John Wesley's Excursions into Beauty and Taste

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Throughout his more than fifty-year tenure as the founder, leader, and patriarch of Methodism in the British Isles, John Wesley never dismissed an opportunity, in his sermons, miscellaneous prose tracts, journals, and letters, to insert his notions of beauty and taste along side the standard concepts of the beautiful (concerning both objects and persons) that attempted to influence the hearts and the minds of his age. Quick perusal of Wesley's diaries and published journal extracts reveals that the graduate of Christ Church and the fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, had read parts (or at least knew of the existence of) such pieces as William Temple's "Upon the Garden of Epicurus" (1690), Francis Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1725), Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Alexander Gerard's "An Essay on Taste" (1759), Horace Walpole's *Essay on Modern Gardening* (1785). However, formal aesthetic criteria or theory claimed little control over or influence upon him; instead, they functioned principally as bases for contrast or as points of transition toward his own views. Long before the events leading to his evangelical conversion on 24 May 1738, Wesley observed and gave his voice to "all things bright and beautiful," as filtered through his Puritanical and Bible-centered notions of Godliness–injected into the veins of his intellect at an early age by a Puritan focused but evangelically benevolent mother. "We must let our good works be seen to the praise and glory of that God which gives us grace to perform those good works," noted Susanna Wesley the elder in her private journal, "but never that we may be seen or taken notice of or esteemed of men. We trust never presume the endeavouring that the praise or glory of them may devolve on ourselves, but if through divine assistance we do any good action let us immediately say, 'not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be ascribed all praise and glory."[1] Such a declaration, embraced by Wesley, points to the

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origins of his early struggles between faith and works, a theological conflict that would contribute to his highly personal perceptions of beauty and taste.

Thus, Wesley conceived of beauty not only in the contexts of order, proportion, perception, or aesthetic experience, but as one means of creating and presenting persons and objects as acceptable to God. However, he, himself, never really defined the terms *beauty* and *taste*, having preferred, instead, to filter them through related qualities and other writers' efforts to define and explicate them. For example, after having digested Gerard's *Essay on Taste*[2] and Addison's eleven *Spectator* essays on the "Pleasures of the Imagination,"[3] Wesley, toward the end of his long life, reached for his own pen to produce a seventeen-paragraph piece under the title *Thoughts upon Taste* (1780). At the outset, the Methodist patriarch complained that Gerard neither explained nor defined his subject, while Addison's essay, though setting forth "some ingenious thoughts" (465-466), lacked breadth. To fill the void, Wesley offered to his Methodist readers several "species of taste" (466), among them being "that which relates to the objects that gratify the imagination. Thus, we are accustomed to say, a man has a taste for grandeur, for novelty, or for beauty; meaning thereby, that he takes pleasure in grand, in new, or in beautiful objects, whether they are such by nature or by art. And herein there is an unbounded variety. I mean in the different tastes of men; same having a taste for grandeur, some for beauty. Some, again, have a taste for one kind of beauty; and others for another. Some have a taste for the beauties of nature; others for those of art. The former for flowers, meadows, fields, or woods; the latter for painting or poetry. But some have a taste both for the one and the other." (467) Therefore, scholars aware of Wesley's role in the overall spiritual and social reformation of the eighteenth century quickly discern the ground upon which the Methodist leader had chosen to search for his principal "species" of taste, as he prepared for the transition of beauty and taste from art to what he conceived as evangelical responsibility. "May we not...observe," he queried, "that there is a beauty in virtue, in gratitude, and disinterested benevolence? And have not many, at least, a taste in this? Do they not discern and relish it, wherever they find it? Yea, does it not give them one of the most delicate pleasures whereof the human mind is capable? Is not this taste of infinitely more value, than a taste for any or all the pleasures of imagination? And is not this pleasure infinitely more delicate, than any that ever resulted, yea, or can result, from the utmost refinements of music, poetry, or painting?" (467) Essentially, Wesley could accept the arguments both of Addison and Gerard, particularly Addison's definition that fine taste represents "that faculty of the mind which discerns with pleasure all the beauties of writing."(468) Addison and Gerard focused principaly upon art; Wesley insisted upon widening the expanse of the lens to include both art and nature--nature, he maintained throughout, owing its very existence to a God-created and God-centered world. And, of course, the beauty of that very nature could, potentially, be experienced easily, out of doors, by every person at practically every level of society.

