoretical positions regarding various theories of the passions. This position could be supported with a few biographical notes about Butler. In 1736, for example, Queen Caroline appointed Butler to become Clerk of the Closet who presides "over the Royal College of chaplains. He

[42] Going back to *The Preface*, Butler informs his readers that the subject of morals may be treated in two ways. First, by inquiring into the abstract relations of things. Second, from matters of fact (what the particular nature of man is, its several parts, their economy or constitution). Even though he chooses the method of matters of fact, he still regards inquiring into the abstract relations of things to be a worthy moral venture, too. As he sums up, "they both lead us to the same thing, our obligations to the practice of virtue" (*S* P.12). Here is an example that demonstrates Butler preferred the role of "moral moderator," rather than to extol one moral extreme position over another.

presents bishops to the Sovereign when they do homage after consecration."[43] While presiding, Butler regularly attending Queen Caroline's evening gatherings amongst learned men. According to Thomas Bartlett's *Memoirs of the Life, Character, and Writings of Joseph Butler*, Butler carried himself as a great philosophical and theological moderator amongst many of his intellectual contemporaries. Bartlett writes:

> Amongst the distinguished divines, were often times summoned on these occasions, were, Berkeley, Clarke, Hoadley, Sherlock, and Secker. Berkeley and Clarke were opposed to each other upon their respective metaphysical theories; and, during the discussion of the points of difference between them, Hoadley invariably supported the views of the latter, while Sherlock was rather disposed to favour the speculations of the former. In the absence of evidence upon the subject, it is not difficult to conceive that Butler, although younger than the leading combatants, might occasionally act as *moderator*, and be inclined to repress the excursive flights of the imaginative Berkeley, by adducing arguments more in accordance with the general theory of Dr. Clarke (Bartlett 41, author's emphasis).

This passage helps to support the view that Butler was not a man who embraced extreme philosophical or theological positions. In spite of this, many people who argued opposing philosophical viewpoints—including Samuel Clarke and George Berkeley—still appreciated Butler's presence at the table of discourse, so to speak. For he displayed profound spiritual and

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[43] "Clerk of the Closet." The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. Ed. Livingstone, E. A.: Oxford University Press, 2006. Oxford Reference. Date Accessed 29 Jun. 2023 <https://www-oxfordreference-com.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/view/10.1093/acref/9780198614425.001.0001/acref-9780198614425-e-1263>.

mental aptitudes. Additionally, according to Terence Penelhum, Butler's mental and spiritual qualities impressed Queen Caroline. Near the end of her life, she had him administer the sacrament to her on her deathbed in 1737, and asked the King to advance him (Penelhum *Butler* 2). His presence must have exuded moral strength and emotional fortitude for her. Broadly speaking, Butler was enthusiastic to help others make sense of their moral psychology and Christian faith throughout their everyday lives. As a result, since Butler demonstrated the characteristics of an intellectual and spiritual moderator in 1736, it would be strange to find this moderating spirit lacking when he preached at The Rolls Chapel ten years prior.

With these biographical considerations in mind, a few questions are worth considering with respect to the theories of emotions during his time: Was Descartes's theory of passions fully calcified during Butler's time? Were there other competing theories of the passions that Butler could have been engaged with or intrigued by? Indeed, the zeitgeist would at least require an active engagement of opposing philosophical positions regarding the passions. By demonstrating this, it would allow Butler to also be regarded—during his time—as a philosophical moderator on different theories of the passions.

The following chapter aims to return to the Contemporary Butlerian debate regarding the emotions. Is it accurate to accept Newberry's determination that Butler adhered to Descartes's feeling theory of emotions? Were there other theories of the emotion that challenged Descartes's theory? Answering these questions will help to address the meaning and significance of sermon nine, paragraph twenty-seven. To be clear, paragraph twenty-seven comes after paragraphs twenty-two through twenty-six. These paragraphs largely examine the role of inadvertency toward forgiving wrongdoers. Already, investigating the historical circumstances of Butler's appointment and time at the Rolls Chapel has shown how he tailored his sermons to fit his

educated, morally jaded, and even, systemically corrupted congregation. Next, by investigating the historical debate on the emotions, particularly during Butler's time, we will see that there might be more reason to detect *another* reference to inadvertency in paragraph twenty-seven; that is, an inadvertency of the emotions.

CHAPTER FOUR

A MALEBRANCHEAN SUPPLEMENT TO BUTLER'S FURTHER REFLECTIONS: AN INADVERTENCY OF THE EMOTIONS

INTRODUCTION

By the time he gets to paragraph twenty-seven of sermon nine, Butler has already demonstrated the importance of "making allowances for inadvertency, misunderstanding, for the partialities of self-love, and the false light which anger sets things in" (*S* 9.25). He believed the appeal to inadvertency could do four things. First, appealing to inadvertency can help to convince the injured that an injury actually never occurred. Butler realizes that this "might be kindly received, and that people would be glad to find the injury not so great as they imagined" (*S* 9.22). In this circumstance, attending to inadvertency may negate or render the injury null and void, and thus, forgiveness is no longer on the table. Second, appealing to inadvertency may help to convince the injured "that the offense is not so great as they themselves imagine" (*S* 9.22). In these circumstances, inadvertency may help—not to lessen the injury itself—but rather, to help lessen the *severity* of the injury. This would be something along the lines of the phrase, "making a mountain out of a molehill." Maybe the wrongdoer lied or acted in a manipulative way; however, the injury was not as awful as it actually first appears to be. For example, a lie was told to protect them from knowing something that would've caused them to perform poorly on an upcoming job interview or public presentation. Upon acknowledging being lied to, the injured believes the injury to be more devastating than meets the eye. In this circumstance, the injury still remains; however, its severity could be quelled by considering some forgotten details that help justify the lie or manipulative behavior. Third, Butler appeals to inadvertency with regard to the judgments that the injured makes about the wrongdoer. For example, instead of judging the

wrongdoer as a monster, a narcissist, or a manipulative psychopath, the considerations of inadvertency should help to lessen the severity of the character judgments attributed to the wrongdoer. Thus, instead of judging the wrongdoer as an awful human being—in general—the consideration of inadvertency could help to adjust the judgments to something less bleak or damning: the wrongdoer is judged to be forgetful, negligent, and careless. Still, the wrongdoer is maintained as such, and further, the injury still warrants the blame and resentment directed at them. But the appeal to inadvertency may help to replace the wrongdoer as a "moral monster," to a "careless" person. Indeed, these three considerations of inadvertency pertain to the wrongdoer.

Butler proceeds to consider a fourth appeal to inadvertency, on behalf of the injured. He obliges the injured to acknowledge that they could also be judged—by others—to be scornful and malicious. As Butler puts it, "From this proper point of view we should likewise, in all probability, see something of these latter in ourselves" (*S* 9.22). It is probable that the injured has acted maliciously or scornfully to others, at least in some time previously, or even, to make this possible consideration in future relationships. Subsequently, Butler argues that it is more than likely that we—the injured (i.e. ourselves)—have wrongfully acted inadvertently to others before as well. This is what Butler indicates when he writes, "and most certainly a great deal of the former" (*S* 9.22). So, while Butler acknowledges that wrongdoers—and ourselves—are capable of acting with scorn and malice, he is much more willing to emphasize that injuries more than likely involve some degree of inadvertency. An inadvertency may pertain to an aspect of the wrongdoer's carelessness or lack of attention to proper detail. Or, the inadvertency may be caused by a forgetfulness of a detail that should have been remembered. In Butler's view, he indicates inadvertency when he concludes paragraph twenty-two. Self-love has a tendency of magnifying everything that is wrong in others. When this happens, the injured often forgets that

they, too, are wrongdoers, that they, too, are flawed human beings. As a result, Butler encourages the injured to acknowledge that this forgetting often happens when we are injured. The best we can do is to attend to this inadvertency in ourselves. By making these further reflections, Butler hopes to encourage his congregation—and his readers—to forgive *with* emotion. He says this as much in sermon three, paragraph nine, writing that we will eventually "proceed *to some further reflections, which may have a more direct and immediate tendency to beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us*" (*S* 9.22). Therefore, Butler's further reflections oblige the injured to attend to inadvertency, both on behalf of wrongdoers and ourselves. In doing so, Butler hopes to convince his congregation to forgive and love their enemies because this will not only benefit the character of human beings, and the greater community, but it will also, he argues, benefit human beings when they pass away and are judged by God—in the afterlife—as forgivers. By forgiving—in this life—it should help to merit an afterlife of paradise, rather than an afterlife of infinite pain, misery, and suffering.

In spite of making allowances for inadvertency, Butler does not want to oblige the injured to fall into an extreme, hyperbolic doubt concerning the judgment of an injury or the culpability of the offender. The experience of resentment is still legitimate with respect to the injury or fault; however, paying heed to inadvertence is another way to help mitigate resentment from accelerating into abuses of rage, fury, or revenge. In this regard, Butler justifies resentment, while also motivating the injured to take a step *beyond* the resentment that is warranted with respect to the injury.

Since paragraph twenty-seven addresses a further point—derived from the previous five paragraphs that concern an appeal to inadvertency—I intend to develop the view that inadvertency *still* pervades throughout paragraph twenty-seven as well. Rather than discussing an

obligation to attend to any inadvertency regarding the injury itself, the severity of the injury, or even, the judgments directed at the wrongdoer, in his further point, Butler is appealing to an inadvertency of the emotions as another way to forgive.

Although there are some passages where Butler describes an inadvertent behavior regarding the emotions, he does not provide much theoretical support to elaborate on what this could mean, especially with regard to his account of forgiveness. In spite of this limitation, though, there could be another philosopher whose ideas help supplement Butler's insights from sermon nine, paragraph twenty-seven: Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715).

The motivation to investigate Malebranche, as a supplement to Butler's twenty-seventh paragraph, derives from a 2014 anthology of essays from several authors entitled, *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth-Century,* edited by James Harris. Section three of this text concerns "The Passions," and two of the essays historically investigate the main philosophers who helped influence the British philosophical debate on the passions, especially during the first quarter of the eighteenth-century. As Amy Schmitter argues in an essay contributing to Harris's edited volume, "Passions, Affections, Sentiments: Taxonomy and Terminology," contrary to Newberry's view, Descartes's influence (regarding his theory of the passions) was actually fading, especially during the last decade of the seventeenth century and even into the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Instead of Descartes being regarded as *the* prominent theorist on the emotions during Butler's time, Schmitter posits that it was actually Malebranche whose writings were more in vogue (Schmitter "Passions" 200). Derived from this historical accuracy, I was motivated to examine what this influence entailed, and in so doing, to investigate Malebranche's theory of the passions and its *probable* impact on Butler. Since

Malebranche's philosophy exhibited the zeitgeist during the time Butler wrote and preached, it is more probable than not that Butler was exposed to his writings.

In the book, *Conscience, Consciousness and Ethics in Joseph Butler's Philosophy and Ministry*, Bob Tennant consistently maintains that Butler knew Malebranche's writings quite well. For example, while discussing the impact French philosophers had during Butler's time, Tennant writes, "Likenesses and affinities to Pascal have been observed in Butler by other scholars. Since he certainly knew Malebranche he may well also have known Artaud's *Port Royal Logic*, which was so important to recent and contemporary French philosophers" (Tennant 102). Moreover, in another passage, Tennant discusses how Malebranche's writings "reworked Descartes from a Christian perspective in publications known to Butler" (Tennant 84-85). Finally, when briefly discussing Malebranche's ethics, Tennant explains that his fundamental argument was to help filter out errors and the receiving of pre-existing truth (Tennant 85). In a quick, critically passing remark made against Malebranche, located in sermon fourteen, Butler writes, "I am not speaking of any fanciful notion of seeing all things in God; but only representing to you, how much an higher object to the understanding an infinite Being himself is, than the things which he has made" (*S* 14.12). This phrase, "seeing all things in God," is famously attributed to Malebranche, and as a result, writes Tennant, it reveals that "he knew at least *De la recherche de la verité*" (Tennant 85). Butler rejected Malebranche's metaphysical view that the human mind is in God. To the contrary, Butler maintained the view that the human mind is a creation of God's, with affections, passions, and appetites that bear a certain relationship to God, and yet, are still separate from God. Since Butler reflected on some crucial tenets in Malebranche's philosophy, it is also more probable than not that he also reflected on some of his work concerning his theory of the passions.

To clarify, my position is not to demonstrate that Butler was directly influenced by the writings of Malebranche. Rather, my aim is fourfold. First, I want to demonstrate, from a historical vantage point, that Malebranche's theory of the passions was more in vogue—particularly more than Descartes's theory of the passions—during the time Butler thought, wrote, and preached. This historical fact helps to suggest that Malebranche's views likely reverberated—either intentionally or unintentionally—with Butler. Second, as will be demonstrated, Malebranche's theory of the passions demonstrates how the passions may arise *either* voluntarily or involuntarily. This theoretical contribution helps to dismantle Newberry's (and by proxy, Pagani's) position that Butler would have subscribed to the "feeling theory of emotions." In this view, once again, the emotions *only* arise involuntarily, and henceforth, "our control [is] only to effects of the emotion, not to the emotions we have" (Newberry 240). Third, I rely on Malebranche's theory of the passions to further challenge Griswold and Garcia's determination that Butler embraces the "cognitivist theory of emotions." While they are both correct for detecting times, in Butler, when he acknowledged that reason could be the cause that aggravates resentment,[44] they maintained disagreement about whether Butler regarded reason to already constitute the passion (i.e. cognitivist), or if, instead, the passion is caused involuntarily, and, then, reason comes in to act in response. Given the attention and engagement with various theories of the passions—especially as the eighteenth century dawned—it would not be accurate to align Butler to fully embrace either theory of the passions. As a result, it would be more accurate to regard Butler as a thinker who was *mediating* between the feeling theory *and* the cognitivist theory of the passions. Or, at best, Butler could be regarded as a thinker who was

[44] Butler writes, "The only way, in which our reason and understanding can raise anger, is by representing to our mind injustice or injury of some kind or other" (*S* 8.5).

working through something similar to what Griswold identifies as a "quasi-cognitivist" theory of emotions (Griswold 37). Fourth, and finally, with the aid of Malebranche's view that "the passions seek their own justification," I argue that Butler's twenty-seventh paragraph of sermon nine *also* alludes to inadvertency with respect to two distinct passions.

Before developing the view that Malebranche's theory of the passions offers a supplement to understand Butler's twenty-seventh paragraph of sermon nine, however, the analysis now proceeds to directly investigate that paragraph.

"FURTHER": *S* 9.27

To briefly recap, in the five paragraphs before paragraph twenty-seven, the emotions of anger and hatred are discussed. In paragraph twenty-three, Butler examined the emotions of anger, hatred or enmity. In his view, "Anger also, or hatred, may be considered as a false medium of viewing things, which always represents characters and actions much worse than they really are" (*S* 9.23). Consequently, he obliges the injured to attend to any cautions of inadvertency or misunderstanding. These emotions have a tendency to intensify to such a degree that they "lead us into mistakes" (*S* 9.25). Since the emotions can strengthen to such a degree that they represent things as much worse than they really are, Butler obliges the injured to take caution and make allowances for inadvertency or misunderstanding. Therefore, Butler obliges the injured to pay caution to inadvertency because the emotions have a tendency to strengthen or intensify in ways that lead forth to mistakes.

In paragraph twenty-seven, however, Butler makes a turn that gives credit to the strength of the emotions. In this way, he is not obliging the injured to resolutely overcome the emotions. On the contrary, he acknowledges a way for *different* emotions to strengthen themselves, and in

morally effective ways. What is more, these different emotions may also inadvertently interact with each other. Butler writes:

> Further, though injury, injustice, oppression, the baseness of ingratitude, are the natural objects of indignation, or if you please of resentment, as before explained; yet they are likewise the objects of compassion, as they are their own punishment, and without repentance will for ever be so. No one ever did a designed injury to another, but at the same time he did a much greater to himself. If therefore we would consider things justly, such an one is, according to the natural course of affections, an object of compassion, as well as of displeasure: and to be affected really in this manner, I say really, in opposition to shew and pretence, argues the true greatness of mind. We have an example of forgiveness in this way in its utmost perfection, and which indeed includes in it all that is good, in that prayer of our blessed Savior on the cross: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do'[45] (*S* 9.27).

In this paragraph, Butler makes a connection between resentment *and* compassion. These are different affections; however, they both concern the same object(s): injury, injustice, oppression, and the baseness of ingratitude. In Pagani's assessment of Butler, resentment is regarded as a private passion, whereas, compassion is determined as a public passion. Moreover, the private passions and public passions do not mutually inform one another (Pagani 14). As Pagani argues, "This distinction necessarily involves a strict, though often overlooked, separation between the private and public spheres and thus between the emotions and actions that may be deemed applicable and appropriate within each of these spheres respectively" (Pagani 14). Indeed, this

[45] Luke xxxiii.34.

separation played a major role in her justification for why forgiveness has nothing to do with the way we feel.

Contrary to Pagani's view, however, in paragraph twenty-seven, Butler explicitly offers a way for resentment and compassion to mutually inform one another. Since resentment and compassion concern the same object (i.e. injury, injustice, oppression, the baseness of ingratitude), Butler argues that they can mutually inform one another. The relationship between resentment and compassion is also discussed in sermon twelve, "Upon the Love of our Neighbor." In this sermon, Butler explains that two people could have the same degree of compassion, and yet, one person could have a degree of resentment that overpowers compassion more than the other. As he puts it, "though two men should have the affection of compassion in the same degree exactly, yet one may have the principle of resentment or of ambition so strong in him as to prevail that over compassion, and prevent its having any influence upon his actions" (*S* 12.10). Here, what Pagani identified to be separate private and public spheres—compassion and resentment—*do* inform each other, participate and conflict with each other, or even, compete to overpower one over the other to influence a person's actions.

After setting-up the connection between resentment and compassion, Butler proceeds—albeit briefly—to consider the plight of the wrongdoer. Until the wrongdoer(s) repents, they will only continue to endure in punishment, and for the following reasons. First, for being responsible for causing the injury, and second, for avoiding or neglecting to attend to the distresses of the injured. Even though Butler maintains there is no such thing as general ill-will towards others or ill-will towards the self—a general kind that is without cause—the wrongdoer still does a much greater injury to himself for failing to attend to the distresses of the injured. After this brief

consideration, Butler returns to consider the perspective of the injured, and this perspective obliges the injured to appeal to the *natural courses* of resentment and compassion.

Sarah Moses briefly examines paragraph twenty-seven in her 2009 essay, "Keeping the Heart": Natural Affection in Joseph Butler's Approach to Virtue." She writes, "Butler sees no inconsistency in stating that it is 'to the natural course of our affections' that, upon seeing injury done, such injury is the occasion of both resentment and compassion" (Moses 620). When Butler describes "the true greatness of mind," he is making the point that the injury could *really affect* the injured to cause *both* resentment and compassion. Here, Butler is not relying on "the observer's perspectives." Rather, he is relying on the *strength* of the natural course of the affections. The injured could recognize the injury, and express resentment for the injury. At the same time, furthermore, they could also endure in a compassion for the wrongdoer, whose injury will continue to serve the wrongdoer—as their own punishment—at least until the wrongdoer repents.

