

The Wesleyan Enlightenment:
Closing the gap between heart religion and reason
in Eighteenth Century England

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

John Wesley (1703-1791) was an Anglican priest who became the leader of Wesleyan Methodism, a renewal movement within the Church of England that began in the late 1730s. Although Wesley was not isolated from his enlightened age, historians of the Enlightenment and theologians of John Wesley have only recently begun to consider Wesley in the historical context of the Enlightenment. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between a man, John Wesley, and an intellectual movement, the Enlightenment.

As a comparative history, this study will analyze the juxtaposition of two historiographies, Wesley studies and Enlightenment studies. Surprisingly, Wesley scholars did not study John Wesley as an important theologian until the mid-1960s. Moreover, because social historians in the 1970s began to explore the unique ways people experienced the Enlightenment in different local, regional and national contexts, the plausibility of an English Enlightenment emerged for the first time in the early 1980s. As a result, in the late 1980s, scholars began to integrate the study of John Wesley and the Enlightenment. In other words, historians and theologians began to consider Wesley as a serious thinker in the context of an English Enlightenment that was not hostile to Christianity.

From a review of the historical literature, this dissertation details six links that scholars have introduced in their study of Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment. However, the review also reveals two problems, one obstacle and one omission, that hinder new innovation and further study. Therefore, as a solution, this study introduces five lenses adapted from the recent scholarship of four historians and one historical theologian that provide new vantage points for considering the enlightenment of Wesley and Wesleyan Methodists, which together form the

Wesleyan Enlightenment. Finally, based on the evidence gathered by using these new lenses, this study argues that because Wesley not only engaged the Enlightenment, but also addressed the spiritual needs and practical concerns of Wesleyan Methodists for more than fifty years in what he referred to as an enlightened age, John Wesley was a central figure in the eighteenth-century English Enlightenment.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to
my wife Dena, my daughter Sarah, my mother Beverly,
my father-in-law Don, my mother-in-law Bernita
and the loving memory of my father Robert E.

Abbreviations

- Letters* (Telford) *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.*, ed., John Telford, 8 vols. (London, UK: Epworth, 1931).
- Works* *The Works of John Wesley*; begun as “The Oxford Edition of The Works of John Wesley” (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1975-1983); continued as “The Bicentennial Edition of The Works of John Wesley” (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984–); 17 of 35 vols. published to date.
- Works* (Jackson) *The Works of John Wesley*, ed., Thomas Jackson, 14 vols. (London, UK: 1872; Grand Rapids, IL: Zondervan, 1958).

Chapter 1

Introduction:

John Wesley and the Enlightenment

Historians and historical theologians have recently begun to consider John Wesley a man of the Enlightenment. According to social historian David Hempton, in 2010, “there is now . . . [a] lively tradition of scholarship interpreting Wesley as a son of the Enlightenment, which only goes to show what a complex figure he was.”¹ Although scholars of Wesley studies would not consider Wesley to have been a central figure in the Enlightenment, many would concede the plausibility of such an alliance. While most of the historians of Enlightenment studies would consider any relationship between John Wesley and the Enlightenment to be completely laden with irreconcilable differences, some have started to consider the remote possibility of these strange bedfellows having at least a few affinities within the Enlightenment of England. Yet, despite the opportunities created by these new but scattered considerations across both Wesley and Enlightenment studies, no scholar has embarked on a comprehensive study that has attempted to explain John Wesley’s complex relation to the Enlightenment. Therefore, based on research designed to fill the void that remains, this study will argue that because Wesley not only engaged the Enlightenment, but also addressed the spiritual needs and practical concerns of Wesleyan Methodists for more than fifty years in what he referred to as an enlightened age, John Wesley was a central figure in the eighteenth-century English Enlightenment.

¹ David N. Hempton, “Wesley in Context,” in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, ed. Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 66.