More than five years prior to their abortive mission to the Georgia colony (1736-1737) and eight years before their evangelical conversions in London, John and Charles Wesley had entered into relationships of various sorts and on various levels with several ladies from Gloucestershire that (given the only available seats with a view for the present audience) appear to assume the form of an epistolary serial melodrama, complete with its

own *dramatis personae*.[5] Without bothering to enter into the particulars, one might state, with accuracy, that the exchange allows for a glimpse into certain notions of beauty and taste embraced by John Wesley. At that moment in his life a relatively young and inexperienced Oxford don, he desperately sought to maintain control over his own romantic passions while simultaneously harboring notions of preparing himself for episcopal ordination and a total commitment to performing the spiritual and social work of the Lord. On 14 August 1731, John Wesley wrote to Ann Granville, in part struggling a bit too hard to paint a new stage scenery of a recent meeting between the two: "I hope to retain some of the reflections which the smooth turf on which we sat, the trees overshading and surrounding us, the fields and meadows beneath, and the opposite hills, with the setting sun just glimmering over their brows, assisted Aspasia [Mary Granville Pendarves] and Selima [Ann Granville] in inspiring, till I have the happiness of meeting part, at least, of the same company on Horrel[6] again."[7] Clearly, for Wesley at this point in his life, natural beauty, at its highest calling, represents the principal earthly agent of divine inspiration intended to calm the heart and to direct the mind. In addition, the reverse spatial order of the preceding passage indicates the degree of Wesley's eventual control over his rhetorical brush, as he extends it heavenward, from turf to setting sun.

To appreciate further the method by which Wesley constructed his broad notion and function of natural beauty, consider but one or two examples (and those relatively late in his life) from his voluminous journals.[8] On Thursday, 5 July 1770, he preached at Dawgreen, near Dewsbury, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. "All things contributed to make it a refreshing season: the gently declining sun, the stillness of the evening, the beauty of the meadows and fields, through which 'The smooth clear "river drew its sinuous train, "'the opposite hills and woods, and the earnestness of the people, covering the top of the hill on which we stood; and above all the Day-spring from on high, the consolation of the Holy One!"[9] As a common practice, Wesley quoted from memory and tended to splice strands from his sources. Thus, "The smooth clear 'river drew its sinuous train'" comes from at least two separate passages in Milton's *Paradise Lost*,[10] while his most convenient source for "the Day-spring on high" resides at the end of the first chapter of Luke.[11] More importantly, however, the reader again notices Wesley's overall spatial scheme of the scene: the declining sun presides over the stillness of the evening, which, in turn bestows beauty downward upon the meadows and fields and to the rivers, hills, and woods; but the congregation assembled *atop* the hill stands within the heart of that divine beauty; the entire setting represented, for Wesley, the manifestation of God's comfort to and for God's people. Four years later (Tuesday, 14 June 1774), Wesley, in County Durham, crossed over the steep hills and the moors from Swaledale and came down "into Wensleydale, the largest by far of all the Dales, as well as most the beautiful." The reversal of direction–from turf to sun, from meadows and fields to mountain top–functioned, for Wesley, as a means of harnessing beauty as a sense of relief or deliverance, in this instance deliverance from the barren (depressing, perhaps) moors and hills of Swaledale to the more fertile (and refreshing) environs of Weardale.[12]

Within a related setting and context, note the Methodist leader's tendency to identify associations between the phenomena of nature and their immediate religious effects. Raised and educated within the traditional ecclesiastical settings of the Church of England,

Wesley, immediately following his 1738 evangelical conversion, believed that he could continue to perform the most basic of his ministerial functions–preaching and conducting of the service of the Church–within the confines of church buildings. However, once Church officials began to deny him access to those buildings, he followed (although, at the outset, with certain misgivings) the example of his junior, George Whitefield, and took to the open fields. Those outdoor homiletic exercises not only served to increase the sizes of his congregations, they strengthened his appreciation for the beauty and purpose of a God-created nature. As but a single example, consider his reaction, at Northampton on 24 November 1769, to this scene: "This evening, there was such an *Aurora Borealis* as I never saw before: the colours, both the white, the flame-colour, and the scarlet, were so exceedingly strong and beautiful. But they were awful too, so that abundance of people were frighted into many good resolutions."[13] For Wesley, the spectacle of that God-created natural phenomenon became a highly emotional but meaningful evangelical sign; in that sense, natural beauty generating from the various colors displayed, dramatically, the power of God–the determination of God to demonstrate to that particular Methodist assembly the need for "good resolutions" and to hold Wesley's followers to such a commitment.