Butler acknowledged the possibility for the injured to be affected by two different affections, at the same time. From this point, Butler was arguing for an appeal to the moral effectiveness hinged on the strength of the passions. Although Butler acknowledged the principles of reason to be superior to the passions or affections, he also recognized that the passions themselves, or rather, the interplay of the passions (e.g. resentment and compassion) may also be a helpful guide to living virtuously. . This calls attention to the need to explore Butler's understanding of the emotions further, in at least in two ways. First, this indicates an appeal to the *strength* of the natural course of the affections, in a way that motivates the injured to forgive wrongdoers. And secondly, in a similar vein to how Malebranche described the passions, resentment, and compassion could "seek their own justification" (*ST* 399, book five,

chapter eleven).[46] What does it mean for resentment and passion to seek their own justification? In an entry from the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Amy Schmitter describes what Malebranche means. She writes:

> Malebranche insists time and time again that "all the passions seek their own justification" (*ST* V.11, 399). That is, they tend to maintain themselves through a kind of feedback loop that includes the production of judgments that accord with the passion and sustain it: cheerful passions will produce judgments that all is right in the world, whereas dread encourages judgments with the opposite character. Because they offer an alternative source for judgments, the passions can compete with our intellect and override its verdicts. Moreover, the passions draw support from other passions; they "cooperate among themselves," producing self-sustaining complexes and trains of passion (Schmitter *SEP*).

To borrow Schmitter's expression, there is a similar "feedback loop" in the way Butler describes the relationship between resentment, compassion, and finally, the judgment of forgiveness. Butler allows for resentment to draw support from another passion, compassion. These passions cooperate among themselves, strengthen each other, and subsequently, sustain themselves in a way that helps elicit forgiveness.

Indeed, in sermon nine, paragraph twenty-seven, Butler did not explain whether the injured is conscious of one affection *more* than the other one, or whether the affection of resentment could involuntarily arise from the affection of compassion. It is at least conceivable, for the injured to endure in a partly conscious affection of resentment *and* an involuntary

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[46] Malebranche, Nicolas. Lennon, Thomas M., & Olscamp, Paul J. (translators and editors). *The Search after Truth*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.

affection of compassion, or vice versa. In any case, paragraph twenty-seven appeals to an operative relationship between two different affections, their similar objects, and their natural courses. Furthermore, Butler shows how resentment and compassion can get entangled with each other, and subsequently, sustain each other through the judgment of forgiveness.

This is not the only time Butler addresses the complexities of competing emotions throughout *Fifteen Sermons*. Sermons five and six investigate compassion. In the fifth sermon, "Upon Compassion," he also demonstrates a complexity that happens—between two different emotions—that correspond when attending to the distresses of others. This takes us into another feedback loop.

ANOTHER "FEEDBACK LOOP" IN *S* 5.7

In sermon five, paragraph seven, Butler examines the relationship between two different affections in a similar way as he did in sermon nine, paragraph twenty-seven. This passage provides further evidence of a connection, between Butler's analysis of the passions and Malebranche's principle that "all the passions seek their own justification."

As Butler describes it, a partly conscious affection—such as compassion—could give rise to another partly conscious affection—a sense of tranquility or calm satisfaction. He writes:

> Over against the sorrow of compassion is likewise to be set a peculiar kind of satisfaction, which accompanies it […] This tranquility or calm satisfaction proceeds, partly from consciousness of a right affection and temper of mind, and partly from a sense of our own freedom from the misery we compassionate. This last may possibly appear to some at first sight faulty; but it really is not so. It is the same with that positive enjoyment, which sudden ease from pain for the present affords, arising from a real sense

> of misery, joined with a sense of our freedom from it; which in all cases must afford some degree of satisfaction (*S* 5.7).

From this paragraph, Butler describes a complex "feedback loop," involving misery and tranquility. On the one hand, the compassionate person endures in the misery that arises when they are attending to the distresses of others. On the other hand, the compassionate person also experiences a tranquility or calm satisfaction that arises from the sense of freedom devoid of the other's misery. Both of these distinct emotions engage each other in a kind of feedback loop, operating with, richocheting, or getting entangled with each other. . As Butler points out, the cooperation of misery and tranquility may provoke the judgment of fault, particularly because of the "sense of our freedom from the misery we compassionate" (*S* 5.7); however, Butler is quick to assert that the compassionate should not allow this judgment of fault to pervade for long. Instead, he acknowledges that this sense of tranquility is similar to the positive enjoyment that arises when they have succeeded in relieving the distresses of others. In other words, while the feedback loop—between misery and tranquility—tends to justify each other by means of producing the judgement of fault or guilt, Butler clarifies that this tranquility is the same that occurs when the compassionate has succeeded in relieving the distress of others. Thus, these passions can compete with our intellect and override its verdicts.

The feedback loop also demonstrates how a voluntary emotion (i.e. compassion) may come into conflict with an involuntary emotion (i.e. tranquility). Or perhaps, these different affections succeed one another—in a way that renders *vague* any precise determination that they are in control of the agent (e.g. from the standpoint of the cognitivist theorist), or are not in control of the agent (e.g. from the standpoint of the feeling theorist). In any case, Butler's passage demonstrates even greater emotional complexity than the Contemporary Butlerians have

considered. From sermon five, paragraph seven, Butler was willing to examine multiple emotions that could operate with each other, even at the same time.

Before delving into Malebranche's principle that the passions "seek their own justification," however, the contemporary Butlerian debate, regarding the emotions, needs to be summarized. One of the main debates concern whether or not the emotions are caused involuntarily (i.e. feeling theory) or voluntarily (i.e. cognitivist theory). The previous paragraphs seem to indicate a kind of melding together of the feeling *and* cognitivist theories of emotion. As a result, can we more accurately assess whether Butler was "feeling theorist" or a "cognitivist theorist"? Or perhaps, is he a combination of both; that is, as Griswold briefly puts it, is Butler a "quasi-cognitivist" (Griswold 37) theorist of the emotions?

THE NATURAL AFFECTIONS: RETURNING TO THE ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEMPORARY BUTLERIANS

To review a point discussed in chapter two, the Contemporary Butlerians correctly identify the "natural affections" as inherently good because they were implanted into human beings by the Creator. For Newberry, "When an emotional response is keeping with the purpose or end for which the emotion was implanted in us, the response is 'natural'" (Newberry 234 n.5). The natural end of resentment, for example, "is to cause harm—harm to the one who is the emotion's target" (Newberry 235). Moreover, as Garcia explains the natural affection of resentment, "Butler draws a sharp distinction between resentment in its 'original' form, as a natural and innocent passion implanted in us by our creator, and its abuse or wrongful indulgence when it becomes 'evil' and 'quite another thing' from what it was" (Garcia 4). In this regard, the abuses of resentment are vastly different than the natural affections that were instilled by the Creator. This is a point Sarah Moses also elaborates on in her 2009 essay, "Keeping the Heart:

Natural Affection in Joseph Butler's Approach to Virtue," particularly when it concerns Butler's view on the natural affection of compassion.

According to Moses, "Generally speaking, passion, appetite, affection, or desire refers to a propensity that directs humans toward particular objects" (Moses 614). They primarily operate to identify and motivate. This directing propensity *identifies* the particular object someone is aiming to acquire, and it *motivates* people to promote both the good of society and the good for oneself. Moses supports this by quoting from Butler, who writes, "There can be no doubt but that several propensions or instincts, several principles in the heart of man, carry him to society, and to the happiness of it, in a sense and a manner in which no inward principle leads him to do evil" (*S* 2.2). So, while the passions help to identify and motivate attitudes to acquire or avoid, they cannot assess the *means* for obtaining the desired traits. The passions need the higher principles of reason to assess the means for obtaining or avoiding the object(s). To further emphasize this point, Moses locates another passage where Butler points out, "Passion or appetite implies a direct tendency towards such and such objects, without distinction of the means by which they are to be obtained" (*S* 2.2). I might walk past an ice cream stand, for example, and suddenly, I have an appetite for an ice cream cone. The appetite identifies and motivates the object to be obtained (i.e. the ice cream cone); however, reason needs to come in to act as a vehicle to obtain the object (i.e. walk up to the ice cream stand, and order an ice cream cone). The passions need to appeal to the higher principles of reason in order to perform the task of obtaining the objects. As Moses explains, "Passion and affection require these principles because these propensities only direct or motivate us toward objects, but do not tell us when or how to obtain them" (Moses 621). The means for obtaining particular objects rely on the higher principles of human nature, including self-love, benevolence, and the highest principle of authority, conscience.

The natural affections *precede* the abuses of resentment via revenge, rage or fury. To be more precise, they are *different* from the abuses. Moses reiterates a point similar to one Garcia made, writing, "When natural affection is exercised beyond its natural stint and bound, it actually becomes something different from its original nature. When an inherent passion is disproportionate or misdirected, it becomes 'another thing from what it was originally in our nature'"[47] (Moses 619). The natural passions were instilled in human beings, by the creator, whose trajectory is necessarily for the good. In other words, the abuses of the passions are the responsibility of human error, not of the design of the natural passions themselves. Since Butler acknowledges a proper justification of the natural affections, as Newberry correctly points out, "This clearly shows that Butler did not consider forgiveness to be the overcoming of resentment *simpliciter*" (Newberry 236). As a result, Newberry demonstrates Murphy's reading of Butler's definition of forgiveness to be inaccurate.

All of the Contemporary Butlerians (i.e. Newberry, Griswold, Garcia, and Pagani) agree to the view that Butler *never* demanded that resentment had to be extinguished, or even overcome, in order to forgive. The disagreement, however, occurs when it comes to the contributions of the emotions. For Newberry, forgiveness is not a matter of "how we feel," but rather, it is a matter of "how we treat one another" (Newberry 242). In this regard, the emotions are involuntary causes that oblige reason to manage them from becoming abusive (e.g. malice or revenge). If the emotions are properly managed by reason, then forgiveness is an action that has nothing to do with the way the forgiver feels. As long as the agent carries out the *action* of forgiveness, they may still feel resentment. The only effort is for reason to be able to manage or

[47] Moses quotes from Butler, *S* 8.3.

mitigate the emotions. At the end of the day, reason wins out by prevailing in the act of forgiveness.

Garcia disagrees with Newberry's view that forgiveness is *not* about how we feel. His reason why forgiveness *is* about how we feel is the same one that Griswold makes. In regard to Garcia's criticism of Newberry, "[he] ignores Butler's explicit identification of "forgiveness" with having "goodwill" or "benevolence" toward our wrongdoer" (Garcia 6). Indeed, the justification of benevolence takes the discussion all the way back to Butler's "observer perspectives," elaborated on by Griswold, and already discussed in the second chapter. These justifications are correct, insofar as they rely on the strength of the principle of general benevolence; however, as we investigated in chapter three, this account does not fully exhaust Butler's account of forgiveness either because he still proceeded "to *some further reflections, which may have a more direct and immediate tendency to beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us*" (*S* 9.3, his emphasis). To be clear, Butler never overrides the arguments he made previously—those that appeal to the objective theorist or disinterested spectator perspectives. Perhaps, these perspectives help elicit the injured to forgive. These perspectives may forgive wrongdoers in rational and emotionally effective ways. Seeing the wrongdoer as a fellow civilian, for example, *may* be enough to forgive wrongdoers in rational and emotional ways. In spite of these convincing routes to forgiveness, however, Butler still carried onwards to consider another route to forgiveness that dealt more explicitly with matters of human frailty; that is, with inadvertency—both on behalf of wrongdoers and on behalf of ourselves.

Griswold and Garcia are both right to demonstrate that Butler's account of forgiveness

does concern how we *feel*. The emphasis that forgiveness only concerns how we act tends to dismiss or minimize the importance of operating reason and the emotions throughout the process. Butler is keen to demonstrate the crucial relationship between principles of reason and emotions. For example, throughout his fifth sermon, "Upon Compassion," Butler raises concerns about people who refuse or neglect to be compassionate to others. The principles of reason need the help of appetites, passions, and affections to live virtuously. In other words, relying *only* on the principles of reason is not going to be an effective route to living righteously.

In sermon five, Butler raises concerns about "they who have got over all fellow-feeling for others, have withal contracted a certain callousness of heart, which renders them insensible to most other satisfactions, but those of the grossest kind" (*S* 5.8). Without the affections, people would be unwilling to give to charity and refuse genuinely help those in need. Even further, people would become "more cruel and injurious" (*S* 5.9). A certain callousness of the heart would emanate from neglecting to attend to the appetites, passions, and affections of others, especially when it comes to demonstrating compassion to the distressed, miserable, and the economically ravaged. Furthermore, a lack of attention to the appetites, passions, and affections will lead to an inability to properly care for oneself. According to Butler, "The private interest of the individual would not be sufficiently provided for by reasonable and cool self-love alone" (*S* 5.10). The appetites, passions, and affections are, thus, crucial for attending to the nourishment of ourselves *and* others.

Butler stresses that it would be absurd to imagine the improvement or care of the public (i.e. the goodness for society) and the private (i.e. the goodness for the individual) without heeding the appetites, passions, and affections. He writes:

Is it possible any can in earnest think, that a public spirit, i.e. a settled reasonable

> principle of benevolence to mankind, is so prevalent and strong in the species, as that we may venture to throw off the under affections, which are its assistants, carry it forward and mark out particular courses for it; family friends, neighborhood, the distressed, our country? The common joys and the common sorrows, which belong to these relations and circumstances, are as plainly useful to society; as the pain and pleasure belonging to hunger, thirst, and weariness are of service to the individual (*S* 5.10).

Although the appetites, passions, and affections, are lower than the higher principles of reason, they are still massively crucial for helping to identify and motivate our duty to helping others, and, likewise, to helping ourselves. In other words, human beings *must* exhibit the emotions—with the help of the higher principles of reason—to live virtuously. To think that we can only rely on the higher principles of reason to do the compassionate work, so to speak, is an absurdity that will lead to an immoral negligence. Moreover, Butler is keen to acknowledge that human beings do not exude the same degree of strength regarding a settled principle of benevolence to mankind. To be clear, the principle of benevolence is there, and it exists for all human beings; however, it does not maintain the same strength from person to person, or even from group to group. In other sermons, he acknowledges that not all human beings have the same strength between various emotions (e.g. compassion and resentment).

For Butler, all human beings have compassion, along with many other passions naturally implanted by God, such as resentment. However, the strength of these passions may be different from one person to another. For example, in sermon twelve, "Upon the Love of our Neighbor," Butler writes,

> Though two men should have the affection of compassion in the same degree exactly; yet one may have the principle of resentment, or of ambition so strong in him, is to prevail

> over compassion, and prevent its having any influence upon his actions; so that he may deserve the character of an hard or cruel man: whereas the other, having compassion in just the same degree only, yet having resentment or ambition in a lower degree, his compassion may prevail over them, so as to influence his actions, and to denominate his temper compassionate (*S* 12.10).

In this passage, Butler examines the importance of loving our neighbor as we love ourselves. In his view, in order to properly love our neighbor, we must also exhibit a proper and proportionate degree of love to ourselves. Although human beings have been endowed with so many different emotions, the strength of one passion (e.g. resentment) may be so much more prevalent in some people than another passion (e.g. compassion). On the one hand, the proportion of one person's compassion may be stronger than that of resentment. On the other hand, the proportion of another person's resentment may be stronger than that of compassion. In this way, Butler emphasizes that this does not mean one person possesses the principle of compassion or resentment more than another. On the contrary, the proportion of each passion—compassion or resentment—bears a relationship with each other. In other words, human beings have been endowed with resentment and compassion; however, the strength of one overtaking the other depends not on the principles themselves *a priori*, but rather, on how these principles interact—or overtake each other based on strength—with each other *a posteriori*.

In summary, Butler demonstrates the importance of exhibiting a proper and proportionate degree of love for our neighbor, and a proportionate love for ourselves, similarly as he stresses the important role of exhibiting a proper and proportionate degree of compassion for others and ourselves. This relationship also pervades Butler's appeal to inadvertency, both on behalf of others (i.e. wrongdoers) and ourselves (i.e. the injured) (*S* 9.22). With so much concern for the

interaction and degree of strength amongst the various passions—and their meaningful relationship with the higher principles of reason—what degree of control do we have over the passions? Indeed, even though it has been demonstrated that Butler went further—in his further reflections—to address another route to forgiveness (one that appeals to inadvertency to elicit another emotional kind of forgiveness), that discourse has yet to examine Butler's theory of the passions. Do his further reflections derive from a cognitivist or a feeling theory of emotions? Or perhaps, did Butler's account of forgiveness operate between both theories of the passions? Subsequently, in the following section, we will briefly recapitulate the debate—amongst the Contemporary Butlerians—and then, proceed to investigate answers to these questions.

WHAT COULD A "QUASI-COGNITIVIST" THEORY OF THE EMOTIONS BE IN EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BRITISH PHILOSOPHY?

In chapter two, it was demonstrated that Newberry's 2001 essay, "Joseph Butler on Forgiveness: A Presupposed Theory of Emotion," sprang forth from a debate on the theory of emotions Butler's account of forgiveness was operating with. This debate began with Newberry, criticizing Murphy's assumption, that Butler's account of forgiveness supports the cognitivist theory of emotions. As Newberry explains, the "cognitivists generally grant a much broader range of control over their emotions than do feeling theorists. Agents have control over their emotions insofar as they hold some control over their cognitive states" (Newberry 240). Admittedly, the extent to which agents *do* have control carries significant conflict within the cognitivist theory, and Newberry briefly acknowledges this (Newberry 240).[48] But nevertheless,

[48] Newberry writes, "William Lyons takes a conservative view, denying direct control over the emotions but conceding our ability to indirectly influence them, while Robert Solomon represents a much more radical view, contending that we choose our emotions" (Newberry 240-241).

cognitivist theorists consider the emotions to have a much more active role with reason than the feeling theorists do. For example, the fear that arises—like when a hiker spots a black bear in a forest—will already correspond with certain kinds of beliefs that are largely under the control of the agent. In other words, the cause of the emotion of fear is already imbued with rational content that derives from knowledge about bears in general.

Newberry *opposes* the view that Butler would have accepted the cognitivist theory of emotions. As he summarizes, the predominant theory during Butler's time was the feeling theory of emotions (Newberry 239), a theory he links to ideas found in René Descartes's 1650 posthumously published text, *The Passions of the Soul*. For Descartes, the passions incite the will to preserve or improve the body. In this way, the passions happen involuntarily. The effects of the passions, however, *are* within the active frame of reason. This distinction—between the involuntary causes of a passion and the voluntary effects—prompts Newberry to determine this to be the main description for the feeling theory of emotions.

The feeling theory maintains the following: "emotions (as feelings) are involuntary and thereby outside of our control because we are passive recipients of feelings. However, agents do possess some degree of control over the causal chain of emotion" (Newberry 239). Beliefs, evaluations, perceptions, or judgments are the causes of the emotion, and subsequently, desires and actions are their effects. With this in mind, the feeling theorists determine the emotions to be caused by an involuntary motion of the body. This bodily motion signals to the mind (i.e. the pineal gland) to take action. In concluding his summary of the feeling theory of emotions, Newberry writes:

> Descartes suggests that our passions simply happen to us (how we feel is not within our control) but the actions resulting from emotion are distinguished from the emotion itself

> and are within our control. Feeling theory thus relegates out control only to effects of the emotion, not to the emotions we have (Newberry 240).

To sum up, the feeling theory of emotions supports the view that the passions arise involuntarily. They simply *happen to us*. The hiker's sudden fear —when spotting the black bear in a forest— is entirely involuntary. However, the action—of carefully moving away from the location of the bear or deciding to play dead—*is* within the rational control of the hiker. In other words, the passion of fear is passive, and subsequently, the rational action is active.