This study is not a biography of John Wesley, much to the disappointment of some of my readers. However, I have attempted to include enough biographical information to provide the necessary historical context for understanding the *whole* Wesley.² Instead, this dissertation is a historiography, “a history of histories.”³ In other words, the purpose of this study is not only to better understand the people, events and ideas of the past, but also to analyze how scholars have understood the complex relationship between a man, Wesley, and an intellectual movement, the Enlightenment.⁴

² Richard P. Heitzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984, 1993, 2003). Behind the scenes of this narrative, I have attempted to be guided by the five considerations that Heitzenrater has introduced for any scholars attempting to discover with historical accuracy the elusive, but whole Wesley: “(1) Wesley was a legend in his own day. . . . (2) Wesley’s public image can be distinguished from his private image. . . . (3) Wesley was a controversial figure. . . . (4) Wesley embodied ideals and qualities not always easily held together or reconciled. . . . (5) Wesley’s life and thought are marked by growth and change. . . . Each of these five considerations listed above, then, emphasizes the necessity to view Wesley in the light of the *whole* of his life and thought. . . . We must look for the elusive John Wesley in the context of the many events and controversies that shaped his mind and spirit from beginning to end. And we must look at the sources with a critical eye, noting whether they are early or late, friendly or antagonistic, public or private, exaggerated or simplistic, firsthand or secondary accounts. As a result of this approach, the object of our quest, John Wesley, though still elusive, will in the end be more understandable and believable as a human being.” *Ibid.*, 26-36.

³ According to historian John Burrow, the history of history writing as a genre did not exist until the twentieth century. Some of Burrow’s questions have been useful for this study: “What did people in the past find interesting in their past, and why did they? Which ‘pasts’ did it lead them to focus attention on, as well as shaping how they chose to present them, and how and why did these change over time?” John Burrow, *A History of Histories: Epics, Chronicles, Romances and Inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2007, 2009), xv.

⁴ According to historian Jonathan Sheehan, “To put religion into dialogue with the Enlightenment, . . . we need to determine exactly who the partners in this conversation are. It may well be that ‘religion’ in *all* senses cannot be related meaningfully to the Enlightenment, precisely because the horizons of these two things were socially and culturally distinct in the period.” Jonathan Sheehan, “Enlightenment, Religion and the Enigma of Secularization: A Review Essay,” *The American Historical Review*, vol. 108, no. 4 (October, 2003): 1075.

More particularly, this dissertation is a comparative history between two historiographies, the juxtaposition of Wesley studies and Enlightenment studies. I concur with the wisdom of distinguished European historian, J. H. Elliott, who declared in the introduction to his classic comparative history of *Richelieu and Olivares*: “If, as is not improbable, a comparative historical approach is always likely to promise more than it can deliver, this is not to my mind an adequate reason for forgoing the attempt. At the very least it may provide a new perspective on familiar figures and events.”⁵ Like Elliott, I too, have experienced the difficulties of bringing clarity out of the clutter that comes with the liability of never being able to develop a consistent method while doing the rewarding, but challenging work of comparative history.⁶

Although the audience for whom this dissertation has been written are my peers in the academic disciplines of both history and theology, the demands of this study have required more than learning exclusively from the scholarship of these two disciplines. Therefore, my research has also introduced me to the work of scholars in the study of philosophy, psychology, sociology and English literature. While I do not pretend to be an expert in any of these additional fields, I do recognize the advantage of using an interdisciplinary approach at some level to accomplish the purpose of this study.

⁵ J. H. Elliott, *Richelieu and Olivares* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984, 1989), 6. In his book, Elliott analyzed the relationship between two seventeenth-century European rivals, Cardinal Richelieu of France and Count-Duke of Olivares of Spain.

⁶ According to Elliott, “I am aware, too, that comparative history is a branch of historical writing more eulogized than practiced, for reasons which will be painfully obvious to anyone who has made the attempt. It has recently been remarked that ‘comparative history does not really exist yet as an established field within history or even as a well-defined method of studying history.’ I must confess to having failed to evolve a method. The technical difficulties are considerable, and not least among them is the problem of keeping two outsize personalities within a single field of vision. I have dealt with this as best I can, but I am afraid that this book is bound to have something of the character of a historiographical Wimbledon, as it switches from Richelieu to Olivares, and then back again to Richelieu. I can only hope that this will not leave the reader with a permanent crick in the neck.” Ibid.