Thus, in Wesley's aesthetic world, there emerged, after 1745 and the solidification of his Methodist organization, a sharp contrast between the potential for viewing forms of the beautiful created by human beings within a church edifice as opposed to experiencing the natural manifestations of beauty outside of that purely institutional structure. In those *Spectator* papers devoted to "The Pleasures of the Imagination," Addison considered architecture as "that particular art, which has a more immediate tendency, than any other, to produce those primary pleasures of the imagination." At mid-point in his discussion, Addison focused upon the construction of houses of worship, declaring that "We are obliged to devotion for the noblest buildings that have adorned the several countries of the world. It is this that has set men at work on temples and public places of worship, not only that they might, by the magnificence of the building, invite the Deity to reside within it, but that such stupendous works might, at the same time, open the mind to vast conceptions, and fit it to converse with the divinity of the place. For every thing that is majestic, imprints an awfulness and reverence on the mind of the beholder, and strikes in with the natural greatness of the soul."[14] Although Wesley, on various occasions within his irregular ecclesiastical career, preached and attended public worship in such buildings, he only rarely stood in awe of or admired them–either as works of art or as denominational symbols. For example, on Sunday, 29 August 1762, the Methodist leader attended service at Exeter Cathedral, in Devonshire. What attracts his attention? A "useful sermon, and the [fact that the] whole service was performed with great seriousness and decency. Such an organ I never saw or heard before, so large, so beautiful, and so finely toned. And the music of 'Glory be to God in the highest,' I think, exceeded the *Messiah* itself."[15] The substance of beauty, in this instance, assumed the form of the music from an anthem, obscuring from Wesley's line of vision the architectural grandeur of one of the more majestic among the Norman church structures in England. Twenty years later, on Tuesday, 18 August 1782, the Methodist patriarch, then age seventy-nine, returned to Exeter Cathedral. What attracts his attention? The "decent" behavior of the congregation and the solemnity of the music following holy communion, "one of the finest composi-

tions I ever heard." At the end of the service, John Ross, Bishop of Exeter, invited Wesley to dinner at the bishop's palace, then situated to the south of the chancel. The latter's critical eye and mind saw fit to retain only the images of "(1) "the lovely situation of the palace, covered with trees and as rural and retired as if it was quite in the country; (2) the plainness of the furniture, not costly or showy, but just fit for a Christian bishop; (3) the dinner sufficient, but not redundant; plain and good, but not delicate; (4) the propriety of the company, five clergymen and four of the aldermen; and (5) the genuine, unaffected courtesy of the bishop, who, I hope, will be a blessing to his whole diocese."[16] The word "plain" and its variants emerge as important to the series of observations, for they stand–along side such parallel terms as "sufficiency," "goodness," propriety, and "unaffectedness"–as among Wesley's essential criteria for beauty and taste. Little wonder, then, that he could easily achieve a transition from Exeter Cathedral to the two-year-old refurbished Methodist chapel at Limerick, Ireland. On Saturday, 8 June 1765, Wesley rode to that town "and found the preaching-house just finished. I liked it best of any in the kingdom, being neat, yea, elegant, yet not gaudy."[17] The same situation had held true on 25 September 1759, when Wesley preached in the new Methodist house at Salisbury, Wiltshire, and later informed the readers of his journal extract that "The new roam there is, I think, the most complete in England. It strikes everyone of any taste that sees it–not with any single part, but an inexpressible something in the whole."[18] As with his commentary upon Exeter Cathedral, Wesley underscored for the readers of his journal extracts, particularly the Methodists among them, what did and what did not constitute priorities for beauty and taste. Those qualities contributing to the Methodist patriarch's design for elegance–neatness and plainness–became the models for the emergence of eighteenth-century Methodist chapels built upon the so-called "Methodist Plan."