Griswold opposes Newberry's position, saying that it would not make sense for Butler "to commend something which is not in an agent's power to do, viz. subdue an emotion by changing his [the agent's] understanding of its appropriateness, proportionality, or what have you" (Griswold 36-37). Moreover, as Griswold accurately points out, there *are* times when Butler identified reason to be the direct *cause* of resentment, and thus, resentment is already constitutued as rational. For example, Butler asserts that reason "can raise anger" by "representing to our mind injustice or injury of some kind or other" (Griswold 37).[49] From this passage, reason can precisely constitute the emotion of resentment.[50] In other words, resentment did not first arise non-rationally, and then, the following action is imbued with reason. This helps support the view that Butler's theory of the emotions runs closer to the cognitivist theory.

Finally, Ernesto Garcia agrees with Griswold for identifying Butler as a cognitivist theorist of the emotions. Garcia writes:

> On Butler's view, forgiveness is not just a matter of "how we treat one another" but also

[49] Griswold quotes from Butler, *S* 8.5.
[50] Pagani also acknowledges Griswold for detecting this passage from Butler (Pagani 17).

> "how we feel." That is, we must develop what Butler calls a "right temper of mind" and be "affected" towards our wrongdoers in the same way any disinterested third party would be in the sense of having basic "goodwill" or "benevolence" (Garcia 6).

Garcia emphasizes the view that Butler's account of forgiveness concerns how we treat each other *and* how we feel. This gives the emotions *some* weight in the process of forgiveness. When Griswold and Garcia *do* develop how forgiveness concerns "how we feel," however, they only accept the emotions in a limited capacity. In this regard, reason must still remain superior over the passions. For example, resentment must not become *too* strong due to the risk that it could motivate the injured to deliberately abuse the emotion (e.g. rage, fury, or revenge). Henceforth, Griswold and Garcia do acknowledge the moral effectiveness of resentment in Butler's account of forgiveness; however, only to a managed degree. By appealing to the "observer's perspectives," resentment must still be minimized in *strength*, particularly by appealing to the higher authority of the general principle of benevolence.

Griswold and Garcia, therefore, appear to be successful in defeating Newberry's argument that attributes Butler's account of forgiveness to support the feeling theory of emotions. And yet, at the end of his chapter, "Bishop Butler's Seminal Analysis," Griswold briefly touches on the idea that Butler would have likely accepted a "quasi-cognitivist" theory of emotions. What does this mean? Griswold only briefly touches on this idea. The emotion of resentment could evaporate in various ways. For example, the injured may have mistaken the identity of the wrongdoer. Or perhaps, the injury is no longer perceived to be not as grievous as it was originally considered. These "cognitive emendations," as Griswold calls them, may take time to settle down the resentment, and furthermore, they "may take significant effort on the agent's part." Finally, the emotion of resentment often corresponds to a "brute sting of pain"

(Griswold 37), and this obviously carries a physiological component concerning resentment. With these final reflections considered, Griswold briefly modifies his position. In the following passage, he dilutes his position a bit, going from determining Butler as a "cognitivist theorist," to positing that he is more likely a "quasi-cognitivist." As Griswold puts it, "An emotion such as resentment is quasi-cognitive; we do not credit it to pre-linguistic humans, which suggests that it includes beliefs (whose content can be stated propositionally). But it is also an affective, bodily state" (Griswold 37). In this final point, Griswold determines Butler to argue for a theory of emotions that incorporates both a bodily (i.e. involuntary or passive) feature *and* a feature that involves beliefs (i.e. activity or voluntary). Thus, the emotions could arise from voluntary and/or involuntary factors.

Instead of delving further into this quasi-cognitivist theory, however, Griswold's analysis of Butler concludes, and subsequently, he moves onto another topic to consider in the following chapter on forgiveness. In spite of Griswold's brief description, could such an insight be developed further? Was there a kind of "quasi-cognitive" theory of the emotions during the time Butler wrote and preached, and—if yes—what would it look like? In attempting to go further, and investigating for answers, another philosopher has played a significant role in British thinking about the emotions. This thinker is not René Descartes, however. On the contrary, as this investigation now turns to examine, Descartes's theory of the passions was actually no longer in vogue in Britain, especially during the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

A THEORETICAL SHIFT IN THEORIES OF THE PASSIONS AT THE TURN OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: FROM DESCARTES TO MALEBRANCHE

Many writers have investigated eighteenth-century theories of the passions, including

Amy Schmitter, James A. Harris, Susan James, Sean Greenberg, and Elizabeth Radcliffe.[51] As they have detected, the eighteenth century was shifting away from the hopefulness that emanated from the age of reason. In particular, they were investigating the potential moral benefits of the emotions. In the essay, "The Government of the Passions," James A. Harris writes:

> It is no exaggeration to say that writers in eighteenth-century Britain were obsessed with the passions and their government. What used to be called 'the age of reason' was, it is now commonplace to remark, really the age of intense interest in non-rational, even anti-rational, aspects of human nature. By the end of the seventeenth-century, it was no longer taken for granted that our passions are predominantly destructive and dangerous (Harris "The Government of the Passions" 270).

In a broad sense, Britain, and much of Europe, was engaged in a heavy debate about the government of the passions. This debate called into question the once held assumption that the passions were anti-rational aspects of human nature. In a more particular sense, Butler's *Fifteen Sermons* are no exception to the growing attention to the moral contributions of the passions. In the book, *The Eighteenth-Century Pulpit: A Study of the Sermons of Butler, Berkeley, Sterne, Whitefield and Wesley*, James Downey also helps to elucidate Butler's attitude, writing, "For Butler the optimism of the age of reason wore thin, possibly because reason itself no longer seemed all-sufficient" (Downey 43). Of course, Butler was not steadfastly opposed to reason. He

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[51] Schmitter, Amy M. "Passions, Affections, Sentiments: Taxonomy and Terminology." Harris, James A. "The Government of the Passions." Harris, J. A. (editor). *The Oxford Handbook of British Philosophy in the Eighteenth-Century*. Oxford University Press, 2014. James, Susan. (2003). *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*. Clarendon Press. Greenberg, Sean. (2010). "Malebranche on the Passions: Biology, Morality and the Fall." *British Journal for the History of Philosophy 18 (2),* pgs. 191-207.
Radcliffe, Elizabeth S. (2019). "Ruly and Unruly Passions: Early Modern Perspectives." *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement, 85*, 21–38.

still held reason to be the highest authoritative faculty of human nature. Moreover, when it came to forgiveness, he still appealed to reason via the general principle of benevolence and the impact of the "observer's perspectives" to help support the strength of that reason. In spite of the appeal to the authority of reason, however, Butler was still unable to rest assured. As Downey elucidates, "Though not wishing to vitiate reason's importance as a guide to human behavior, Butler's scrupulous honesty will not permit equivocation" (Downey 47). In this regard, Butler maintained reason to be the most authoritative aspect of human nature. And yet, he was also willing to consider some anti-rationalist features in his thinking, writing, and preaching.

Due to his growing influence, particularly in Britain, Malebranche is the most likely candidate who helped contribute to the discourse on taking the passions more seriously. To consider this from Newberry's historical position, we might ask if Malebranche was simply another Cartesian who acquiesced to the dominance of his feeling theory of emotions. According to Oxford professor, Peter Millican, Malebranche was a follower of Descartes, and hence, a Cartesian. "But, someone who went very much out on his own."[52] Malebranche's desire to go "very much out on his own" clearly had an impact on British thinkers, and one such impact included the discourse on the passions. To be clear, as the engagement with Descartes was fading—at least between the 1690s and 1720s—the reception of Malebranche was flourishing.

In what ways did Malebranche follow and deviate from Descartes? To begin with, Malebranche accepted many of Descartes' views about the passions. As Susan James elucidates in her book, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, Descartes and Malebranche aimed to "interpret the passions by placing them within a wider account of the

[52] Millican, Peter. "2.5 Nicolas Malebranche and George Berkeley," Lecture at the University of Oxford. Link: https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/25-nicolas-malebranche-and-george-berkeley

soul and its relation to the body" (James 85). Malebranche accepted Cartesian dualism as a way to frame the interpretation of the passions. Moreover, in the essay, "Ruly and Unruly Passions: Early Modern Perspectives," Elizabeth Radcliffe writes, "Philosophers were preoccupied with the role of physiology in the production of the passions and their effects. This is a theme that Descartes and Malebranche share" (Radcliffe 24). Many of Descartes's insights—regarding the causes of the emotions—concerned a meticulous description of the bodily impulses that occurred and gave rise to an emotion. Indeed, much of Malebranche's analysis also follows the same trajectory.

In at least two major ways, Descartes and Malebranche share similar theories of the passions. Sean Greenberg also elaborates on these similarities in the essay, "Malebranche on the Passions: Biology, Morality, and the Fall." First, they agreed on the account of the mind and body as separate substances. Second, they both accepted the view that the "function of the passions is to promote the survival of the body" (Greenberg 191).[53] What marks Malebranche's theory of the passions unique, according to both Greenberg and James, entails his effort to synthesize the philosophy of Descartes and Augustine. Although Malebranche agreed with the Cartesian account that determined that the passions function primarily to promote the survival of the body, he *also* appealed to Augustinian idea that the passions have their source in the soul, and thus, they are acts of the will. Consequently, Malebranche sought to further extrapolate on how the "passions include movements of the will" (Greenberg 199). In this regard, the passions have a voluntary function with respect to moving the will *to* will.

[53] In *The Passions of the Soul*, Descartes confirms the natural use of the passions "is to incite the soul to consent and contribute to actions that can serve to preserve the body or render it more perfect in some way" (*PS* 92).

According to James's investigation of Malebranche's theory of the passions, there is an inactive function of the passions, identified as the "inclination to love our body and all that is useful in its preservation" (James 111). When it comes to this mechanized description—concerning the preservation and love for the body—Malebranche is following Descartes's feeling theory of emotions, as described by Newberry, "the passions simply happen to us (how we feel is not within our control)" (Newberry 240). Malebranche does not only rely on Descartes's theory of the passions, however. From his influence of Augustine, Malebranche also considered a second inclination: "the natural inclination towards the good in general that God continually impresses on us" (James 111). Indeed, this natural inclination is identified in the same way as Butler's explanation of the natural courses of the passions. Since the passions were instilled in human beings by God, they necessarily serve a function to the good. Malebranche identifies this natural inclination as a movement of the will.

Malebranche's theory relies on the premise that God instilled human beings with a will that naturally functions towards the good in general. This natural function of the will cannot be reduced strictly to an involuntary function because the passions *move* the will to take voluntary action.[54] As a result, in Malebranche's theory of the passions, first, there is an inactive function of the impulse to love and protect the body, and second, there is an active function of the will—instilled in human beings from God—whose inclination is towards the good in general. As James summarizes, "The soul perceives—it receives representations which provide it with a stock of ideas—and the will is able to call up particular ideas from this stock. Its function, however, is not merely to contemplate perceptions but to respond to them" (James 111). The lines between

[54] James goes into a deeper analysis on how the passions also exude some voluntary and involuntary functions, even in Descartes's theory of the passions. This would also challenge Newberry's assessment of Descartes's theory of emotions. See pages 87-108.

voluntary and involuntary are muddied here. The soul perceives representations, involuntarily, but it also must move the will to respond to them, and with a voluntary function. Such a crisscross of voluntary and involuntary functions calls into question Newberry's assessment of the feeling theory of emotions, at least as the debate endured from Malebranche onwards into the British discourse during Butler's time.

To sum up, although there *is* a natural inclination (i.e. an active movement of the will) for the good in general, the will is also inevitably connected to the body, and therefore, it is subject to error. According to Greenberg, "It is *because* the passions normally function to preserve the body that they dispose agents to make errors about their truth good: on account of the Fall, passions lead agents to make (mis)take things that are merely good for the body as their true good " (Greenberg 192, his emphasis). For Malebranche, the passions were naturally designed to function towards the good in general; however, since they are connected to the body, they are subject to glitches or abuses. Drawing from the writings of Augustine, he concludes that the acquiring of moral knowledge inevitably misses the mark because human beings—those who think they have achieved moral knowledge—must be reminded of their corrupted faculties (derived from the Christian doctrine of the Fall). Consequently, human beings should not *always* allow their passions to take priority on actions because they tend to lead to abuses, in the same vein that Butler describes the abuses of resentment (e.g. rage, fury, peevishness or revenge).

In contrast, although James grants that Descartes also considered the passions to move the will, "there is nothing in his account of the passions themselves to explain why this should be so, other than the claim that they monitor our well-being. Malebranche, by contrast, builds these aspects of the passions into his analysis" (James 115). Thus, James determines Descartes's account of the passions to *primarily* concern the preservation of one's body. Malebranche

inherits this account, and yet, he pushes further. In Malebranche's view, more importantly, the will is continuously searching for the good and examining the causes of error.

Since Malebranche's theory of the passions corresponds with the respective views of Descartes and Augustine, the passions are described with both involuntary *and* voluntary features. To sum up, the involuntary feature concerns the reception of sensations. The voluntary feature concerns the movement of the will whose natural inclination is an obligation to search for the good that is the will's essence. However, James makes a further point that distinguishes Malebranche from Descartes's theory of the passions. Although Malebranche determined the passions to concern the survival or maintenance of the body, in agreement with Descartes's assessment, he also explains a way for the passions to exhibit inadvertent communications; that is, for the benefit of the greater social good. To provide my own example, eight people are hiking through a thick forest. All of a sudden, one of the hikers gasps and stops, open-mouthed. The hiker's facial expression is frozen, staring at the preying glance of a mountain lion standing twenty yards ahead of them. The rest of the hiking group notices these facial expressions, and subsequently, they freeze as well. The facial expression, thus, communicates something to the rest of the group. Not only does the expression communicate the distress of the situation, but it also demonstrates a demand to take action in response.

The sudden fear at the sight of the mountain lion leads to involuntary facial expressions of fright or dread. These expressions inevitably communicate a sense of danger to the rest of the hiking group. As James summarizes, the passions do not *only* act to preserve the body of the hiker, but they also promote the good of the collective. In James's investigation, therefore, the idea that the passions *also* concern the collective good is a unique position regarding Malebranche's account that Descartes's theory does not develop.

For Malebranche, the movement of the will cannot always grasp the operations concerning the defenses of the body and the communication to others in their bodily preservation. In this way, the movements of the will are also subject to disorders and limitations of power. As James points out, Malebranche tends to carry a more pessimistic view than Descartes, particularly about the way human beings are able to control or adequately manage their passions. She writes:

> Malebranche here seems to interpret the disorder of the human will as a limit on its power, and in doing so offers a more pessimistic picture than the Cartesian one of our capacity to control our passions. Although Descartes is not exactly sanguine about our prospects, he cautiously inclines to the view that there is a sense in which all our passions lie within our power (James 122).

With this brief summary, Malebranche was intrigued by Descartes's optimism to control the passions, and yet, he also appealed to an Augustinian pessimism concerning the limitations of the will to control or grasp the passions. This analysis calls into question Newberry's assessment, especially regarding the view that Descartes's theory of the passions flourished throughout Butler's time. Given the internal debate, it also thwarts the view that the feeling theory of emotions was a fully calcified theory. Instead of regarding the passions to *only* be involuntary and thereby outside of our control, Malebranche's view entails a more complicated relationship between the involuntary *and* voluntary features of the emotions. This facet reduces the crux of Newberry's argument, especially as he emphasized the view that Butler would have judged the emotions to be merely involuntary or passive.

Although the differences between Malebranche and Descartes have received scholarly attention, it still needs to be shown that Malebranche's theory had considerable influence during

Butler's time, especially within Britain. To be clear, my aim here is not to argue that Butler was a rigorous scholar of Malebranche. Rather, the fact that Malebranche's work was engaged with, especially during the time Butler wrote and preached, challenges Newberry's presumption that Descartes was *the* predominant theorist on the passions. The fact of the matter is the following: Malebranche's theory of the passions was in the zeitgeist. A thinker, writer, and preacher like Butler would have been exposed to debates regarding Malebranche's views on the passions (either from the writings themselves or from his contemporaries). Subsequently, this engagement would have played some role in the way Butler thought about the passions, either directly or indirectly. To support this historical accuracy, the discussion now moves onto explaining Malebranche's influence in Britain throughout the 1690s and 1720s.

ENGAGING MALEBRANCHE IN EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BRITAIN

In her 2013 essay, "Passions, Affections, Sentiments: Taxonomy and Terminology," Amy Schmitter acknowledges the influence of Descartes's *The Passions of the Soul,* especially throughout the second half of the seventeenth century, further adding, "but [it] waned in the eighteenth century" (Schmitter "Passions" 200). To help support this historical claim, she references several eighteenth-century writers who investigated the passions; however, they did not actively engage with Descartes's text. These writers include Francis Hutcheson, John Norris, Mary Astell, John Bethune, Ralph Cudworth, Henry More, and Adam Smith (Schmitter "Passions" 200). Contrary to Newberry's belief that Descartes's theory of the passions was front and center, these writers were more impacted by Malebranche's theory of the passions. As Schmitter emphasizes, "Yet if Descartes's reputation faded, Malebranche's importance spread (Schmitter "Passions" 200). The evidence of Malebranche's popularity within English intellectual circles—especially between the 1690s and 1720s—is also examined in Charles

McCracken's 1983 book, *Malebranche and British Philosophy*.

According to McCracken's text, the acceleration of interest in Malebranche is confirmed by the unprecedented quantity of English translations that were published over a short period. Malebranche published his famous text, *De la recherche de la vérité*, in 1674-75. Although the first English translation of this text, *The Search after Truth*, was not published until 1694, it had already been studied by some prominent English thinkers, even during the latter half of the 1670s.[55] Readers of Malebranche also included James II and theologians Thomas Taylor and John Wesley. Philosopher Mary Astell defended Malebranche's theory of love in *The Christian Religion, as profess'd by a Daughter of the Church of England* (London, 1705)" (McCracken 5-6). Poet Elizabeth Thomas (also known by the name "Corinna") "learned French in order to read Malebranche's works in the original, and defended his views about the love of God" (McCracken 6) in opposition to those who defended Locke's views. The list follows onwards to John Toland, William Molyneux (friend of John Locke), and two of Butler's close friends, Samuel Clarke and George Berkeley. As Radcliffe briefly points out, "the view that morality consists of necessary relations discovered by reason was first advocated by Malebranche, and then embraced by Ralph Cudworth and Samuel Clarke" (Radcliffe 27). Indeed, the impact his work had on Clarke suggests that he would have obliged Butler to engage with Malebranche's philosophy.[56] Finally, according to McCracken, "One of Trinity College's brightest students,

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[55] McCracken writes, "Actually Malebranche was already known to some in Britain in the 1670s as is clear from the correspondence of Leibniz, Oldenburg, Wallis and Vaughan" (McCracken 18 n.81).

[56] In *Fifteen Sermons*, Butler *did* make a passing critical remark about a phrase attributed to Malebranche. In sermon fourteen, "Upon the Love of God," he writes, "It is nothing to observe that our senses give us but imperfect knowledge of things: effects themselves, if we knew them thoroughly, would give us but imperfect notions of wisdom and power; much less of his Being, in whom they reside. I am not speaking of any fanciful notion of *seeing all things in God*; but only representing to you, how much an higher object to the understanding an infinite Being

George Berkeley, poured over *The Search*, recording some of his reflections on it in the notebooks in which he was working out his ideas (i.e. the *Commonplace Book* or *Philosophical Commentaries*)" (McCracken 10). These contemporaries of Butler, therefore, help bolster the likelihood that Malebranche's philosophy had some impact in the way Butler thought, wrote, and preached at the Rolls Chapel.