The general definition that will be used for the Enlightenment in this study was proposed by historian Dorinda Outram who wrote what many historians still consider to be the best survey of the Enlightenment.⁷ According to Outram,

Recent writing on the Enlightenment by professional historians has opened up new areas of enquiry, especially in the social history of ideas, rather than maintaining the former concentration on the works of a canon of great thinkers. We are now far more aware of the many different Enlightenments, whether national or regional, Catholic or Protestant, of Europeans and of indigenous peoples. This diversity mirrors the inability of eighteenth-century people themselves to make any single definition of Enlightenment. [It may be] . . . implied that, in the end, the term ‘the Enlightenment’ has ceased to have much meaning. A more positive reaction might be to think of the Enlightenment not as an expression which has failed to encompass a complex historical reality, but rather as a capsule containing sets of debates which appear to be characteristic of the way in which ideas and opinions interacted with society and politics.⁸

During the course of this study, the limitations of this definition will be exposed because Outram believes, contrary to the thesis of this dissertation, that Wesley was a counter-Enlightenment figure. Still, Outram’s definition is the most useful for this study because she has best accounted for the vast spectrum of approaches that comprise the historiography of Enlightenment studies.

In the past two decades, historians have discovered new ways that religion and the Enlightenment were compatible. In 2006, historian Helena Rosenblatt introduced a “Christian Enlightenment” that was expressed not only as various European Protestant Enlightenments, but also as a French Catholic Enlightenment. In 2008, historian David Sorkin expanded the study of Enlightenments to what he called a religious Enlightenment, which included his expertise on the Jewish Enlightenment. Most recently, historian William J. Bulman has not only written an important book on the *Anglican Enlightenment*, but also co-edited a work with historian Robert

⁷ Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

G. Ingram entitled *God in the Enlightenment*.⁹ The logical progression of these recent studies has created the opportunity to investigate the viability of a Wesleyan Enlightenment.

The title of this study, “The Wesleyan Enlightenment,” is a double entendre that alludes to both the enlightenment of John Wesley and the enlightenment of Wesleyan Methodists. The result is inferred in the subtitle of this study, which highlights how the enlightenment of Wesley and Wesleyan Methodists helped to close the gap between their heart religion and reason.¹⁰ As the enlightenment shaped Wesley’s life and ministry, he in turn adapted what he read or learned and disseminated it to Wesleyan Methodists under his spiritual care. How Wesley experienced the enlightenment and how he attempted to facilitate the enlightenment of Wesleyan Methodists will be analyzed later in Chapter five of this study.

Despite the hesitancy among scholars of Wesley studies to shed further light on Wesley’s complex relationship with the Enlightenment, it has not come from a perception that John Wesley was incompatible or somehow not shaped by the Enlightenment. Rather, Wesley

⁹ Helena Rosenblatt, “The Christian Enlightenment,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660-1815* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 283-301. David Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). William J. Bulman, *Anglican Enlightenment: Orientalism, Religion and Politics in England and its Empire, 1648-1715* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015). William J. Bulman and Robert G. Ingram, eds., *God in the Enlightenment* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016).