When, on one of the limited occasions upon which Wesley chose to doff his clerical hat in the direction of traditional ecclesiastical architecture, he exercised rhetorical caution and control so as not to contradict his aesthetic principles and priorities. The final paragraph of his journal entry for 23 November 1774 demonstrates, from yet another perspective, that for him, the word "beauty" held a number and variety of meanings and applications:

> About two [p.m.], I preached in an house [at Ely, Cambridgeshire] well filled with plain, loving people. I then took a walk to the cathedral, one of the most beautiful I have seen. The western tower is exceeding grand, and the nave of an amazing height. Hence we went through a fruitful and pleasant country, though surrounded with fens, to Sutton [Cambridgeshire]. Here many people had lately been stirred up. They had prepared a large barn. At six o'clock [p.m.], it was well filled, and it seemed as if God sent a message to every soul. The next morning and evening, though the weather was uncommonly severe, the congregation increased rather than diminished.[19]

Once more relying on spatial arrangement, Wesley guided his readers from the Methodist preaching house, with its "plain, loving people," to the grand and beautiful Ely Cathedral–which he described only in general terms and never mentioned the people or

the liturgical activities within. Then, without so much as a backward rhetorical glance at the beauty and grandeur of that structure, he plunged quickly into the fruitful and pleasant countryside between Ely and Sutton. The large barn of the latter town then superimposes itself upon the image of Ely Cathedral; every soul in the congregation had embraced God's message, and even the severe weather on the following morning did not dull the worshippers' emotions. Wesley departed from Sutton on 25 November, "in much hope that they will continue in this earnest, simple Love."[20] Thusly, if somewhat circuitously, did John Wesley define beauty.

Classical symmetry arises as yet another criterion by which Wesley attempted to provide his readers with what he believed to have been the essence and substance of beauty. Stranded for a week during late August-early September 1787 at St. Peter Port, Isle of Guernsey, by rain and high winds, the eighty-five-year-old Wesley found a free afternoon to tour Cambridge Park (or the New Ground), a favorite evening strolling place for the local gentry. "Both the upper ground, which is as level as a bowling-green, and the lower, which is planted with rows of trees, are wonderfully beautiful."[21] Such a quick glimpse and almost cryptic reaction hardly provide substance to support Wesley's views; they combine to serve merely as a hollow precis to his more developed commentary on the beauty of the classic rural scene, as had been set down in detail (at least insofar as concerns a journal entry) eight years earlier in his journal for Wednesday, 13 October 1779. Informing his readers that he had already experienced the Painshill Gardens at Cobham, Surrey (5 October 1771),[22] and Henry Hoare's gardens at Stourhead, Wiltshire (12 September 1776),[23]

> ...I was now desired to take a view of the much more celebrated gardens at Stowe [Buckinghamshire]. The first thing I observed was the beautiful water which runs through the gardens to the front of the house. The tufts of trees, placed on each side of this, are wonderfully pleasant. And so are many of the walks and glades through the woods, which are disposed with a fine variety. The large pieces of water interspersed give a fresh beauty to the whole.[24]

To that point in his narrative, John Wesley, the Oxford don, the reader of Horace and Virgil and Herbert and Marvell, appeared to have lost himself in the thoughts and manners of a preceding generation wherein, Maynard Mack has informed us, "landscape and garden...assume some of the functions of album and commonplace book, philosophical *vademecum* and *momento mori*. They serve as aides to reflection–or to recollection, introspection, and worship, giving us, says Addison [in *Spectator* 477], 'a great Insight into the Contrivance and Wisdom of Providence' and suggesting 'innumerable subjects for Meditation.'"[25] However, Wesley, himself, rudely interrupted his own meditation upon the classical gardens at Stowe, as though suddenly remembering his own present identity and position, as well as that of the audience for whom he had carefully prepared his journal extracts:

> Yet there are several things which must give disgust to any person of common sense: (1) the buildings called temples are most miserable, many of them both within and without. Sir John Vanbrugh's is an ugly, clumsy lung, hardly fit for a gentle-