McCracken confirms the expansion of British interest in Malebranche, from numerous social strata, writing, "His admirers ranged from a deposed English king who made France his home to defrocked French priests who made England theirs, from London booksellers to Oxford dons, from ladies who wrote essays on divinity to soldiers who had a penchant for metaphysics" (McCracken 156). As a result, Malebranche's philosophy became prominent within British intellectual circles, particularly from the mid-1690s and into the first quarter of the eighteenth century.

The engagement of Malebranche's work is corroborated with the growing English translations of many of his texts. In the same year *The Search after Truth* was published in English, his theological work, *Traité de la nature et de la grâce*, was also translated into English. The following year, *Christian Conferences: Demonstrating the Truth of the Christian Religion and Morality*, was published, along with many of his polemical writings and replies to skeptical writers such as Simon Foucher and Le Jesuit Le Valois. Le Vassor published a biography of him,

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himself is, than the things which he has made: and this is no more than saying, that the Creator is superior to the works of his hands" (*S* 14.12, emphasis added). Moreover, in the Editor's Notes, McNaughton writes, '…seeing all things in God': Butler may well be referring here to Malebranche" (McNaughton 181 n.14.12). To avoid a lengthy metaphysical digression, however, I chose not to elaborate further on this matter, at least within the confines of this project. This reference may offer an opportunity for another research venture concerning Butler's passing criticism of Malebranche's dictum. Robert B. Louden's essay, "Butler's Divine Utilitarianism," would be a good reference to begin unpacking such a debate.

in English, that "was highly favorable to Malebranche—of his famous controversies with Antoine Arnauld and Pierre-Sylvain Regis" (McCracken 8). Finally, McCracken emphasizes that the interest of translating Malebranche's writings was unprecedented. He concludes this point, writing, "The upshot of this flurry by the translators was that more of Malebranche's works were translated into English between 1694 and 1700 than were ever to be translated into any other language" (McCracken 9). The growth of these translations would have residuals for many English-speaking intellectuals, including Irish philosopher Francis Hutcheson (1694-1746), whose writings on the passions relied on many of Malebranche's insights.

According to Schmitter, by the end of the seventeenth century, the majority of philosophical discourses on the passions no longer relied on "a list of eleven passions, an enumeration stemming from Aristotle, though often attributed to Aquinas" (Schmitter "Passions" 199). These eleven included "the concupiscible" passions (i.e. love, hate, desire, aversion, joy, and sadness), along with "the irascible" passions (i.e. hope, despair, fear, daring, and anger). As Schmitter summarizes, during the turn of the eighteenth century, however, the division of the concupisciple and the irascible passions was no longer in vogue. Theorists tended to prefer reducing or simplifying the number of passions worth examining. Thus, "the enumeration of six passions derived from the concupiscible remained popular. Hutcheson borrows it for his *Essay*[57], where he credits Malebranche; it seems to have spread from there (e.g. Bethume 1770)" (Schmitter "Passions" 199). Moreover, Charles McCracken echoes this impact, writing, "Both Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith endorsed Malebranche's view that 'the passions all justify themselves,' and Hutcheson commended to his readers Malebranche's subtle division of the

[57] Hutcheson, Francis. *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections* (London, first published in 1728). Indeed, this is just two years after the second edition of Butler's *Fifteen Sermons* was published.

passions" (McCracken 17). In this regard, Malebranche's examination on the passions, particularly regarding the reduced number of passions to examine, and the dictum that "all the passions seek their own justification," played a role in many of Hutcheson's writings.

In 1725, Hutcheson published *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue*. This was shortly before Butler's *Fifteen Sermons* were first published, and one year before Butler published his second edition. David McNaughton, editor of the 2017 Oxford publication of *Fifteen Sermons,* maintains that this work—along with *An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections, with Illustrations of the Moral Sense* (1725)—most likely had an influence on Butler (McNaughton 194). As McNaughton writes, "Although Butler never mentions Hutcheson explicitly, there can be little doubt that Butler took his work into account, especially in his later work" (McNaughton 195). Furthermore, as McNaughton underscores, both of these works would have been out by the time Butler wrote the Preface to the second edition of *Fifteen Sermons* (published in 1729). In the Preface, Butler *does* briefly mention various treatises on the passions; however, he does not identify the writers of the treatises. In paragraph thirteen, he explains that several perceptions are routinely felt or spoken of; however, it often comes to the fore that they are not easy to explicate or distinguish from the others. Thus, broadly speaking, the clear demonstration of an idea or perception is often a difficult venture. Butler writes:

> The many treatises upon the passions are a proof of this; since so many would never have undertaken to unfold their several complications, and trace and resolve them into their principles, if they had thought what they were endeavoring to shew was obvious to everyone who felt and talked of these passions (*S* P.13).

By this time, Butler *was* aware of Hutcheson's treatises on the passions, and thus, he is likely

offering a veiled reference to him. Moreover, since Hutcheson relied a great deal on Malebranche's theory of the passions, the veiled reference would also—at least by proxy—be attributed to Malebranche. According to Jeffrey Barnouw's 1992 essay, "Passion as 'Confused' Perception or Thought in Descartes, Malebranche, and Hutcheson," the manner in which Hutcheson distinguishes the passions from the affections is largely derived from Malebranche's work. On the one hand, similarly to Malebranche, Hutcheson identifies the passions to concern any "confused sensation" of pleasure or pain, occasioned or attended by the violent motions of the body. Any sensation, caused from the bodily impulses, is confused because "the very involvement of the body (in an agitation of animal spirits), that makes passion an obstacle to human knowledge and autonomy" (Barnouw 397). In sum, the passions are marked as violent, confused sensations connected with bodily motions. Then, on the other hand, the affections arise from a natural apprehension of good or evil. In this way, the affections are connected to a rational assessment of good or evil, whereas, the passions are regarded as "confused" sensations derived from the movements of the body.

Relying on insights from Malebranche, Hutcheson also regards the affections to contribute both to self-love *and* benevolence to others. Going back to a previous example, the hiker who gasps—at the sight of a dangerous predator in the forest—is aiming to preserve his or her body (i.e. self-love) while also commanding the rest of the hiking group to follow suit (i.e. benevolence). As Barnouw writes, "The arguments he [Hutcheson] offers seem to come from Malebranche, that hunger and pain are well suited to the preservation of our bodies, while the natural affection for offspring […] must help preserve the species" (Barnouw 419). To regard an affection of self-love to already imply an affection of benevolence is something Butler also supports. In the latter stages of the Preface, for example, he argues that the affections from self-

love also tend to affections from benevolence. In paragraph forty-two of the Preface, Butler makes reference to another point he makes in sermon twelve, writing, "we are commanded to love our neighbor *as ourselves*" (*S* 12.5).[58] In this way, the affections indicate a kind of feedback loop between self-love and benevolence.

"ALL THE PASSIONS SEEK THEIR OWN JUSTIFICATION"

In *The Search after Truth*, Malebranche explicitly discusses the dictum, "all the passions seek their own justification," throughout Book Five: "The Passions," chapters ten, eleven and twelve. The first time it comes up is located in chapter ten. Malebranche writes:

> The passions all seek their own justification; they unceasingly represent to the soul the object agitating it in the way most likely to maintain and increase its agitation. The judgment or the perception causing the agitation is strengthened to the extent that the passion increases, and the passion increases to the extent that the judgment producing it is in turn strengthened (*ST* V.10, 397).

As Malebranche describes, a judgment or perception could cause the agitation of the passions. For example, the judgment, "I am optimistic," lends forth to an aggravation of an optimistic passion. My body feels lighter, I am breathing calmly, my heart-rate is moving at a healthy pace, and so on. In this regard, the judgment is voluntary, and subsequently, the bodily impulses ensue. Or rather, my bodily impulses could be caused involuntarily. My calm breathing and relaxed

[58] In the Preface, Butler writes, "For, if there be any principles or affections in the mind of man distinct from self-love, that the things those principles tend towards, or that the objects of those affections are, each of them, in themselves eligible, to be pursued upon its own account, and to be rested in as an end, is implied in the very idea of such principle or affection" (*S* P.42). For Butler, virtue is not to be pursued as an end for itself. On the contrary, virtue pertains to affections that already imply the principles of self-love and benevolence.

heart-rate could elicit the following judgment, “I am optimistic.” In either example, the passions seek their justification. The agitation of the passions could arise voluntarily or involuntarily, and in so doing, they demand their own justification insofar as they are preserved or enhanced. The passions, therefore, have a connection to matters of *strength*. In other words, the judgments that produce the passions tend to increase the passions. When someone judges, “I am resentful at my neighbor,” then this judgment tends to further aggravate the resentment. Indeed, Butler addressed this relationship in a similar way with regard to the passions of resentment and compassion.

To apply this to Butler’s account of forgiveness, the passion of resentment could first derive from the judgment or perception of an injury. Subsequently, the passion of resentment strengthens, to such an extent that it also enhances the judgment of the injury. This is what Butler identifies as “settled and deliberate” resentment (*S* 8.4). Or, secondly, the resentment could derive from an instinctual response to hurt or pain. Butler identifies this as “hasty and sudden” resentment (*S* 8.5). In this way, resentment could be constituted rationally. In another way, it could be constituted as an instinctual response to harm. Now, in regard to the feedback loop of the passions seeking their own justification, Butler indicates a feedback loop, especially between the passions of resentment and compassion. These distinct passions could conflict with each other to justify themselves toward producing judgments. In sermon twelve, Butler writes:

> In the inward frame the various passions, appetites, affections, stand in different respects to each other. The principles in our mind may be contradictory, or checks and allays only, or incentives and assistants to each other. And principles, which in our nature have no kind of contrariety or affinity, may yet accidentally be each other’s allays or incentives (*S* 12.9).

In this passage, Butler demonstrates that many passions which seem contrary to each other—

resentment and compassion—could accidentally work with each other, and even in surprising ways. This accidental operation of contrary passions indicates the operation of inadvertency. The passions may assist each other due to the agent's carelessness or lack of attention to detail. Or rather, they may assist each other due to their inability to remember. The injured could experience resentment and compassion, directed at the wrongdoer, and, at the same time, forget precisely why they are experiencing these contrary passions. The injured might declare, "I cannot remember why I became so entangled in these passions. But, for some reason, they were aiding me to forgive the wrongdoer." Subsequently, the passions sought justification in the judgment of forgiveness. Indeed, this is what Amy Schmitter describes as the 'feedback loop' that occurs between various passions.

The dictum that the passions all seek their own justification runs close to Griswold's determination of a "quasi-cognitivist" theory of the emotions. An emotion like resentment "includes beliefs (whose content can be stated propositionally). But it also is an affective, bodily state" (Griswold 37). Or rather, as Malebranche elucidates, "All our passions depend on the fermentation and circulation of the blood" (*ST* V.10, 397). With this bodily contribution taking effect, Malebranche's account of the passions involves a feedback loop between bodily motions *and* judgements or perceptions. On the one hand, the feedback loop could begin from a judgment or perception that causes the bodily motions to occur. On the other hand, the loop could begin from a bodily motion that causes the judgment or perception to occur.

In Book Five, chapter eleven, Malebranche insists that the passions rely on each other to be preserved or strengthened. As he writes, "But everything about the passions is arranged in the most appropriate way possible for their mutual preservation. They strengthen one another, and even the most remote are of help" (*ST* Book V.11, 402). In this regard, Malebranche offers a way

for different emotions to operate along with each other. Different emotions are not indifferent to each other. On the contrary, they have a tendency of latching onto or aiding each other towards the attainment of something perceived to be good or avoided as something bad. When he explains the trajectory of desire, for example, several passions come along to help aid in acquiring that object. He writes, "But desire is animated by love, strengthened by hope, increased by joy, renewed by dread, accompanied by courage, envy, anger, and several other passions that in turn form an infinite variety of judgments that succeed one another and sustain the desire giving birth to them" (*ST* V.11, 402). A singular passion has a greater tendency to grow weak and die off; however, a passion accompanied by other passions tends to have a better chance to be maintained, strengthened, and preserved. Here is a way to help explain the relationship Butler discussed between two different passions strengthening each other (resentment and compassion).

MALEBRANCHE AND THE INADVERTENT FACIAL EXPRESSIONS DERIVED FROM AN INJURY

Towards the end of Book Five, chapter twelve, Malebranche summarizes the view that the passions were instilled in human beings "for the good of the body and to unite us through the body to all sensible objects, for although sensible things can be neither good nor evil with regard to the mind, they are nevertheless good or evil in relation to the body to which the mind is joined" (*ST* V.12, 406). The senses and imagination are better at revealing the relationship between sensible objects and the body than the mind is. Consequently, the faculties of sense and imagination agitate the passions more intensively than possessing clear and distinct knowledge of them. As Malebranche continues, "But because our awareness's are always accompanied by some motion in the spirits, a clear and evident awareness of some great good or evil that the senses have not discovered always excites some secret passion" (*ST* V.12, 407). In this regard,

even if the senses have *not* discovered a clear and evident awareness of a good or evil, the movement of the spirits (i.e. the will) will always elicit a passion. In other words, the movement of the will tends to elicit a passion that helps corroborate the awareness of a good or evil that ought to be attended to or avoided.

According to Malebranche, the passions encompass two things for human beings, and these derive from The Fall. First, the passions accompany *our* (i.e. human) perception of the good. The pursuit of a healthy relationship—accompanied by the passion of love—is an example of how the passions accompany our perception of the good. Second, the passions accompany the soul's natural impulse toward the good (and this natural tendency toward goodness was implanted in human beings by God). What happens, though, is that the human perception of the good also accompanies the natural impulse toward the good, and a confusion results. As Malebranche explains, "But because we are affected by different sensations according to the different circumstances accompanying both our perceptions of the good and the soul's impulses toward the good, we confuse these sensations with the soul's emotions and imagine as many different impulses in the passions as there are different sensations" (*ST* V.3, 348). From this passage, Malebranche maintains that the combination of our perception of the good, along with the natural impulse towards the good, renders our sensations and the passions confused and obscure. Even though the passions help to preserve our body—helping us to attend to appetites we desire or avoiding dangers and fears that could harm our body—human beings are unable to avoid confusion about such sensations and passions (as this confusion emanates precisely from The Fall).

Since human beings are composed of a mind and body that are naturally joined, the impulses of the mind are communicated to those of the body. As a result, although the impulse of

the soul is almost always the same, the motion of the animal spirits may differ for each of the passions new determination of the motion of the animal spirits, which differs for each of the passions. These animal spirits, writes Malebranche, "are therefore driven into the arms, legs, and face to provide the body with the disposition necessary for the passion, and to spread on the face the look of an injured man in relation to the circumstances of the injury and the worth or influence of the two men involved" (*ST* V.3, 350). As strong as the passions are that may arise internally—when someone has been injured—they may also be strongly projected onto the expressive face of the injured.

After describing the relationship between the passions and the expressions on the face of the injured, Malebranche proceeds in a similar way as Butler did in sermon nine, paragraph twenty-two. Going back to Butler's analysis, he began by obliging the injured to consider "our imagining we are injured when we are not, or representing the injury to ourselves as greater than it really is" (*S* 9.22). Again, this consideration pertains to the injury itself, or the severity of the injury. Similarly, with regard to reflecting on injuries, Malebranche writes, "If, then, the person we are talking about receives some injury only in his imagination, or an injury that is real but slight, and that causes no great disturbance in his brain, the flow of animal spirits will be weak and languid, and perhaps will not be great enough to alter the body's ordinary natural disposition" (*ST* V.3, 350). Here again, Malebranche considers the injury itself, and also, the probability of the injury not being as severe as it really was. Subsequently, he considers the injury to be really atrocious, and the facial changes that would display on the face of the injured. He writes, "But if the injury is atrocious and occurs while his imagination is aroused, there will be a great disturbance in the breain and the spirits will be dispersed with such force that they will almost immediately form on his face and body the look and bearing of the passion dominating

him" (*ST* V.3, 350). From this disturbance, according to Malebranche, the facial expressions may be emitted with a proud and menacing strength. Or, if the injured is weak and unable to resist the evil actions made by the wrongdoer, his facial expression will appear to be humble and submissive. Moreover, these facial expressions—of dread, sadness, groaning, sniffling of the nose, or tears streaming down the cheek—may inadvertently arouse impulses of compassion by onlookers, and even, to the wrongdoer. Malebranche implies this inadvertent behavior as much, writing, "His groans and tears naturally arouse impulses of compassion in onlookers and even in his enemy, and from them they extract help that he could not expect from his own resources" (*ST* V.3, 351). The face—of the injured—may inadvertently take on features of rage and despair that could even disarm a wrongdoer who has almost no moral conscience at all. As the injured endures the misery of being wronged by another, they may inadvertently display facial features that encourage compassion or indignation from others. It is conceivable that these inadvertent facial expressions may be caused from forgetting. For example, a friend could tell another friend, "You speak so condescendingly to people sometimes," and the utterance of this sentence expresses aggravation and annoyance. The listener frowns and appears distraught to hear this; however, they forgot what "condescendingly" means. So, while the facial features responded accurately to the friend's words, and the negative tone for which these words were spoken, they have forgotten the meaning of the word that supports this judgment. Subsequently, the listener might respond, "Okay, I can tell you are upset with me. I forget what it means to speak to others condescendingly, though." In sum, the listener inadvertently frowned but the meaning of the word is on the tip of their tongue, so to speak, but they forgot its meaning in relation to the negative tone of their friend's voice.

From Malebranche's point of view, "the soul has no part in this mechanical activity" (*ST*

V.3, 351). God placed infinite wisdom in every possible action that arises to preserve human beings. As a result, sensations and impulses *do* accompany disturbances of the animal spirits that elicit passions; however, these impulses or disturbances do not cause the disturbances. But it is these inadvertent facial expressions that *could* be the reason others are able to arouse passions of compassion or indignation. In other words, although the passions are directly aimed to preserve oneself, they may also inadvertently aim to encourage others to preserve oneself as well. As Malebranche summarizes:

> For besides the fact that we cannot conceive how a sensation of the soul could move a body, it is certain that when the soul is moved by some passion, not only is it not thinking that there are animal spirits, muscle, and nerves in its body, or about their use—it does not even know what bearing it should give to its body or what look it should form on its face. It is not even aware of this look, though it is actually formed, unless a mirror is present or a friend tells it about it (*ST* V.3, 351).

In this passage, Malebranche indicates that—in the case of the injured—they would be unable to be fully aware of the facial expressions they make, unless they stand in front of a mirror or a friend informs them. And yet, the groans and tears naturally arouse impulses of compassion from others, including the wrongdoer. These inadvertent facial expressions may even elicit an apology from the wrongdoer. So, although Butler's further reflections oblige his readers to attend to any inadvertency—on behalf of the wrongdoer and ourselves—Malebranche's theory of the passions considers the way the facial expressions may arise inadvertently as well. Both thinkers considered the possibility of the injury being mistaken, the severity of the injury, and ways to help mitigate injuries that are legitimate or justified. On the one hand, Butler considered inadvertency on behalf of the wrongdoer and on behalf of the injured. It is more probable than

not that wrongdoings were made from the contribution of inadvertency than from malice, hatred, or scorn. On the other hand, Malebranche considered the way facial features can inadvertently be communicated to wrongdoers or onlookers with the aim of preserving oneself. In these circumstances, inadvertent facial expressions may help to elicit an apology, and perhaps even, consequently, a facial expression that exudes forgiveness.