> man's stable; (2) the temples of Venus and Bacchus, though large, have nothing elegant in the structure. And the paintings in the former, representing a lewd story, are neither well designed nor executed; those in the latter are quite faded, and most of the inscriptions vanished away; (3) the statues are full as coarse as the paintings; particularly those of Apollo and the Muses–whom a person not otherwise informed might take to be cook-maids; (4) most of the water in the ponds is dirty and thick as puddle; (5) it is childish affectation to call things here by Greek or Latin names, as Styx and Elysian Fields; (6) it was ominous for my lord to entertain himself and his noble company in a grotto built on the bank of Styx, that is, on the brink of hell; (7) the river on which it stands is a black, filthy puddle, exactly resembling a common sewer....[26]

Essentially, certain superficial, imitative, and cheap attempts to create anew the classical scene offended Wesley's prescriptive sense of classical beauty, in much the same manner as the offense to himself and his labors brought on by "lumps" of drunken, rock-throwing hecklers who continually sought to erode the sound and the sense of his outdoor worship services. Ornamentation violated Wesley's spirit of the plain and simple; the latter collectively served as the thesis to his overall evangelical mission, while the former assumed the presence of the Established Church that he wished, simply and plainly, to cleanse and to elevate. Finally, note Wesley's attention to dirt and decay, defects that corresponded with his constant concern that faith, as with art and architecture, must undergo continued maintenance, lest it decay and crumble and become nothing.

Although the name never enters upon any of Wesley's printed pages, one would be almost eager to label the founder and leader of the Methodists as one of the few adherents to the work of John Pomfret. That Bedfordshire Church of England clergyman and minor poet left the world a year before John Wesley's entrance into it; his single claim upon the memories of students, during the decades prior to the 1970's, usually stood near the opening of the literature anthologies for his having illustrated a clear example of the virtues to be discovered and absorbed from the Aristotelian ideal of retirement that the neoclassicists firmly embraced. In his popular *The Choice* (1700), Pomfret announced that

> Near same fair Town I'd have a private Seat,
> Built Uniform, not Little, nor too Great:
> Better if on a Rising Ground it stood;
> Fields on this side, on that a Neighbouring Wood;
> It should no other Things contain
> But what were Useful, Necessary, Plain. (5-10)[27]

If nothing else, John Wesley's notions of beauty and taste, as well as his methods of expressing those notions, demonstrate how tenaciously he held to the rhetorical and philosophical conventions that governed his own times. Indeed, his reaction, on 29 November 1771, to the Duke of Cumberland's improvements at Windsor Park reads almost as a prose version of Pomfret's poem: "The most remarkable work is the triangular

tower. . .built on the edge of Windsor Park. It is surrounded with shrubberies and woods, having some straight, some serpentine walks in them, and commands a beautiful prospect in three ways, a very extensive one to the south-west. In the lower part is an alcove, which must be extremely pleasant in a summer evening. There is a little circular projection at each corner, one of which is filled by a geometrical staircase; the other two contain little apartments, one of which is a study." Then follows the inevitable moral conclusion, again for the benefit of Wesley's evangelically-minded readers: "I was agreeably surprised to find many of the books not only religious, but admirably well chosen. Perhaps the great man spent many hours here with only him that seethe in secret [Matthew 6:4]. And who can say how deep that change went which was so discernible in the latter part of his life!"[28]

Finally, consider the most insignificant and fragile mode of beauty, so labeled if for no other reason than its transience. From the lustful leers of Samuel Pepys eying ankles from his pew in St. Olave's Church, Hart Street; through Pope's vitriolic tribute to the battle of the sexes; to and beyond Cowper's "Young Lady" with "Heaven reflected in her face," the poets and prose writers of the long eighteenth century devoted sufficient space to observing and reacting to human beauty–particularly that that form of it adorned with wig, petticoat, and gown. All but a minute number of the numerous women who drifted in and out of John Wesley's long life possessed neither the time nor the funds to sit for their portraits, so from that point of view, one cannot easily determine his criteria for human female beauty. However, two examples might assist in the exercise. On Saturday, 10 July 1736, at Savannah, Georgia, Rebecca Bovey, the daughter of a Georgia settler, died suddenly. Her parish priest, thirty-three year old John Wesley, went to the Bovey home, gazed down upon the recently departed young woman, and pronounced. "I never saw so beautiful a corpse in my life. Poor comfort to its late inhabitant."[29] Rarely has one observed so precise (and concise) a statement on the superficiality of human beauty. Nineteen years later, at London on Sunday, 3 August 1755, Wesley dined with an unidentified person who, for an unspecified number of years, had lived "with one of the most celebrated beauties in Europe"–she also unidentified. "She [the beauty] was also proud vain, and nice [foolish] to a very uncommon degree. But see the end! After a painful and nauseous disease, she rotted away above ground and was so offensive for many days before she died that scarce any could bare to stay in the room."[30] Wesley ended his journal entry for that day at that point, without further comment, obviously confident that the details of the event alone proved sufficient to underscore the fragility and insignificance of human beauty, as well as its inability to protect the human being against erosion from pride, vanity, and outright stupidity. Wesley pushed his pen hard to expose his readers to the moral realization that beauty, natural or contrived, could, on occasion, demand considerable sacrifice. Touring the estate of William Petty, Lord Shelburne, outside of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, on 11 October 1775, he posted an initially favorable reaction to the setting: What a variety in so small a compass. A beautiful grove, divided by a serpentine walk, conceals the house from the town. At the side of this runs a transparent river, with a smooth walk on each bank. Beyond this is a lovely wood, having a grassy walk running along, just within the skirts of it. But can the owner rejoice in this paradise? No; for his wife [Lady Sophia Cartaret Shelburne (1746-1771)] is snatched away in the bloom of youth!"[31] What possible purpose, he appeared to have

asked his readers, could come from the contrivance of beauty when death had robbed the eye and the mind and the heart of the ability to appreciate it? The estate of the late High Sheriff of Suffolk, one John Reynolds, confronted Wesley (on 5 November 1771) as "the best contrived and the most beautiful I ever saw. It has four fronts and five rooms on a floor, elegantly, though not sumptuously, furnished. At a small distance stands a delightful grove. On every side of this, the poor, rich, man who had no hope beyond the grave, placed seats to enjoy life as long as he could." In 1755, Reynolds had "the satisfaction of laying the remains of his only child and, two years after, those of his wife. After two years more, in the year 1759, having eat, and drank, and forgotten God for eighty-four years, he went himself to give an account of his stewardship."[32] Of course, a significant number of persons might well have viewed the two preceding instances as results of simple coincidence. However, in Wesley's Methodist scheme, coincidence has no role to play. His heavy editorial hand stamped into his journal extracts those scenes that he believed would convey the strongest of moral lessons.

At the risk of oversimplification (as well as over-emphasis, perhaps), there could arise no serious challenge to the conclusion that John Wesley's world of beauty firmly established the criterion of plainness–the sound and the sense of a form of plainness that comes directly from Scriptures and the one element that can protect the human being from the fate of the example of the unidentified European beauty cited above.[33] Thus, according to the *General Rules of the Methodist Societies* (1742, 1743), a member of either sex could have been dismissed from a Methodist society for "The 'putting on of gold or costly apparel,' particularly the wearing of *calashes, high-heads,* or *enormous bonnets*...."[34] As evidence of Wesley's consistent adherence to that "rule," a London newspaper (unnamed) reported that when Wesley preached the sermon for the opening of City Road Chapel, London, on 1 November 1778, "the first quarter of an hour of his sermon was addressed to his female auditory on the absurdity of the enormous dressing of their heads; and his religious labours have so much converted the women who attended at this place of worship that widows, wives and young ladies appeared on Sunday without curls, without flying caps, and without feathers: and our correspondent further says that the female sex never made a more pleasing appearance."[35] Following the the same criterion, Wesley commanded that Methodists chapels and preaching houses be devoid of art and musical instruments and that Methodist preachers not ordained by the Church of England would not be permitted to adorn themselves in clerical garb.