BUTLER ON FORGETTING WITH FORGIVING: IT *COULD* "JUST HAPPEN"

In the previous chapter, it was demonstrated that Butler obliges human beings to attend to inadvertency as a way to help elicit the process of forgiveness. In sermon nine, paragraphs twenty-two through twenty six, Butler was primarily focused on the way inadvertency could impact the judgment of the injury itself, to represent the injury as greater than it really is, or the judgments made about the wrongdoers. These three features contribute to Butler's further reflections, "which may have a more direct tendency to subdue those vices in the heart, to beget in us this right temper, and lead us to a right behavior towards those who have offended us: which reflections however shall be such as will further shew the obligations we are under it" (*S* 9.21). In this chapter, I have argued that paragraph twenty-seven adds in *another* contributing factor to Butler's appeal to inadvertency.

The goal of paragraph twenty-seven, sermon nine, concerns the way two distinct passions can play a critical role for the injured sceptic to endure on a path towards forgiveness. As a result, paragraph twenty-seven is a pivotal passage in the sermon because it harkens back to the further aim of his sermon, derived from paragraph three. Stated once again, Butler informs the reader (and the congregation) that he is going to "proceed to *some reflections, which may have a more direct and immediate tendency to beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us*" (*S* 9.3). These further reflections go beyond the "observer's perspectives" that

Griswold and Garcia elaborated on. Of course, Butler does not adamantly dismiss or disregard the perspectives of the objective theorist or the sympathetic spectator; however, he is aware that the preaching of these perspectives may still not convince people to forgive and love their enemies.

Many people could agree to these "observer's perspectives" but still refuse to forgive. Subsequently, the further reflections offer another crucial effort to convince the injured sceptic, writes Butler, "To be affected really in this manner, I say really, in opposition to shew and pretence" (*S* 9.27). Here, Butler's aim was not merely to remind the equity judges, clerks, and lawyers to adhere to precepts that they were already long been aware of. On the contrary, he was trying to awaken a morally jaded congregation to reengage in the importance of forgiveness, especially on an everyday practical and emotional basis.

With the supplement of Malebranche's dictum, "all the passions seek their own justification," Butler's twenty-seventh paragraph can be even further clarified. In this paragraph, he considers the injured to endure in both resentment and compassion, at the same time. As he puts it, "though injury, injustice, oppression, the baseness of ingratitude, are the natural objects of indignation, or if you please of resentment, as before explained; yet they are likewise the objects of compassion" (*S* 9.27). An injury may evoke a multitude of passions, including resentment and compassion. Since the passions all seek their own justification, it is possible for the injured to experience an interplay between these different passions. Thus, the give and take of resentment and compassion may lead to the forgiveness of injuries in a way that still justifies the passions.

His further reflections, therefore, go further than Murphy's reading of Butler, and even further than the scrutiny that this reading produced on behalf of the Contemporary Butlerians. By

examining these further reflections, we see that Butler was willing to allow for another meaning of forgetting—attending to inadvertency on behalf of wrongdoers and the injured—to contribute to his account of forgiveness.

In spite of Butler's efforts to acknowledge the achievements of reason to convince the injured sceptic to forgive and love their enemies, he could not help but continue onwards to infuse an awareness of the limits—even a suspicion—of the role the authority reason could play in his account of forgiveness. This suspicion may also have been shared by his congregation. Perhaps even, it was a suspicion that Butler himself previously held. Generally speaking, a moderator will often try to reason with individuals towards gaining a resolution derived from a certain conflict. And yet, if a successful resolution arrives—derived from an inadvertency or forgetfulness—then this may be a worthy avenue to take as well. The importance of reason, and the acknowledgement of its limits, therefore, may have been just what Jekyll was looking for in appointing Butler to preach at the Rolls Chapel.

PIVOTING BACK TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Butler's appeal to inadvertency was supported with his own empirical evidence to help urge the skeptic of forgiveness—presumably the majority of his congregation—to go out and practice forgiveness, especially from an emotional standpoint. The demand to attend to any inadvertency must have previously helped Butler to forgive others of wrongdoings done onto him, or perhaps even, for others to express forgiveness of his wrongdoings done onto them. After investigating the further reflections of sermon nine—including many of the historical circumstances that played a role in Butler's thinking, writing, and preaching at the Rolls Chapel—can these insights be applied to reading Butler in the twenty-first century? Are Butler's reflections about the complexities of inadvertency—both on behalf of the wrongdoer and the

injured—something that continues to be examined as a route to forgiveness today? In his reflections, his obligation to pay caution to inadvertency stems from an inability to perfectly judge injuries in themselves. This imperfection implies that there are human flaws that can be related to forgetfulness.

Although Butler's *Fifteen Sermons* were preached between 1719-1726, are his insights relevant to the recent growth in neuroscience and human psychology? In other words, are Butler's further reflections made more relevant by appealing to growing body of empirical studies about the complex relationship between forgetting and forgiving? As will be demonstrated, recent studies in the empirical sciences have been able to determine that forgetting is not necessarily a bad thing to be avoided. In fact, forgetting may help aid the injured to be more forgiving. To determine Butler's relevancy, the final chapter makes a pivot—away from the eighteenth-century—and into an inquiry of some recent scientific findings on forgetting within the twenty first century.

CHAPTER FIVE

DOES BUTLER'S ACCOUNT OF FORGIVENESS OFFER A MORAL SUPPLEMENT TO TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SCIENCE? AN APPLICATION OF FORGETTING WITH FORGIVING

INTRODUCTION

Butler's ninth sermon, written and preached between 1718 and 1726, offers a way for forgetting to play a role in forgiveness. The injured has a tendency to magnify the injury itself, the severity of the injury, the judgments attributed to the wrongdoer, and additionally, there is a tendency that the injured forget that they are also wrongdoers. As Butler indicates, self-love "magnifies every thing which is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens every thing amiss in ourselves" (*S* 9.22). From the pulpit of an Anglican preacher, Butler reminds his congregation—and readers—not to forget that everyone is a sinner. In other words, the injured has—at one time or another—been a wrongdoer to others. As he stresses, although it is possible that these wrongdoings occurred from malicious or scornful intent, there is equally the likelihood that they—the injured—have committed injuries to others from inadvertencies. These inadvertencies are associated with something said non-intentionally, or acting in a careless and mindless way, or finally, the wrongdoing could be caused from forgetting some details that should not have been forgotten. For Butler, the injured ought to consider that the wrongdoer may have acted wrongly due to the causes of forgetfulness. Subsequently, they ought to be able to look themselves in the mirror, so to speak, and attend to their own inadvertencies. Perhaps, at some time in the past, they acted wrongfully to another, and the action was caused by forgetting some important details. This forgetting nevertheless led to an injury. Injuries can still warrant blame and resentment, even if they were made from forgetfulness. As a result, Butler argues for

the injured to attend to inadvertency—not only on behalf of the wrongdoer—but also, on behalf of themselves. In this way, Butler considers forgetting to play a role in his account of forgiveness. Moreover, inadvertency may convince the sceptic of virtue to carry out the obligation to forgive, particularly because it obliges the injured to go further than the precepts "to love our enemies" and "forgive." By going further, therefore, the appeal to inadvertency may serve a greater emotional resonance for promoting the injured sceptic to forgive wrongdoers. The appeal to inadvertency—both on behalf of others and ourselves—could have more of an emotional impact to elicit forgiveness than appealing to rational principles (e.g. the principle of general benevolence).

Butler's appeal to inadvertency acknowledges more complexity about memory accorded to an injury. In this regard, forgetting is not necessarily an all or nothing phenomenon. Forgetting does not have to be relegated to the connotation of a pathology about memory. Indeed, it *would* be difficult to make sense of forgiving another, especially when the memory of the injury, injustice, cruelty, or oppression, is completely null and void. Something would need to be remembered in order to forgive a wrongdoer. Paying caution to inadvertency introduces some grey area, though, with respect to the memory of wrongdoing or the judgments that correspond to the wrongdoer. Butler's implicit view is that human memory is not capable of being fully mastered, particularly because ignorance is an inevitable feature of human nature. As a result, there will always be further details worth sifting through. These further details may help elicit emotions whose natural course is the good, as they were instilled by the Creator. The emotions may work in strange and surprising ways. A person may endure resentment and compassion—toward the wrongdoer—in ways that surprisingly lead to forgiveness. For Butler, "The principles in our mind may be contradictory, or checks and allays only, or incentives and assistants to each

other. And principles, which in their nature have no kind of contrariety or affinity, may yet accidentally be each other's allays or incentives" (*S* 12.9). An overly compassionate person, for example, may become overpowered with the emotion of resentment directed at the wrongdoer. In spite of the strength of resentment, however, their compassion may eventually, even inadvertently usurp that resentment. Some people are able to inadvertently allow compassion to overcome their view of wrongdoers, even if they still maintain some degree of resentment. The injured may even explain this in surprising ways. For example, "I am still upset at her for what she said; however, for whatever reason—I cannot even remember why—the compassion I have for her overwhelms my resentment." As a result, forgiveness may be brought forth from the surprising interaction of opposing emotions.

As has already been demonstrated, Butler's further reflections offer a way for the injured sceptic to consider forgetting in the process to forgiveness. With regard to these insights, the following questions arise: Can Butler's further reflections be even further applied to the growing research of contemporary human neuroscience and psychology, particularly on the *benefits* of forgetting? Although the recent science of forgetting continues to investigate the intricate biology of forgetting, do Butler's further reflections help instill a *moral* feature with regard to this growing science?

In the Editor's Introduction to the 2017 Cambridge edition of Butler's *Fifteen Sermons*, David McNaughton argues against the comparative neglect of Butler's moral writings. As he insists, "we have so much to learn from him. Perhaps his most important contribution to ethics […] is to what used to be called moral psychology" (McNaughton xiii). From this point, McNaughton expresses some dismay regarding the overall discipline of psychology to have become reduced to empirical studies of thought and behavior. In this way, psychology utilizes

"such instruments as questionnaires, experiments and MRI scans" (McNaughton xiii). The MRI scans help to track or map which parts of the brain are most active when people make moral judgments. While these scans do a wonderful job at detecting the neuro-network that occurs when people act and think, they are incapable of examining how people *ought* to think, behave, and act. Subsequently, scientific conclusions may be a bit too premature for neglecting moral considerations. Based on these concerns, McNaughton maintains that Butler's sermons help demonstrate an approach to lived moral experience, paying close attention to what it is like to be a responsible and responsive moral agent, and henceforth, investigating the numerous moral undertones with respect to the emotions. As a result, McNaughton writes, "Proper interpretation of these and other findings must rest on an adequate philosophical understanding of our moral psychology and it is in this area, especially, that Butler's strengths lie" (McNaughton xiv). From this passage, he believes Butler's analysis into lived moral psychology would aid in empirical research that relies on questionnaires, experiments, MRI scans, and so on.

In spite of McNaughton's concerns, the following chapter does not intend to be a polemic on recent neuroscience and psychology. On the contrary, this chapter seeks to marry recent scientific research on forgetting with Butler's further reflections of sermon nine, "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries." Given the growing investigations on the scientific benefits of forgetting, simply put, Butler's further reflections provide a moral supplement to their findings.[59]

Seldom do neuroscience and Joseph Butler's moral philosophy get mentioned in the same sentence. In 2009, however, Arthur Dyck and Carlos Padilla published their essay, "The

[59] Indeed, the scientific research is far too extensive to fit into the confines of this project; however, I want to at least examine some empirical findings to help demonstrate why Butler's further reflections offer a worthy moral supplement.

Empathic Emotions and Self-Love in Bishop Joseph Butler and the Neurosciences." In this essay, Dyck and Padilla apply Butler's writings on compassion[60] to twenty-first century neuroscientific research about empathy. As they put it:

> Butler's delineation of self-love and compassion, and how they interact in moral experience, provides the neurosciences with a fruitful way to integrate presently competing definitions of empathy. Indeed, research in the neurosciences would be enriched by a study of Butler's moral psychology" (Dyck and Padilla 578).

Although Dyck and Padilla acknowledge the fact that Butler did not have the term *empathy* available to him, they still insist that his description of compassion resonates with neuroscientists who aimed to properly define empathy. Generally speaking, neuroscience defines empathy to reference the unique capacity human beings have to know what another person is feeling, feel what another person is feeling, and to compassionately attend to the distresses of others (Dyck and Padilla 579). Empathy concerns an individual's ability to accurately detect another's emotional state. After defining empathy, Dyck and Padilla bring in Butler specifically because his writings on compassion connect with neuroscientific studies on the meaning of empathy. In sum, they were struck by the relevance of Butler's views about compassion with the growing neuroscientific efforts to define empathy.

Using Dyck and Padilla's essay as a guide in the effort to demonstrate pertinence between Butler's insights on compassion and neuroscientific studies on empathy, can a similar effort for relevancy be made with respect to Butler's appeal to inadvertency and recent neuroscientific studies examining the relationship between forgetting and forgiving? To answer

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[60] They primarily draw from sermons five and six, "Upon Compassion."

this question, the investigation now proceeds to examine some recent empirical research concerning this relationship.

THE BENEFITS OF NOT REMEMBERING

Scott A. Small is a physician who specializes in aging and dementia. He is director of the Columbia University Alzheimer's Disease Research Center and professor of neurology and psychiatry at Columbia University. In 2021, he published a book entitled *Forgetting: The Benefits of Not Remembering*. As a student of memory, he initially accepted the standard view, "in which better memory is always the noble goal, whereas forgetting is to be prevented and fought tooth and nail" (Small 4). Throughout a career spanning over thirty-five years, however, Small and other memory investigators and doctors eventually shifted their views about the overemphasis regarding the prevention of memory. As Small points out, "We now know that forgetting is not just normal but beneficial to our cognitive and creative abilities, to our emotional well-being, and even to societal health" (Small 5). In short, science continues to accumulate support for the contributions of forgetting on the beneficial emotional health of human beings. Thus, Butler's consideration of the moral role of inadvertency—in the eighteenth century—portends the growing field of recent science about the meaningful role of forgetting in the twenty-first century.

Throughout much of his career, Small has studied pathological kinds of forgetting (e.g. age-related dementia, Alzheimer's). His book is primarily focused on what he calls "normal forgetting," as distinguished from "pathological forgetting." On the one hand, pathological forgetting is "a true worsening of one's memory, a worsening that impacts the ability to fully engage in our information-laden lives" (Small 5). On the other hand, normal forgetting is "the forgetting that we are born with and that naturally varies among us like height or other traits"

(Small 3). Insofar as a human being could be tall or short, for example, their normal patterns of forgetting could also vary. Later in this chapter, we will also address the different varieties of inadvertency. While some varieties of inadvertency indicate normal or pathological forgetting, there are other varieties that do not indicate forgetting.

To be clear, Small maintains that normal forgetting is not *necessarily* beneficial; however, science *has* been able to reveal many of its benefits. For example, research has been able to detect a set of molecules that operate to hold onto memories and another set of molecules whose function is to forget memories. As Small writes, "New insight in the past few years has uncovered a completely different set of molecules involved with normal forgetting, a molecular toolbox distinct from growing spines" (Small 38). Hence, there *is* a cognitive function that carefully disassembles the size of memories. Given the way human beings continue to adapt to complex environments, Small goes further to assert, "Forgetting is a cognitive gift" (Small 38). This cognitive gift is elaborated as a kind of botanical pruning; that is to say, trimming memories from becoming too large and overwhelming cognitive function.

Small's book was written for a general audience that attempts to explain the functions of memory and forgetting for the layperson. In order to describe the way human beings store, save, and retrieve memories, Small relies on the analogy of the human brain as a personal computer. He identifies the three main regions of the brain as contributors to memory. First, the posterior area is where most of the cherished memories are stored. Second, the hippocampus carries the function of allowing the brain to save memories. Third, the prefrontal cortex, "located right behind our foreheads, is the general area that helps us open and retrieve memories" (Small 13). Moreover, similar to the way a personal computer carries "bits" (the binary digits of 0 and 1) of information, the basic unit of memory storage is located at the tips of a neuron. Each neuron

carries antennae-like “tips” which are identified as dendrites. At the top of the dendrites are located “dendritic spines.” Small writes, “Tiny but mighty, and like budding leaves on the branches of a highly arborized tree, spines are where the neurons connect and communicate with one another at a meeting point called a synapse. The larger the spines, the stronger the synaptic connection, and thus the louder and clearer the information” (Small 13-14). The dendritic spines are not static or fixed, but rather, they are flexible or bending, capable of growing or regressing over time.

The dendritic spines may be stimulated to grow and proliferate, and thus, the connections between neurons are strengthened to form new memories. In this way, the shape and size of the dendritic spines play a large role in creating, saving, or storing memories. The shape or size of the spines may also regress. As Small elucidates, “When the neuron is stimulated out of sync with its neighbor, the spines might wilt back down—which is what happens during forgetting. The dendritic spines, at the outer tips of neurons, are thus the information bits of our memories” (Small 14). The spines play a crucial role in the function of the brain. These spines may grow or be pruned or trimmed down. Furthermore, if the dendritic spines grow too rapidly or aggressively, then the neuron connections could lead to deteriorated memories as well. As Small emphasizes, “To walk this fine line, the memory toolbox grows spines with energy-saving efficiency, and does so in a carefully calibrated way” (Small 16). As Small argues, the decreasing of the dendritic spines is not necessarily a bad thing. On the contrary, the decreasing of dendritic spines could also be a benefit to a person’s memory function.

Small also relies on the literary insights of Jorge Luis Borges’ short story, “Funes, His Memory” to challenge the generally agreed view that remembering is always more valuable than forgetting. In fact, the story demonstrates that forgetting plays a crucial role in the way human

beings function on a daily basis. In this story, Funes is thrown from his horse, and hits his head on the ground. Consequently, his brain is inflamed, with the result being that he inexplicably remembers everything he encounters. Over time, however, Funes realizes that this incredible gift of memory is actually a burden. He loses the ability to generalize. For example, when he wakes up in the morning, he looks at himself in the mirror. Later on in the day, he looked in the mirror, and detects great changes in his features. Facial hair is starting to grow, and these subtle changes mean that Funes is unable to rely on pattern recognition to determine he is the same person looking in the mirror several hours earlier. In other words, Funes has lost the ability to see patterns and make general connections. Too much strength of memory, as Small uses Borges' story to illustrate, can clog the brain's ability to function on a daily basis. To connect this point with Butler's further reflections, without forgetting some aspects of the injury—or about the judgments made about the wrongdoer(s)—then it could be extremely difficult to function empirically or morally, not to mention the concern of becoming emotionally aggressive and excessively prideful. As Butler puts it, "In this there is doubtless a great mixture of pride; but there is something more, which I cannot otherwise express than, that resentment has taken possession of the temper and of the mind, and will not quit its hold" (*S* 8.12). Butler also stresses a concern about having too much strength of memory insofar as it clogs the brain's ability to be able to function routinely. In any case, deriving a lesson from Borges's short story about Funes, Small writes:

> Without forgetting, young Funes could not generalize from one sensory experience to the next—did not, for example, grasp that the dog he saw in the morning light and the dog he saw at twilight were the same dog. Without forgetting, Funes found that his only respite from life's constant fluctuations was to routinize his life and to minimize sensory

overload by banishing himself to his dimly lit, quiet, and never-changing bedroom (Small 44).