As with almost everything of significance upon which John Wesley cast his mind's eye, his own form of evangelicalism, which hurled an Oxford don into the pits and dregs of eighteenth-century human existence, combined with his reliance upon the Old and the New Testaments to block his understanding and appreciation of beauty and taste as the majority of his contemporaries outside of his religious organization viewed, appreciated, and understood those qualities. Not surprisingly, those same contemporaries did not always understand (nor did they particularly care to understand) Wesley's notion of plainness. The sarcastic Horace Walpole, as but a single example, attended the Methodist service at Bath on 9 October 1766, filtering the experience through the metaphor of opera, observing Gothic windows and fine furniture, and describing the sixty-three-year-old Wesley as "a lean elderly man, fresh-coloured, his hair smoothly combed, but with a *soup-*

con of curl at the ends. Wondrous clean, but as evidently an actor as Garrick."[36] Walpole appears not to have been interested to inquire or to note that on the occasion of that visit, Wesley held the service not in his own *Wesleyan* Methodist preaching house, but in the fashionable chapel built by Selina Shirley Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, for her rival Calvinist Methodist connexion–she having invited Wesley to preach there. Nonetheless, Walpole's account underscores the obvious realization that Wesley's notion of beauty–even the very existence John Wesley, himself, perhaps–looms large in his journals and sermons to represent yet another clear manifestation of the metaphor of tension that so fiercely dominated a considerable portion of the observations, the thoughts, the events, and the literature of the long eighteenth century.

Notes

1. Charles Wallace, Jr. (ed.), *Susanna Wesley. The Complete Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997): 253. See also Psalms 115:1–"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."

2. Wesley read Gerard's *Essay* (the 1764 Edinburgh edition) during 21-24 March 1779, asking, "And this is the treatise that gained the premium [from the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh]? It is lively and pretty, but neither deep nor strong, Scarce any of the terms are accurately defined, indeed defining is not the author's talent. He has not by any means a clear apprehension, and it is through this capital defect that he jumbles together true and false propositions in every chapter and in every page." See *The Works of John Wesley. Volume 23. Journal and Diaries*, VI (1776-1786), ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995):120.

3. See these *Spectator* numbers for 1712: 411 (Saturday, 21 June), 412 (Monday, 23 June), 413 Tuesday 24 June), 414 (Wednesday, 25 June), 415 (Thursday, 26 June), 416 (Friday, 27 June), 417 (Satur-day, 28 June), 418 (Monday, 30 June), 419 (Tuesday, 1 July), 420 (Wednesday, 2 July), 421 (Thursday (3 July). *The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison*, ed. Richard Hurd (London: T. Cadell and W. Davis, 1811), 4:336-377.

4. *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson. 3rd. ed. (London, Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872), 13:465-470.

5. The epistolary exchanges (as well as the actual meetings) occurred (based upon extant correspondence and indirect references from diaries, journals, and other letters) from approximately 5 February 1729 to 24 September 1736. The principal participants, each with a pseudonym, lest the letters should have fallen into others' hands, may be identified as Mary Granville Pendarves (Aspasia), Ann Granville (Selima), Sarah Kirkham Chapone (Varanese), John Wesley (Cyrus), and Charles Wesley (Araspes). See Samuel J. Rogal, *A Biographical Dictionary of Eighteenth-Century Methodism* (Lewiston, New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997-1999), 1:289-290; 2:233-234; 5:69-78.

6. Horrel Hill, near Stanton, Gloucestershire.

7. *The Works of John Wesley. Volume 25. Letters. 1. 1721-1739*, ed. Frank Baker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980): 307.

8. Be aware, first, that Wesley always intended certain parts of his journals to be read by others, and thus his carefully edited extracts usually appeared two to four years following the actual events. For example, Part 15, covering the period 14 May 1768 to 1 September 1770, did not reach the press until 1774.

9. *Works. 22. Journal and Diaries. V (1765-1775)*, ed. Ward and Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999): 238-239.

10. With Serpent error wand'ring, found their way,

And on the washy Ooze deep Channels wore;
Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
All but within those banks, where Rivers now
Stream, and perpetual draw thir humid train....(7:303-306)

. . . .

Streaking the ground with sinous trace; not all
Minims of Nature. . . . (7:481-182)

John Milton. Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957): 353-354, 358.

11. Luke 1:78–"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us...."

12. *Works 22*, 415. Professor Ward declares that "The entry is a testimony to his [Wesley's] sensibilities; the soft beauties of Wensleydale were felt as a deliverance from the moors above." Within a somewhat similar context, but in another place and more than 150 years later, one may recall Ernest Hemingway's Robert Jordan caning down and up the mountain–an exercise that Hemingway repeats throughout the first eleven chapters of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), heightening the contrast between the relative safety of Pablo's cave (with the sunlight at the entrance and the warmth inside) and the inherent dangers (past, present and future) presented by the mountain. See especially pp. 2, 18, 35, 48, 131.

13. *Works 22*, 209.

14. *Spectator* 415 (Thursday, 26 June 1712). See *Works of Addison*, 4:351, 352-353.

15. *Works. Volume 21. Journal and Diaries. IV (1755-65)*, ed. Ward and Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992): 387.

16. *Works. Volume 23. Journal and Diaries. VI (1776-86)*, ed. Ward and Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995): 249-250.

17. *Works 22*, 5. The Methodists of Limerick, on 1 May 1763, opened for worship the formerly derelict Church of St. Francis Abbey, a structure in Quay Lane once owned by the Knights Templars. One writer described it as "a plain handsome building with a brick front supported by four Tuscan columns, and over the place of worship are commodious roams for their [the Methodists'] preachers. It was finished at the expense of above 600 which was chiefly contributed by the members of their Society in the city, and by sane other charitable persons in this and other parts of the kingdom." See *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 6 (1908):114-115; 28 1(1952):143.

18. *Works. Volume 21*, 230.

19. *Works. Volume 22*, 438.

20. *Works. Volume 22*, 439.

21. *The Works of John Wesley. Volume 24. Journal and Diaries, VII* (1787-1791), ed. W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003):57.

22. See *Works. Volume 22*, 291-292.

23. See *Works. Volume 23*, 33-34.

24. *Works. Volume 23*, 151.

25. Maynard Mack, *The Garden and the City. Retirement and Politics in the Later- Poetry of Pope, 1731-1743* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969):22.

26. *Works. Volume 23*, 151-152.

27. Ronald S. Crane (ed.), *A Collection of English Poem , 1660-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1932): 299-300. In a long respected anthology of eighteenth century poetry and prose, the editors provided quick access and a glimpse of a later reaction to Pamfret's *The Choice*, citing lines from *The Choice* (c.1819) of Leigh Hunt:

I have been reading Pomfret's *Choice* this spring,

A pretty kind of–sort of–kind of thing,
Not much a verse, and poem not at all,
Yet, as they say, extremely natural.
And yet I know not. There's a skill in pies,
In raising crusts as well as galleries:
And he's the poet, more or less, who knows
The charm that hallows the least thing from prose,
And dresses it in its mild singing clothes.

See Louis I. Bredvold, Alan D. McKillop, and Lois Whitney (eds.), *Eighteenth-Century Prose and Verse*, 2nd ed. (New York: The Ronald Press, 1956): 145.

28. *Works. Volume 22*, 298-299. Suggestion (more likely rumor. speculation, or wishful thinking) had arisen during the nineteenth century that the beginning of the transformation of William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland from "the butcher of Culloden" to a person of deep religious conviction may have been the result of his attendance at services conducted by George Whitefield. See Aaron Crossley Hobart Seymour, *The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon. By a Member of the Houses of Shirley and Hastings* (London: William Edward Painter and John Snow, 1840), 1:199.

29. *Works. 18. Journal and Diaries. I (1735-38)*, ed. Ward and Heitzenrater (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988): 165.

30. *Works. Volume 21*, 22.

31. *Works. Volume 22*, 467.

32. *Works. Volume 22*, 296.

33. See especially 1 Peter 3:3–"Whose adoring let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel...."

34. *The Works of John Wesley.- Volume 9. The Methodist Societies: History, Nature, and Design*, edited Rupert E. Davies (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989): 71. Although primarily referring to a light carriage with low wheels, having a top or hood that could have been raised or lowered, the calash also became identified with a piece of female apparel for the head that resembled a hood or carriage top.

35. *Works. Volume 23*, 111-112, n.56.

36. W.S. Lewis (ed.), *Selected Letters of Horace Walpole* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973): 134-135. Walpole attended the service on 9 October 1768 and the next day described the event in a letter to John Chute.