In Small's book, Borges' story helps to illuminate the importance of forgetting for contributing to the cognitive function of generalizing. After the demonstration of recent scientific findings, regarding the meaning of forgetting, science has caught up to help validate Borges' literary assumption about the requirements of forgetting for healthy cognition.[61] Moreover, Small provides a brief reference to an empirical psychology experiment published in 2015, conducted by Stephanie Lichtenfeld and others[62], to support the growing research that supports how "emotional forgetting dulls the memory shards of an aggrieved pain" (Small 172). In this experiment, Lichtenfeld relies on a distinction between "decisional forgiving" and "emotional forgiving," terminology derived from a clinical psychologist named Everett Worthington. Before delving into Lichtenfeld's experiment and results, however, Worthington's terms first need to be explained.

DECISIONAL FORGIVENESS AND EMOTIONAL FORGIVENESS

According to the introduction to the research article "Forgive and Forget: Differences between Decisional and Emotional Forgiveness," Lichtenfeld's experiment was motivated to answer the following question: "Whether empathy and the replacement of negative emotions with positive ones is a core aspect of forgiveness, or if the mere decision to forgive is sufficient"

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[61] Small provides a few references to support recent scientific findings about the benefits of forgetting. Davis, R.L., and Y. Zhong, "The Biology of Forgetting—A Perspective." *Neuron*, 2017. 95(3): pp. 490-503; Richards, B.A., and P.W. Frankland, "The Persistence and Transience of Memory." *Neuron*, 2017. 94 (6): pp. 1071-1084.

[62] Lichtenfeld, Stephanie., Buechner, Vanessa L., Maier, Markus. A., & Fernández-Capo, Maria (2015). "Forgive and Forget: Differences between Decisional and Emotional Forgiveness." *PLOS ONE*, *10*(5), 2015.

(Lichtenfeld 1). The motivation to answer this question hinges on Worthington's distinction between decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness. In the 2007 essay "Forgiveness, Health, and Well-Being: A Review of Evidence for Emotional Versus Decisional Forgiveness, Dispositional Forgiveness, and Reduced Unforgiveness," Worthington writes, "Decisional forgiveness is a behavioral intention to resist an unforgiving stance and to respond differently toward a transgressor" (Worthington 291). This obliges the injured to engage in the rational process *not* to resist the precepts "forgive" and "love our enemies." In this way, decisional forgiveness concerns the rational decision to control one's behaviors (Worthington 292). Although this kind of forgiveness allows the injured to control any hostility directed at the wrongdoer, as Worthington underscores, "[it] does not necessarily reduce stress responses. Thus, it is probably related to reconciliatory processes and through improved relationships, indirectly to health" (Worthington 292). The main crux of decisional forgiveness, therefore, pertains to the injured making a rational decision to release the transgressor from the debt associated with the injury.

Before moving to discuss Worthington's view on "emotional forgiveness," it should be noted that the description of decisional forgiveness exhibits a strong similarity to Butler's earlier method of convincing the injured sceptic to forgive and love our enemies. Indeed, this took place *prior* to the further reflections of sermon nine, "Upon Forgiveness of Injuries." The breakdown of decisional forgiveness connects with Butler's aim to elaborate the two following reasons why human beings are obligated to "love our enemies" and "forgive." The first reason is located in paragraph eighteen, and described by Griswold as the "objective theorist's standpoint" (Griswold 35). As Butler puts it, "Love to our enemies […] is in truth the law of our nature, and what everyone must see and own" (*S* 9.18). By appealing to the perspective of the objective theorist,

Butler obliges the injured to elicit a standard similar to Worthington's account of decisional forgiveness. Forgiveness is the law of our nature, and henceforth, the injured ought to resist an unforgiving stance and respond positively toward the transgressor. In other words, this perspective obliges the injured to decide not to withhold forgiveness, but rather, to decide on forgiving due to the fact that it is the natural law for human beings.

Decisional forgiveness also plays a role in the second perspective in Butler's ninth sermon, paragraph nineteen. Butler obliges the injured sceptic to rely on the "sympathetic spectator" perspective. In this way, Butler acknowledges that the injured does not have to love the wrongdoer with any peculiar kind of affection. At the very least, they ought to be able to *decide* on forming a civil relationship with the wrongdoer. Here again, Butler's "sympathetic spectator" perspective obliges the injured to decide on forgiving the wrongdoer. In this way, decisional forgiveness helps to diminish resentment and, as a result, general benevolence is reestablished. Indeed, as was previously demonstrated, Butler maintains these perspectives to be effective in obliging the injured to forgive. They are still practical and reasonable approaches to persuade the injured to help elicit forgiveness. At the same time, however, Butler knew these perspectives might not win over the injured to emotionally forgive. Worthington and Scherer make a similar point, writing, "Granting decisional forgiveness might change negative motivations but not change negative emotions. Some people grant forgiveness and sincerely never intend to seek revenge or avoid the offender, yet they remain bitter, resentful, hostile, hateful, angry, and fearful toward the offender" (Worthington and Scherer 392). Although decisional forgiveness obliges the injured to resist being an unforgiving person, these motivations do not necessarily change the negative emotions that have accrued for the injured.

An emotional kind of forgiveness also needs to be demonstrated. Therefore, Worthington's account of emotional forgiveness now needs to be examined.

According to Worthington, "Emotional forgiveness is the replacement of negative unforgiving emotions with positive other-oriented emotions. Emotional forgiveness involves psychophysiological changes, and it has more direct health and well-being consequences" (Worthington 291). While decisional forgiveness entails the behavioral intention to resist an unforgiving stance, emotional forgiveness involves more of an emphasis on enduring an emotional change. As Worthington emphasizes, "Emotional forgiveness is likely more related to health sequelae because of its strong connection to overcoming negative affect and stress reactions by cultivating positive affect" (Worthington 292). The cultivating of positive affect encourages the injured to direct positive emotions of empathy, compassion or love toward the wrongdoer. This does not necessarily mean that positive emotions must always fully overcome the negative emotions. As Worthington and Scherer help to clarify:

> Whereas the experience of some positive emotions is necessary to neutralize unforgiveness, the person may or may not have a net final positive emotion toward the transgressor. The forgiveness might be partial (reduced unforgiveness) or complete (resulting in a net neutral or even net positive emotion toward the transgressor) (Worthington and Scherer 387).

Worthington and Scherer maintain that the injured needs to *at least* be able to endure in a partial degree of resentment to move on a path toward forgiveness. Once again, this approach connects with some of Butler's eighteenth-century ideas about the degree of resentment appropriate to forgive the transgressor. Indeed, Butler's account of forgiveness never disputes the possibility for the injured to fully overcome their resentment, directed at the transgressor. The success of

overcoming resentment is still a worthwhile venture in the process of forgiveness. But, to be clear, Butler does not establish this as the necessary standard in his account of forgiveness. He demonstrates this, especially throughout sermon nine, paragraph twenty-two. After attending to inadvertency on behalf of the wrongdoer, and then, on behalf of ourselves, writes Butler, "Thus the indignity or injury would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come out to be nothing at all" (*S* 9.22). The hesitation to fully overcome resentment is expressed twice here, "almost infinitely lessen," and, "perhaps" come out to be nothing at all. In short, the injured may still be able to properly forgive the wrongdoer, even if they also hold onto *some* degree of resentment—insofar as it does not accumulate to rage, fury or revenge—directed at the wrongdoer.

In Worthington's view, "Emotional forgiveness may happen through a mechanism of emotional replacement of negative with positive, other-oriented emotions" (Worthington 296). Butler's further reflections demonstrate a similar resonance with Worthington's assessment of emotional forgiveness. In sermon nine, paragraph twenty-seven (discussed in the previous chapter), Butler made the point that "injury, injustice, oppression, the baseness of ingratitude, are the natural objects of indignation, or if you please of resentment […]; yet they are likewise the objects of compassion" (*S* 9.27). Since resentment and compassion concern the same object(s), Butler indicates the possibility that the emotion of resentment—directed at injury or injustice—could be replaced with compassion—also directed at injury or injustice. In other words, as Worthington understands emotional forgiveness, the negative emotions (i.e. resentment) could be replaced by positive, other-oriented emotions (i.e. compassion). Henceforth, Butler helps to enforce the impact on the emotions to go beyond the rational decision to forgive, writing, "to be affected really in this manner, I say really, in opposition to shew and pretence, argues the true

greatness of mind. We have an example of forgiveness in this way" (*S* 9.27). As a result, Butler's further reflections can serve as a supplement to Worthington's analysis of emotional forgiveness.

Although Worthington sets up this distinction between decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness, his analysis lacks any consideration with regard to any consideration of forgetting. These questions might then be asked: Does forgetting also play a role in emotional forgiveness, and if so, how? Lichtenfeld's psychological research experiment may help to answer these questions.

EMOTIONAL FORGETTING

Lichtenfeld's experiment draws from Worthington's distinction between decisional and emotional forgiveness. Although the research is not aimed to dismiss the worthiness of decisional forgiveness, Lichtenfeld believes that any true forgiveness requires some contribution of the emotions. From this point, Lichtenfeld clarifies the primary aim of the experiment:

> While several theories incorporate decisional and emotional processes of forgiveness in their model, empirical evidence in respect to differences between these processes is rare. This is particularly true for experimental research studies. Hardly any study has manipulated emotional versus decisional forgiveness and investigated consequences of these different forgiveness processes. Thus, the aim of the present study is to investigate differences between decisional and emotional forgiveness on cognitive processes involved in the forgiveness process, namely forgetting (Lichtenfeld 2).

Lichtenfeld's research, therefore, aims to consider *forgetting* as a significant cognitive process involved in forgiveness. Between decisional forgiveness and emotional forgiveness, the goal is to detect whether or not "forgetting offense-relevant characteristics of an offender may be a hint

that one feels at peace with a transgressor" (Lichtenfeld 2). In sum, forgetting is not determined as the annihilation of the memory of wrongdoing, but rather, a forgetting of judgements (i.e. trait words) attributed to the offender.

Her research experiment was conducted at LMU Munich and was approved by the ethics committee of the Department of Psychology. Forty-two undergraduate students at LMU Munich (all female, mean age 22.3 years) participated in the experiment, and earned course credit. Lichtenfeld and her team of researchers developed two scenarios that were determined to be "realistic offenses experienced by students at a university" (Lichtenfeld 2). Both scenarios pertained to a student who intentionally committed a transgression within a group preparing for a class presentation. The degree of the transgressions, however, was different. In the first scenario, a group of students were asked to prepare a presentation for a class. Amongst the group, the transgressor showed little to no engagement and left the work up to the other students to complete the task. As a result, the group received a worse grade than was expected. In the second scenario, a group of students had to prepare a presentation for a class. Amongst the group, one student had an innovative idea that led to a successful presentation. Another student in the group, however, informed the professor about the innovative idea, and proclaimed it to be her idea instead. Subsequently, the transgressor—the student who lied to the professor—earned a higher grade than the rest of the group.

Results indicated that the second scenario was generally regarded *more* negatively by the participants than the first scenario, particularly according to "their valence, arousal, and severity of the transgression" (Lichtenfeld 4). For both scenarios, three experts were asked to select twenty trait words that were characteristic of the transgressor. Moreover, for each scenario, ten of the twenty trait words were offense-relevant (e.g. in the first scenario, the transgressor was

described as “lazy,” whereas in the second scenario, the transgressor was described as “egoistic”). As Lichtenfeld points out, “Each trait word was relevant for one scenario, but not for the other. Thus, for half of the participants ten of the trait words were offense-relevant, while for the other half the other ten trait words were offense-relevant depending upon the scenario they had read” (Lichtenfeld 4). After reading the offenses for each scenario, group members were asked to choose the trait words that best corresponded to the offender’s transgression.

Participants were required to follow the instructions on a computer screen as both scenarios were described. After being presented with twenty trait words to describe the transgressor, participants were randomly assigned to one of three categories: the decisional forgiveness condition, the emotional forgiveness condition, and the control condition. As Lichtenfeld writes:

> In the decisional forgiveness condition they were asked to think of that person as a human being that misbehaved and to resolve not to pay her back and to behave positively and not negatively toward the offender. In the emotional forgiveness condition they were asked to wish that the offender experiences something positive or healing and to focus their feelings on empathy. In the control condition participants were asked to think about one’s own thoughts, feelings, and physical reactions in this situation and what they would think and how they would react in such an instance. Then, participants were asked to answer three filler questions related to the scenario (Lichtenfeld 4).

Finally, after the participants were momentarily interrupted to complete a short “distractor task,” (solving simple arithmetic problems for two minutes), a free-recall test followed. Participants were directed to write down as many of the previously presented traits of the person as possible,

over a duration of thirty seconds. Once the thirty seconds were up, participants were provided with a demographics questionnaire, given their extra credit, and dismissed.

The results show that participants in the emotional forgiveness condition recalled significantly *fewer* offense-relevant traits than those in the decisional forgiveness and the control conditions (Lichtenfeld 5). Participants in the emotional forgiveness condition recalled the same amount of offense irrelevant traits (i.e. offense traits that did not accommodate the specific transgression) as the decisional forgiveness and control conditions. Finally, participants in the emotional forgiveness condition recalled significantly fewer relevant trait words as compared to irrelevant traits, whereas participants in the decisional forgiveness condition, and the control condition, recalled equal amounts of relevant *and* irrelevant trait words (Lichtenfeld 5). Upon receiving these results, Lichtenfeld concludes that the difference—between the emotional forgiving condition versus the decisional and control conditions—helps illuminate the contribution of forgetting offense-relevant trait words, especially in the emotional forgiveness condition. As she puts it, "Specifically, our results demonstrate that emotional forgiveness leads to substantially higher levels of forgetting in respect to offense relevant traits compared to both decisional forgiveness and no forgiveness" (Lichtenfeld 6). To be clear, the participants—in the emotional forgiveness condition—did not annihilate the memory of the wrongdoing. Rather, the forgetting pertained to *some* offense-relevant trait words attributed to the wrongdoer. Thus, the experiment demonstrated how forgetting can contribute to the process of an emotional kind of forgiving. Indeed, the researchers did not conduct this experiment to prove that a decisional kind of forgiveness is worthless. Some people prefer a decisional kind of forgiveness over an emotional kind. The researchers find both kinds of forgiveness to be legitimate; however, they were interested to see if forgetting contributes to those who forgive on a more emotional level.

The outcome of the experiment supports Lichtenfeld's hypothesis that emotional forgiveness carries a meaningful relationship with forgetting some offense-relevant trait words directed at the transgressor. After obliging the emotional forgiveness group to engage in feelings of empathy or compassion, many of the offense-relevant trait words (e.g. egotistical, selfish, scornful, or malicious) were forgotten. As Lichtenfeld clarifies, emotional forgiveness does not indicate the view that the painful experience should be entirely forgotten, but rather, as she emphasizes, it impacts "the *extent* in which the offender is held responsible for a transgression" (Lichtenfeld 8, emphasis added). The fault or injury is still maintained as a legitimate experience; however, the forgetting pertains to the extent of responsibility that the injured has ascribed to the transgressor(s). Similarly with Butler's further reflections, the injured may fancy the wrongdoer to be acting out of malice or scorn; however, he points out, "we should frequently discern that to be in reality inadvertence and mistake in our enemy," was more likely. And further, "we should likewise in all probability see something of these latter [inadvertence and mistake] in ourselves" (*S* 9.22). In this regard, Butler obliges the injured to consider something irrelevant to the injury, the severity of the injury, or even, the judgments that are attributed to the wrongdoer: they are obliged to consider themselves as wrongdoers, too. This still legitimates the fault or injury; however, the appeal to inadvertency—on behalf of wrongdoers and ourselves—could allow for something irrelevant to help in the process toward an emotional kind of forgiveness.

Another outcome of the experiment concerned the relationship between offense relevant trait words and offense irrelevant trait words. On the one hand, the participants in the decisional forgiveness group, and in the control group, were able to remember offense relevant trait words much more readily than offense irrelevant trait words. On the other hand, the participants in the emotional forgiveness group were able to remember more offense irrelevant trait words than

offense relevant trait words. As Lichtenfuld reflects on this result, she writes, this could be "due to the fact that if an individual has not emotionally forgiven an offense, individuals still ruminate about the transgression and offense relevant traits are still even more salient as compared to non-offense relevant traits, which further supports our hypothesis that emotional forgiveness is a precondition to forget negative associations in respect to the transgressor" (Lichtenfeld 6). In this regard, the emotional forgiveness condition considered more offense irrelevant trait words that played a role in forgetting some offense relevant trait words. Thus, forgetting played a significant role for those in the emotional forgiveness group.

In spite of the results of the experiment, Lichtenfeld's article concludes by acknowledging several limitations. First, the experiment would need to be replicated several times in order to gain more confidence in the results. Second, the experiment was conducted entirely with female undergraduate students.[63] It would be interesting to see if the results would change by including male undergraduate students within the experiment. Given these limitations, however, the results still help support the view, as Lichtenfeld writes, "that it is not enough to decide to forgive, but just like in the decision making process it is important to rely on one's feelings to find optimal solutions, it seems important to incorporate emotions and empathy when truly forgiving someone" (Lichtenfeld 8). The results, therefore, still provide another supplement concerning the role forgetting plays in the development of empathy and forgiveness.

While Lichtenfeld's empirical study examines the role forgetting trait words plays in the development of forgiveness, another empirical study engages more closely to the meaning of forgetting, as it was described by Butler; that is, as an inadvertency. Henceforth, the following

[63] Lichtenfeld does note that a significant majority of the undergraduate students, within the department of psychology at LMU Munich, were female students at the time of the experiment.

experiment analyzes inadvertency, especially for people who have experienced emotionally charged autobiographical memories that were recalled and retold over weeks, months, or even years after.

REMEMBERING ALL THAT AND THEN SOME: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ABOUT ATTENDING TO INADVERTENCY

In the 2011 research article, "Remembering all that and then some: Recollection of Autobiographical Memories after a 1-year Delay," Jenna Campbell, Lynn Nadel, Devin Duke and Lee Ryan engaged in a study to determine what happens when rich, personally relevant, and emotionally charged autobiographical events are recalled or retold over a period of weeks, months, and even, years (Campbell et al. 407). Their study was motivated by a desire to understand two main points of interest. First, the relationship between the emotions that arise when a memory is recalled, and second, the amount of details that arise—over a period of time—when such autobiographical memories are recalibrated.

Before describing the experiment they conducted, Campbell, Nader, Duke, and Ryan briefly summarized the prevailing narrative about recalling or retelling memories as time goes by. For example, in a collection of published studies, particularly authored by F.C. Bartlett, the passage of time results in a loss of detail as memories become simplified, distorted, and forgotten. In his 1932 "War of the Ghosts" study, for example, twenty English-speaking college students were asked to read an unfamiliar Native American story. The story was told twice and recollected after a fifteen-minute delay. Afterwards, participants were instructed to recall and retell the story over a period of one year. The results revealed that participants tended to create newly distorted information and forgot important details while retelling the story.

In F.C. Bartlett's view, the vividness of an event fades away over time. Subsequently, a person's narrative of the event becomes oversimplified, distorted, and eventually, forgotten. Indeed, these results echo Jeffrie Murphy's determination of forgetting. Returning to his identification of forgetting, he writes, "Sometimes we lose a vivid memory of old wrongs, become bored with our resentments, and simply forget. But this just happens to us; that is, it is totally non-voluntary" (Murphy and Hampton 23). As time marches on, in other words, the richness of a person's memory destabilizes and fades away into oblivion.

Instead of merely accepting Bartlett's empirical research, however, the researchers also make reference to a vastly different view on memory over time, particularly from sources that examine a condition called "hypermnesia." According to a few studies on hypermnesia, writes Campbell:

> Ballard reported that children could recall lines of poetry on subsequent memory tests that they could not recall on an initial test. Much later, Erdelyi and Becker (1974) demonstrated that recall for pictures increased over the course of three memory tests with delays, and coined the term hypermnesia to refer to the phenomenon of increased recollection as a function of retrieval practice (Campbell et al. 407).[64]

Based on these empirical findings, participants' recall actually improved over time. Children were able to recite more lines of poetry or recollect images of pictures better than they did over a shorter period of time. As a result, these studies in hypermnesia challenged Bartlett's view that

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[64] Ballard, P.B. "Obliviscence and Reminiscence." *British Journal of Psychology Monograph Supplements*, 1, 1913, pgs. 1-82.
Erdelyi, M. H. & Becker, J. "Hypermnesia for Pictures: Incremental Memory for Pictures but Words in Multiple Recall Trials." *Cognitive Psychology*, 6, pgs. 159-171.

memory recall fades into distortion and forgetting.

In addition to studies in hypermnesia, multiple trace theory (MTT) has demonstrated the importance of an intact hippocampus to retain long-term episodic memories. In the 2007 published empirical study, "Autobiographical Memory Retrieval and Hippocampal Activation as a Function of Repetition and the Passage of Time," Nadel, Campbell, and Ryan summarize, "MTT posits that the hippocampus remains an integral part of the memory trace and is thus always involved in retrieval of long-term episodic memories regardless of the age of the memory" (Nadel, Campbell & Ryan 2). To support this view, neuroimaging studies have demonstrated that retrieving detailed memories activates the hippocampus. No matter how old these memories are, the hippocampus is able to activate the traces of memories. Amnesiac patients, however, "lack the detail present in remote episodic memories retrieved by an individual with an intact hippocampus (Nadel, Campbell & Ryan 2). In this regard, a healthy functioning hippocampus can maintain traces of memories regardless of how old the memories are.

Furthermore, according to MTT, when a memory is retrieved, a new hippocampal trace is created. The retrieval or reactivation of memory traces leads to a re-encoding of the memory. This re-encoding tends to strengthen and change the details associated with the trace. As a result, the details of the memory become more accessible, expanding the original details of the trace or constructing altered details of the trace. Furthermore, as Nadel, Campbell, and Ryan emphasize, "Importantly, the altered trace may incorporate additional components of the context of the retrieval, or even new information that is *inadvertently* (or incorrectly) generated by the act of retrieval" (Nadel, Campbell & Ryan 2, emphasis added). Here, inadvertency concerns the ability for the altered trace to either strengthen the details of the memory or to incorrectly alter the

details of that trace. Perhaps even, inadvertency could both strengthen *and* alter the details of a memory.

MTT demonstrates the meaning of inadvertency that helps challenge Murphy's view of forgetting as a mere fading away or boredom of memories over time. Moreover, while the acknowledgement of this understanding of inadvertency is proven to re-encode memories, it was Butler who—in the eighteenth century—morally advocated for human beings to "make allowances for inadvertence," (*S* 9.25) both on behalf of wrongdoers *and* on behalf of ourselves (the injured). In other words, MTT provides the science to help support Butler's further reflections of sermon nine, obliging human beings to pay caution to inadvertency because this either strengthens or alters memories in emotionally evocative ways.

Returning to their 2011 empirical study, Campbell, Nadel, Duke, and Ryan acknowledged that the majority of empirical studies tends to only ask participants to remember words, pictures or brief impersonal stories.[65] Subsequently, they aimed to investigate the effects of repeated retrievals and retellings for more personal life events. In particular, they wanted to understand what happens to personally relevant and emotionally charged events when they are recalled or retold over a period of weeks, months, or even, years.

Seven participants (ages 47-64, mean age 57.4) were "instructed to recall only unique events that had occurred more than two years ago and that took place in a specific place and time. They were instructed to visualize the details of the event, playing it out as if it were a scene in a movie" (Campbell, Nadel, Duke, and Ryan 408-409).[66] The experimenter would then create

[65] Indeed, this could be another shortcoming of Lichtenfeld's study because the scenarios did not oblige participants to address their own personal stories either.

[66] Campbell, and others, engaged in a similar study, published in 2007. In this study, twelve middle-aged participants were asked to provide details of memories, and then, return to be

a memory cue for each memory, such as "Mary's 40th birthday party," which was used for cued recall during subsequent retrieval sessions (Campbell, Nadel, Duke, and Ryan 409). Then, participants were interviewed approximately a year and a half later to complete the study. Six participants were interviewed in-person and one interview was conducted over the phone. The interviewer was required not to comment or converse with the interviewees. Instead, the interviewer was tasked with engaging strictly as a listener. Participants were encouraged to discuss as many details of the memories as they could remember. Moreover, as the researchers write, "In addition they were instructed to include any new information that came to mind that they had not previously discussed" (Campbell, Nadel, Duke, and Ryan 408). Finally, their recollections were tape recorded and later transcribed for analysis.

After going through describing the details of the memories, participants were asked to rate the memory on six scales of importance. First, the importance of the event at the time it occurred. Second, the current importance of the memory. Third, the emotionality of the event at the time it occurred. Fourth, the current emotionality of the event. Fifth, how vivid the memory was being recalled, and sixth, their energy or arousal level at the time of the event (Campbell, Nadel, Duke, and Ryan 408). For each of these categories, participants were required to rate its importance, on a scale between one and five (1 = somewhat and up to 5 = extremely). Finally, they were asked to rate whether the event was regarded as positive or negative (-3 = very negative, and +3 = very positive).

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interviewed—after thirty days—to determine the strength of their retrieval. This study returns seven of these participants, from that study, to examine their memory retrieval after a year and a half. Source: Nadel, Lynn, Jenna Campbell and Lee Ryan. "Autobiographical Memory Retrieval and Hippocampal Activation as a Function of Repetition and the Passage of Time." *Neural Plasticity*. Hindawi Publishing Corporation. Vol. 2007, Article ID 90472, pp. 1–14.

In addition to the importance of the memories, participants were tested about the conditions of detail associated with the retelling of the memories. Three conditions of memory detail were tested. First, "internal details" concerned the details that occurred at the time of the event. For example, "This happened before my nephew turned nine." Or, "I remember this took place the day before John's retirement party." Internal details, thus, pertain to any circumstances of continuity regarding the time and place of the event. Second, "external details" provided context for the memory that was *not* unique to the event. These external details, the researchers write, "occurred outside the time window of the event, or provided a judgment about the event" (Campbell, Nadel, Duke, and Ryan 409). For example, "I had taken the bus into downtown several times in the past." These details may help frame the narrative but they do not explicitly concern the details of the event itself. Third, "editorial details" included statements of uncertainty. For example, "I think this was the day after the presidential election." Or, "Now that I think about it, it must have been the week before the election took place." Editorial details may, therefore, help to either bolster or encroach the accuracy of the telling of a personal memory.

Based on the results of their experiment, for all of the participants studied, detail counts—for all three of the conditions—*increased* over the year and a half delay (Campbell, Nadel, Duke, and Ryan 409). Details that were initially left unattended to, drawn from oversight, or rather, inadvertence, were elaborated on further in the follow-up study. To help assess these detailed increases, Campbell relied on the demonstration of participants' word count in the retelling of past events. Moreover, as the researchers assessed the ratings concerning the emotionality of the memories, Campbell writes:

> Interestingly, although the reported details of memories generally increased over time, the ratings of current emotionality, importance then and now, vividness, and arousal all

> declined significantly, regardless of the original retrieval condition, with the exception of the event at the time that it occurred (Campbell, Nadel, Duke and Ryan 410).

Contrary to the efforts of Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein, who advocated for a virtue of forgetting intensively negative memories, this study demonstrates the importance of allowing the participant to retrieve *more* details that were not included in their previous recollections. Moreover, by allowing the participant the opportunity to attend to details initially left out—inadvertently—the new recapitulation of the memory actually helped the participant's emotional intensity to become reduced. As Campbell stresses the point, the details of the events were "salient, emotionally charged, and important to the story of our lives as they are recounted and conveyed to family, friends, and strangers over months and years" (Campbell, Nadel, Duke, and Ryan 411). Inadvertent details were suddenly unfurled, and thus, these details helped expand the participants' understanding and emotional grappling of the memories that continued to play a role in their lives.

With regard to the role of inadvertency, although the participants were able to recount more details of past events, the study did not "assess the accuracy of the memories being described" (Campbell, Nadel, Duke, and Ryan 412). The memory details, therefore, may have been strengthened or altered over the duration of time. In spite of this possibility, the researchers insist, "It is critical to note that while these additions may be inaccurate they are not necessarily inappropriate, in that they reflect knowledge derived from prior (or subsequent) experiences of a related nature. This process serves to create a rich episodic narrative" (Campbell, Nadel, Duke, and Ryan 412). Any new information could have been brought *beyond* the frame of the memory that was initially told. In this way, inadvertency could contribute to altering the accuracy of the memory. Moreover, new information could be brought forth to more accurately describe the

event, and thus, this would describe inadvertency in terms of strengthening the memory. In any case, the process of retelling personal and emotionally charged memories has demonstrated that further details may actually help mitigate the intensity of emotional resonance.

MORAL IMPLICATIONS OF REMEMBERING ALL THAT AND THEN SOME: ATTENDING TO INADVERTENCY

The insights from neuroscience and cognitive psychology help to demonstrate how forgetting plays an important role in the way human beings are able to function in the retelling of memories and their willingness to forgive wrongdoers. With respect to these empirical findings, an eighteenth-century moral writer and preacher offers a moral obligation to pay caution to inadvertency. From his further reflections, paying caution to inadvertency may play a pivotal role in motivating people to engage in the process and expression of forgiveness. In so doing, Butler was able to acknowledge the richness, flexibility, complexity, and adaptability of human memory.

Butler clearly does not exclude forgetting from playing a role in his account of forgiveness. Rather than advocating human beings to suppress, avoid ruminating, or dwelling on painfully negative memories—as Boleyn-Fitzgerald and Blustein advocated, Butler morally obliges human beings to pay cautions to inadvertency; that is, to consider the possibility of miscalculating the injury itself, the severity of the injury, the magnified judgments attributed to the wrongdoer, and finally, to consider that the injured also inadvertently wrongs others. These considerations demonstrate that Butler considered forgetting to be something more complex than something that just happens to us, or rather, something that we simply become bored with, and finally, something that is simply too far from agency to count as a moral virtue, contra Murphy's assessment of Butler.. From the research of MTT, such further details may either strengthen the

accuracy of the memory or they may alter the memory. Moreover, based on the results from Campbell, Nadel, Duke, and Ryan, engaging in further memory details tends to reduce the emotional intensity associated with the contents of the memory. Allowing for this kind of detail expansion, therefore, may help convince the injured to forgive wrongdoers of injuries. Or, as Butler writes, it might "beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us" (*S* 9.3). In this way, the twenty-first century science helps to support Butler's further reflections that may have a more direct tendency to elicit the forgiveness of injuries. On the one hand, Lichtenfeld's empirical study demonstrates a way for empathetic emotions to help forget some judgments made about the wrongdoer. While the wrongdoings were not entirely forgotten, some judgments about the wrongdoer were, and this resulted in a greater willingness for participants to forgive than those who did not. On the other hand, Campbell's empirical study helps to exhibit some complexities of emotional memories, especially as time wears on. In some cases, false details may help to mitigate the emotional intensity of memories. In other cases, true details—those that may not have been adequately explored—could also come to the fore in helping the injured to affectively forgive. But, in both cases, forgetting played a contributing role that led to a more emotionally directed forgiveness.

This chapter explored some recent scientific studies about the relationship between forgetting and forgiveness. We also relied on Everett Worthington's breakdown of the two different kinds of forgiveness (decisional and emotional). These kinds of forgiveness were shown to have a great similarity in Butler's ninth sermon. Throughout the first half of the sermon, his account argued for a decisional kind of forgiveness. Before concluding his sermon, however, he moves into investigating an emotional kind of forgiveness that considers the role of inadvertency (both on behalf of wrongdoers and the injured). Before we conclude this thesis,

however, there are also many different kinds of inadvertency that are worth attending to as well. Indeed, as discussed earlier, inadvertency does share a relationship to forgetting or forgetfulness; however, it is not always the case that inadvertence is caused by forgetting. In many cases of criminal law, for example, inadvertent behaviors contribute to various degrees of blameworthiness and punishment. Sometimes, inadvertent actions are derived from forgetting, and other times, they are not. In the next section, I will describe some of the other varieties of inadvertency, particularly through issues including blameworthiness, negligence, recklessness and culpability.

VARIETIES OF INADVERTENCY IN MATTERS OF BLAMEWORTHINESS, CULPABILITY AND NEGLIGENCE

As was discussed in chapter three, Butler preached to a congregation of equity lawyers, clerks, and judges. Many of these people would have likely dealt with cases involving people who had acted inadvertently, and yet, were still culpable for various crimes. These inadvertent actions may be aligned with judgments of blame, culpability or negligence. Butler, in particular, makes a connection between inadvertency and carelessness. Going back to sermon eight, he explains that inadvertency, strong temptations and mistake often heighten or lessen resentment. Then, he writes, "Men do indeed resent what is occasioned through carelessness: but then they expect observance as their due, and so that carelessness is considered as faulty" (*S* 8.7). This relationship between inadvertency and carelessness is examined much further in a 2011 collection of papers moderated by Kenneth W. Simons: *Introduction to Symposium, Negligence in Criminal Law and Morality*. Simons also contributed an introductory essay to this symposium that includes papers written by Doug Hasak, Holly Smith, Michael Moore and Heidi Hurd. In his introductory essay, he sets forth a debate on inadvertent negligence, showing that many legal

scholars continue to grapple with questions about culpability, the distinction between negligence and recklessness, and also the severity of punishment for wrongdoings committed inadvertently.

To help explain the different varieties of inadvertency, I want to focus on Douglas Husak's essay, "Negligence, Belief, Blame and Criminal Liability: The Special Case of Forgetting." In this essay, Husak elucidates a case of inadvertency that involves the meaning of forgetting similarly in the way Butler considers in his further reflections of sermon nine. Husak does not consider inadvertency as an annihilation of memory, but rather, as a temporary forgetting that aligns closer to negligence or carelessness as Butler described in sermon eight. To briefly recalibrate Butler's view, the meaning of forgetting is described as an inadvertency on behalf of the injured *and* ourselves. Earlier in our lives, we have inadvertently wronged others before. Moreover, others have previously wronged us inadvertently. When the injured is wronged, they tend to forget that the wrongdoer probably committed the transgression with some involvement of inadvertency. The injury could be so glaring or emotionally intense that this is forgotten. In so doing, the injured magnifies the wrongdoer, the injury, or the judgments attributed to the wrongdoer's transgressions. This is a meaning of forgetting that is associated with an oversight attributed to human frailty. Butler appeals to inadvertency because he was not a believer of direct ill-will toward others and ourselves. His overall optimism about human nature encouraged him to consider inadvertency over ill-will. Hence, it is more probable that inadvertency contributed to the wrongdoing rather than direct ill-will. If the injured can consider inadvertency on behalf of the wrongdoer, then they should also consider inadvertency "in ourselves" (*S* 9.22). By implication, Butler believes that human beings are capable of making this connection to inadvertency; however, injuries tend to cause our passions to rise in ways that respond in proper or improper ways. Finally, in Michael Moore and Heidi Hurd's essay,

"Punishing the Awkward, the Stupid, the Weak, and the Selfish: The Culpability of Negligence," they discuss at least four different kinds of inadvertency. This essay helps to elucidate varieties of inadvertency that do not explicitly relate to forgetfulness.

Husak's primary aim is to investigate the distinction between negligence and recklessness by introducing a case involving forgetting. This case involves a defendant named Joe who generally knows that leaving an infant unattended in a bathtub is dangerous. While giving his infant a bath, however, he is distracted by a phone call, and thus, steps away from the room to take the call. In doing so, Joe "*forgets* that he has created a substantial and unjustifiable risk of harm" (Husak 199). Husak elucidates this example, writing:

> Joe, an otherwise loving parent, is busy giving a bath to his 1-year old son. The phone rings; he quickly leaves the bathroom to travel a few short steps down the hall to answer it, and becomes completely engrossed in the ensuing (unimportant) conversation. He forgets about the bath, and his son has drowned by the time he finally remembers" (Husak 201).

From this horrific case, Husak examines if Joe's action would be best identified as negligent or reckless. In his view, the action would be identified as reckless insofar as Joe was conscious and aware of the risk of leaving his son alone in the bathtub, stepped aside, took the phone call, and knowingly remained outside of the bathroom without returning to attend to the infant. In the event that he was not conscious and aware of the risk, however, the action would be identified as negligent precisely because he *should* have been aware of the risk. Based on the facts of the circumstances, most people would find Joe to be culpable and blameworthy for the death of his son; however, a disagreement would likely occur based on whether he ought to be punished for negligence rather than recklessness (Husak 207). Finally, the severity of the judgment is often

debated from behavioral negligence. From the standpoint of judging the degree of culpability or blameworthiness, according to Husak, this predicament often occurs when it involves cases of the kind of inadvertency associated with forgetting.

To unpack what was going on in Joe's mind when he walked outside to take the phone call, Husak considers the possibility that his inadvertent action—as a case of forgetting—identifies more closely with negligence than recklessness. In Joe's mind, he was previously aware and knew that leaving an infant unattended in the bathtub is risky and dangerous. When he stepped aside to take the phone call, however, he forgot about the peril that he had created. After realizing that he had been away from the bathroom for a lengthy period of time, he remembered the dangers that he had put his son into, and subsequently, he rushed back into the bathroom to find his son drowned. Joe acted negligently because he did not choose to engage in the criminal act of drowning his son. He also did not decide to leave his son alone for a long period of time because he did not care. According to Husak, "The negligent actor need not have a defective character; only one act of carelessness will suffice for liability. Joe may have an excellent memory and still be punished for his single lapse" (Husak 203). Indeed, Joe did not endure in a seriously excessive memory disorder. He *could have* avoided the harm if he had properly attended to the danger of leaving his infant unattended while stepping aside to take the phone call.

In Husak's view, the awareness of a belief (i.e. "Leaving an infant unattended in a bathtub is dangerous") does not have to be operating in Joe's thoughts for him to be judged to act recklessly. As Husak emphasizes, "reckless persons need not to be saying to themselves "this is risky" when they act" (Husak 209). In a similar vein, Husak argues that Joe was still tacitly aware that leaving an infant unattended in a bathtub is dangerous. Joe did not completely forget

that leaving infants unattended in a bathtub is dangerous. By stepping away from the bathroom, moreover, he did not suddenly forget that the bathroom was still there: the walls, ceiling, shower curtains, bottles of soap, etc. Joe's inadvertent behavior derived from a forgetting of a critical aspect to detail derived from multitasking behaviors (i.e. attending to the infant, preparing for the bath, hearing a phone call, stepping aside to take the phone call, concentrating on what the speaker was saying, gathering thoughts to respond to the message, etc.). The conglomeration of these competing details caused Joe to forget the dangers of leaving his son alone for a long time.

Husak writes, "Phenomenologically, we rarely articulate propositions to ourselves in order to qualify as believing them. And for good reason. Persons who are keenly aware of a risk and seek to minimize it quickly learn *not* to be distracted from their task by mentally entertaining such propositions" (Husak 209). For example, a baseball batter need not consciously reflect to himself, "I might strike out if I miss the next pitch," to properly anticipate the next pitch to arrive. They are still locked-in, so to speak, and ready to hit. In other words, the batter does not suddenly forget, "I might strike out if I miss the next pitch," while awaiting the next pitch. Thinking through this thought may, in fact, detract from their ability to hit the next pitch. The baseball batter would also demonstrate multitasking while preparing for the next pitch (i.e. they are choking their hands up on the bat, setting their feet inside the batter's box, looking at the pitcher's wind-up, timing the speed of the ball's arrival, etc.). They still know, at least tacitly, that they might strike out if they miss the next pitch; however, it need not be consciously reflected on awaiting the next pitch. As George Sher puts it, "he simply trusts himself to think of what is needed when the time comes. No agent could function at all if he did not have confidence that his mind will, just of its own accord, dip into his memory bank to deliver up just the information he needs at just the time he needs it" (Sher 127). In this regard, agents function with

a conscious front and nonconscious back, so to speak. There are conscious thoughts, but also, nonconscious oversights that still operate in our decision-making and behavior. These nonconscious operations do not indicate forgetting if it means the decay or annihilation of memory. But rather, as Husak develops further, when it comes to Joe's parental multitasking, this was precisely what caused him to forget to attend to his son.

In Joe's case, the forgetfulness of leaving his son in the bathtub was *retrievable*. He did not walk away from the bathtub with the intention of being gone for a long time. He probably left for what he thought was only a minute or two. Instead, after several minutes speaking on the phone, he became distracted and forgot about his son. As the conversation begins to wind down, Joe suddenly remembers, "My infant son is dangerously left alone in the bathtub!" This sudden recognition led Joe to drop the phone call, rush over into the bathroom, and unfortunately, find his son drowned. As a result, writes Husak, "Joe's case involves *temporary* rather than irretrievable forgetfulness" (Husak 212). This concerns Joe's awareness of details that were temporarily forgotten during the worst time and circumstances but could be retrievable. For example, the speaker on the phone might have informed Joe, "I actually need to go now because my son is waiting for me to pick him up from music practice." This news may have been blood curdling for Joe's memory retrieval of attending to his son's bath.

As Husak simplifies the case of forgetting, a person can only forget something they once believed. He writes, "In all such cases, there must have been a prior time at which the defendant *was* aware of the conditions that create the relevant risk. Later, however, he forgets about these conditions" (Husak 211). Connecting this with the case of Joe forgetting to attend to his infant, Husak argues that Joe tacitly believed that he was leaving his infant unattended in the bathtub. Drawing from Sher's analysis, he notes that it is even possible that Joe was aware of the very

risk, and hence, this awareness inevitably drove him away from other thoughts that were occurrent. He writes, “Sometimes it is our very awareness of the risk that drives the *occurrent* thoughts from our minds” (Husak 209 n.40). In other words, the conscious awareness of the risk may have precipitated the onslaught of occurrent thoughts that led to the infant’s drowning. Once the phone rang, for example, Joe temporarily forgot the risk of stepping away from the bathroom. Although Joe recognized the following premises, “My baby is unattended in the tub,” and also, “Babies left unattended in tubs are at risk of dying,” he forgot to draw the following inference, “My baby is at risk of dying” (Husak 213). By stepping aside and taking the phone call, therefore, he inadvertently forgot to infer premises one and two with the conclusion, “My baby is at risk of dying.” This conclusion was forgotten based on the occurrent thoughts that Joe dealt with during the multitasking of the infant and the phone call.

According to the article by Nash Unsworth, Richard P. Heitz, and Nathan A. Parks, “The Importance of Temporal Distinctness for Forgetting over the Short Term,” on the one hand, empirical researchers have argued that forgetting derives from temporal decay. Over time, information simply decays and becomes forgotten. On the other hand, there is growing research arguing that “previously presented items interfere with the ability to recall the current item because of problems in discrimination at retrieval” (Unsworth 1079). In this regard, it is not the case that information simply decays over time that causes forgetting to occur. Rather, the current item of information (e.g. attending to the infant in the bathtub) is proactively interfered with other items of information, and hence, this is another significant cause of forgetting. As these authors emphasize, proactive interference “occurs because the information is no longer temporally distinct after a long delay, but rather blends in with other similar information presented previously, causing increased confusability between items” (Unsworth 1079). Based

on short term memory empirical studies, the accumulation of details can conflict with each other that causes forgetting. This interference is proactive rather than something associated with decay of memory as time goes on.

If we consider that Joe's forgetfulness was caused by a proactive interference of information, then is his wrongdoing forgivable? Considering the perspective of the mother of the infant son, this would be difficult to determine. This might be an unforgivable mistake. Since Butler poured so many reflections on resentment and forgiveness, it was his overall moral view that human beings ought to forgive each other. To forgive is much better than to allow a person's resentment to fester and become abusive (e.g. becoming a vengeful person). Furthermore, forgiveness produces greater delight than wallowing in the miseries of resentment. As Butler writes, "Let it not be taken for granted that the temper of envy, rage, resentment yields greater delight than meekness, forgiveness, compassion, and goodwill; especially when it is acknowledged that rage, envy, resentment are in themselves mere misery; and the satisfaction arising from the indulgence of them is little more than relief from that misery" (*S* 3.8). From his religious view, moreover, he would argue that the mother forgiving Joe would be better than refusing to do so because it would benefit her in the afterlife (i.e. being a forgiving person in this life will probably benefit her in the afterlife). The mother would certainly be justified in holding onto resentment directed at Joe. As Butler puts it, "Resentment is not inconsistent with good-will: for we often see both together in very high degree; not only in parents towards their children, but in cases of friendship and dependence, where there is no natural relation" (*S* 9.13). Here, however, the resentment and good will would communicate between the parents of the drowned son. Thus, the mother is justified in maintaining her resentment; however, Butler

obliges this resentment to be more closely aligned with good will than with abuses (e.g. scorn, hate, malice or vengefulness).

Could the mother take the route of a decisional kind of forgiveness? Returning to Worthington's terminology, she would need to make a rational decision to resist an unforgiving stance and to release Joe from the massive debt associated with the injury. Connecting this decisional kind of forgiveness with Butler's reasoning, the mother may need to "have a due, natural sense of the injury, and no more; [s]he ought to be affected towards the injurious person in the same way any good [wo]men, uninterested in the case, would be" (*S* 9.19). Indeed, it would be extremely difficult for the mother to attend to the injury as though she were uninterested in the case. This is a transgression that would be hard to reestablish in the manner of a respectful civilian relationship. Despite the horrendous circumstances, however, the mother could still decide to resist an unforgiving stance, and rationally, forgive Joe. In similar circumstances, this would not be out of the question, even if the families and friends of the mother argue against it.

From the angle of emotional forgiveness, the mother would need to replace her negative emotions with more positive feelings like compassion, sympathy, and empathy. The effort to appeal to an emotional kind of forgiveness, writes Worthington, involves "cultivating positive affect" (Worthington 292). Indeed, the devastating loss of the infant son is also Joe's, not only the mother's loss. Although the mother may not be able to fully understand how Joe walked away from the infant in the bathtub, she may still be able to comprehend that the transgression was not intentional, and further, that it was caused from a forgetting derived from parental multitasking, something that many mothers have endured as well (although normally not to the severity of a son actually drowning). In other words, although Joe's transgression is a horribly

inadvertent mistake, he was still a loving and caring father who had no intentions of causing his son to drown. Thus, for the mother to express an emotional kind of forgiveness, she would need to experience compassion and empathy for the fact that Joe is also suffering pain and misery, even if the resentment is justified to experience as well.

Before concluding this section, I want to examine other varieties of inadvertency that are different from the kind associated with forgetting. Indeed, inadvertency is not always caused by forgetting. I might inadvertently close my Microsoft word document without saving my recent work. This inadvertent action would correspond more closely with an accident rather than forgetfulness. To help elaborate on other varieties of inadvertency, Michael Moore and Heidi Hurd provide at least four additional kinds of inadvertency: "Flaws in motor control, cognition, motivation, or conation" (Moore and Hurd 167). First, flaws in motor control include sensory impairments (e.g. blindness or impaired hearing) that could inadvertently do harm. Some people are often identified as "accident-prone," for example. In many circumstances, a person's muscles, reflexes, or neurological limitations, may fail to operate properly. Moore and Hurd lump all of these under the broader term, "clumsiness."

Inadvertencies based on cognition are also quite extensive. These may include conditions that cause short attention spans (e.g. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), making it difficult for people to properly pay attention to what they are doing. Some people may endure momentary lapses of memory caused by the development of dementia or Alzheimer's Disease, "making it impossible for them to draw on the lessons of the past as they draw inferences about the riskiness of their conduct in the present" (Moore and Hurd 168). Other cognition based inadvertencies may derive from cognitive biases whereby people may carry an over-optimism associated with wishful thinking that improperly inflates the benefits of their actions.

Inadvertency also concerns matters of motivation. According to Moore and Hurd, “In many cases in which people impose unjustifiable but unforeseen risks on others, it is tempting to think that they manifest one or more common vices—e.g. narcissism, selfishness, jealousy, sloth, indifference, extravagance, gluttony, envy, lust, greed, vainglory, despair, cowardliness” (Moore and Hurd 169). A person may even inadvertently harm others while aiming to live a life of virtue. For example, a person could inadvertently run over a dog while hurriedly riding their bike to a veterinary clinic to care for dogs there. Inadvertent behaviors could also occur for actors performing in an improv theatre event. Perhaps, the actor aimed to respond to a cast mate with something funny and thoughtful; however, they inadvertently said something unpleasant and hurtful.

Finally, inadvertency can be categorized with certain conational defects. As Moore and Hurd elaborate, “One who suffers from akrasia, or weakness of will, is prone to succumbing to short-term temptations in a way that sabotages his own well-reasoned goals. He thus possesses a conational deficit that may well be a reason why his actions result in inadvertent harm to others” (Moore and Hurd 168). An impetuous or impulsive person, or rather, someone who acts before they things, is listed amongst the many inadvertent behaviors associated with conation.

From inadvertent behaviors derived from flaws in motor control, cognition, motivation, conation, and finally, forgetting, this is quite a common and everyday experience that is a part of the human experience. Returning to Butler’s ninth sermon, indignities or injuries are more likely derived from inadvertencies than direct ill-will. As Butler reiterates:

> We ought all to be disposed to excuse in others, from experiencing so much of them in ourselves. A great man of antiquity is reported to have said, that, as he never was indulgent to any one fault in himself, he could not excuse those of others. This sentence

> could scarce with decency come out of the mouth of any human creature. But if we invert the former part, and put it thus: that he was indulgent to many faults himself, as it is to be feared the best of us are, and yet was implacable, how monstrous would such an assertion appear? And this is the case in respect to every human creature, in proportion as he is without the forgiving spirit I have been recommending (*S* 9.26).

Inadvertencies are a part of the human experience. Since human beings can experience so much inadvertency on behalf of ourselves, then we ought to be able to detect inadvertencies on behalf of others as well.

For Butler, it would be monstrous for us to be unable or unwilling to consider the meaning of inadvertency as another way to help elicit forgiveness. To sum up, if human beings are unwilling to forgive wrongdoers—based on the decisional kinds of forgiveness attributed to the objective theorist perspective or the third-party bystander's perspective (supported by the general principle of benevolence), then Butler's final resort is to appeal to the additional feature of human experience: inadvertency. With this consideration in mind, Butler aimed to "*beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us*" (*S* 9.3). As a result, Butler's account of forgiveness involves a meaningful consideration of forgetting that aids toward the climax of his sermon which argues for his congregation, and readers, to engage in the forgiving spirit that he has been recommending.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, it has first been demonstrated—from a descriptive and historical standpoint—that Butler's account of forgiveness involves another meaning of forgetting—as the appeal to inadvertency on behalf of others and ourselves—helps convince the injured to forgive. Historically, Butler went further—in sermon nine—to argue that we ought to appeal to inadvertency—both on behalf of wrongdoers and on behalf of ourselves—to help elicit an emotional kind of forgiveness. These further reflections were investigated to show that Butler clearly took into serious consideration how attending to inadvertency could also help to convince people to forgive, especially when it concerns the fact that his congregation had largely become morally indifferent (on the heels of the South Sea Bubble and other political controversies surrounding the equity courts). The social and political scrutiny that public opinion cast onto the equity law courts helps to support the view that Butler was preaching to a congregation that needed an additional moral spark of practical application. A morally educated congregation does not necessarily apply their education in their everyday lives. Indeed, these historical circumstances have yet to be examined by those who adhered to Murphy's traditional reading of Butler, or even by the Contemporary Butlerians (i.e. Newberry, Griswold, Garcia, and Pagani).

Since Butler preached at the Rolls Chapel from 1719-1726, it is likely that he wrote and preached a few hundred sermons during that period. After his friend and editor, Thomas Secker, convinced him to choose his best fifteen sermons to publish, it is worthwhile to note that two out of those fifteen chosen sermons that he chose to publish emphasize the relationship between resentment and forgiveness. Clearly, Butler regarded these sermons to be crucial—not only for his congregation—but also, for general and philosophically minded readers.

Notably, from a normative standpoint, Butler argues that human beings are morally

obligated to attend to inadvertency—on behalf of wrongdoers and ourselves—because it demonstrates a function of human frailty. Through the weaknesses of human nature, we inadvertently act from accident or mistake without forgetting. Or, we inadvertently act with forgetting. This appeal to human frailty is supported by Butler's optimistic view on human nature. Overall, he did not believe in general principles of ill-will towards others or ill-will toward ourselves. In this regard, he preferred to argue that it is more than likely that human beings wronged each other from *some* contribution of inadvertency, carelessness, mistake or misunderstanding, than as a result of the contributions of pure evil. Thus, Butler would clearly prefer the normative standard that the injured ought to consider any forgotten details—that should have been remembered—than the notion that actions were derived from evil intentions.

Throughout this dissertation, it was demonstrated that Butler considered rational principles, appetites, passions, and affections, on behalf of others *and* on behalf of ourselves. With regard to compassion, for example, Butler argued that human beings need to be compassionate for others. In order to properly express compassion for others, moreover, they also need to demonstrate compassion for ourselves. As he puts it, "The private interest of the individual would not be sufficiently provided for by reasonable and cool self-love alone: therefore the appetites and passions are placed within us as a guard and further security, without which it would not be taken due care of" (*S* 5.10). Moreover, in sermon twelve, "Upon the Love of our Neighbor," Butler argues that, in order to properly love our neighbor, we also need to attend to an appropriate degree of love to ourselves. He emphasizes this, writing, "The precept before us may be understood to require, that we love our neighbor in some certain *proportion* or other, *according as* we love ourselves" (*S* 12.9). Finally, this relationship—between the others and ourselves—is also demonstrated with regard to inadvertency. By considering the wrongdoer

to commit a wrongdoing from any inadvertency, then, writes Butler, "From this proper point of view, we should likewise in all probability see something of these…in ourselves" (*S* 9.22). Therefore, the reciprocity of concerns for the other, and the concerns for ourselves, reverberate—in Butler's moral philosophy—for compassion, for love, and also, for an understanding of inadvertency (i.e. either an inadvertent mistake without forgetting or an inadvertent mistake with forgetting) as another route to an emotional forgiveness.

Butler clearly argues for his congregation—and readers—to forgive for moral reasons. He believed that it was better to forgive than to exercise resentment in abusive ways. He also prefers forgiving over moral indifference. He did not want his congregation to leave The Rolls Chapel without being encouraged to forgive in their everyday, practical lives. Further, he was not trying to play lip service to forgiveness as something that he did not believe in either. He truly believed that forgiveness was crucial for his time and day—both publicly and privately. Although it is one thing to forgive from a decisional, deliberative or rational standpoint, it is also another thing to forgive from an emotional standpoint. As has been demonstrated, Butler considered forgiveness to arise in both of these ways. Indeed, he never dismissed either way that the injured can appropriately forgive wrongdoers—by appealing to the objective theorist's perspective or from the perspective of the disinterested spectator (via Griswold and Garcia). Perhaps, this is all that is needed for some people to forgive wrongdoers; however, since Butler took seriously the sceptic, he continued to carry on forwards to the further reflections of sermon nine.

Butler's appeal to inadvertency provides another way to emotionally forgive wrongdoers. As he puts it, considering inadvertency may "*beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us*" (*S* 9.3). This kind of emotional forgiveness does not require the injured to

rely on the objective theorist's perspective to oblige the injured to forgive because it is our nature to forgive. Moreover, it does not rely on the perspective of the innocent bystander to love the wrongdoer as we would love to a fellow civilian. Rather, it encourages human beings to call attention to the frailty of the human condition. This frailty considers carelessness, negligence, mistakes, misunderstandings, and, even, forgotten details that should not have been forgotten. His emphasis on inadvertency brings another unique layer to his account of forgiveness that has not been previously examined. In my view, this additional layer is worthwhile for many people who have come to understand the principle of benevolence, and yet, are not willing to adhere to it when it comes to other people injuring them. To be clear, when other people are injured, it is easier to instruct them to forgive, and love their enemies, because, simply, it is the right thing to do. However, when other people injure us, it is not always easy to live by our own advice, which we give to others. Indeed, we often become experts when it comes to handling the problems of others. But, when we are injured or hurt, it is not easy to heed our own advice. The road to forgiveness becomes more treacherous. By considering inadvertency—on behalf of others and ourselves—the injured can still legitimate and support their resentment for those who have wronged us. But, by calling attention to the fact that self-love tends to magnify the wrongdoer as worse than they really are, we are obliged to look at ourselves in the mirror, so to speak, and detect times when we have acted inadvertently toward others. This changing of perspectives makes for a compelling case to forgive others.

This dissertation also aimed to settle the Contemporary Butlerian debate concerning what theory of emotions Butler's account of forgiveness most adhered to. By relying on historical accuracies that investigate theories of emotion—during Butler's time of writing and preaching—it helps show that he wavers between adhering to feeling and cognitivist theories. Since Butler

was not a philosopher of extreme positions (he tended to mediate between extreme philosophical positions), it makes no sense to try to detect strains of thought that support either extreme position. Moreover, with the help of Malebranche, the philosophical debate on the passions was also shown to be complex during Butler's time. In other words, I argued that the extreme positions—between the feeling and cognitivist theories—were not calcified during the time Butler wrote and preached. It appears more probable than not—indeed, he was a thinker who examined matters of probability as the best guide for living—that he was mediating between both extremes, especially as a thinker whose goal was to convince his congregation to be able to manage their emotions to forgive.

In sum, this dissertation argues that Butler's further reflections are especially relevant today based on the growing body of research in neuroscience and empirical psychology. From a historical and textual point of view, Butler clearly considered a way that forgetting can also help to elicit forgiveness. Although a neuroscientist will not be able to read Butler to map the brain, his account of forgiveness is still relevant and compatible with scientific researchers who have demonstrated, and continue to investigate, the relationship between forgiving and forgetting. Those who continue to examine this relationship could find Butler's insights appealing, especially throughout the further reflections of sermon nine. Going further than neuroscientists or empirical psychologists, finally, anyone interested in the moral importance of forgiveness—even those that are not directly affiliated with a religious tradition—can read Butler's work with the encouragement to go out and forgive. Indeed, if a person is unwilling to forgive for religious reasons, then perhaps they are still willing to forgive for reasons that connect with the imperfections of human memory, the frailties of being human, and thus, inadvertent mistakes without forgetting, and finally, inadvertent forgetting (on behalf of others and ourselves).

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