¹⁰ Although “reason” takes many nuanced forms throughout this study, the term “heart religion,” unless qualified, is simply and consistently used as shorthand for Wesley’s longer definition. In the introduction of *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (1743), Wesley explained, “This is the religion we long to see established in the world, a religion of love and joy and peace, having its seat in the heart, in the inmost soul, but ever showing itself by its fruits, continually springing forth, not only in all innocence—for ‘love worketh no ill to his neighbour’—but likewise in every kind of beneficence, in spreading virtue and happiness all around it.” Gerald R. Cragg, ed., *The Works of Wesley: The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion and Certain Related Open Letters*, Bicentennial ed., vol. 11 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1975, 1989), 46.

scholars have been reticent to research Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment because there has been no consensus among recent Enlightenment scholars on a definition of enlightenment, let alone a working concept for either the Enlightenment or the Enlightenment in England.¹¹ My own experience as a participant in the 2016 Summer Wesley Seminar held on the campus of Duke University indicated to me that some of the leading lights in Wesley Studies, including Randy L. Maddox, Richard P. Heitzenrater and Russell E. Ritchey, were open to considering the plausibility of my dissertation title, "The Wesleyan Enlightenment."¹² As a result, many of the insights in this study, apart from my unintended errors or misrepresentations, have been shaped either directly or indirectly by the people, resources, presentations, conversations and collegiality I experienced during the Wesley Seminar, which was designed in part to develop and guide new scholarship in Wesley studies.

The origins of the term Methodist began with a group of students (the first Methodist "society") at Oxford University that Charles Wesley initiated in March 1729 and John Wesley, sometime after returning to Oxford in October 1729, began to lead.¹³ At first, "Methodist" was

¹¹ This insight comes from a conversation I had with historian Peter Nockles during the summer of 2015 in the coffee shop of The John Rylands Library in Manchester, England. In the course of our visit, he inadvertently attempted, out of a genuine concern for the success of my research, to discourage me from focusing my energy on Wesley and the Enlightenment because of the current disarray in Enlightenment studies.

¹² In this sentence, the "s" in Studies is capitalized because here the academic discipline of Wesley Studies, which has chairs in major universities such as Duke, Southern Methodist and Vanderbilt, is emphasized. Although the history of Wesley Studies will be briefly reviewed in Chapter two, here it needs to be pointed out that with few exceptions in this dissertation, a small "s" will be used for Wesley studies in order to denote the study of Wesley by all kinds of scholars, including those who are not historical theologians or church historians from the Methodist or Wesleyan tradition.

¹³ Although this dissertation does not emphasize the leadership and contribution of Charles Wesley to Wesleyan Methodism, this study does take into account not only his role, but also his relationship to John, which, based on John's extant out-letters, may have been the most

simply a pejorative term used to ridicule the efforts of John Wesley, Charles Wesley, George Whitefield and others who were attempting to grow in holiness through a variety of pious practices. Later, the term became adopted as the name of a revival or renewal movement that developed within the Church of England. Based on differences in theology, Methodism became divided into two groups, Wesleyan Methodists and Calvinistic Methodists.

For this study, therefore, I have chosen to use the term “Methodist”, following the example of Wesley’s best biographer, Henry D. Rack, who has clarified that the term should be used as a “generic for the followers of Wesley and Whitefield, for the Welsh, and often for the Huntingdonians. Where it is necessary to distinguish the different groups, . . . ‘Calvinistic Methodist’ will be used for all but Wesley’s followers and ‘Wesleyan’ or ‘Wesleyan Methodist’ for them.”¹⁴ John and Charles Wesley spearheaded the Wesleyan Methodists who ascribed to the theology of Arminianism, while George Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon directed the Calvinistic Methodists who emphasized the doctrines of Calvinism. Arminianism emphasized the role of free will in the salvation of one’s soul and insisted that salvation was available to all. In contrast, Calvinism argued that man’s salvation was determined solely through election and

important relationship John had after the death of his mother Susanna Annesley Wesley in 1742. The limited space given to Charles Wesley in this study does not imply he was unimportant, rather, it simply denotes the limited span of this dissertation.

¹⁴ Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*, 3rd ed. (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1989, 1992, 2002), xii. According to Rack, “‘Methodist’ in the eighteenth century was a slippery term. It originated as a term of abuse for the so-called Holy Club in Oxford and was eventually accepted as a label by John Wesley for his followers. However, it was also used at the time for the evangelical groups in Wales associated with Howel Harris and others; and for Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon and their followers in England – all of them Calvinists, unlike Wesley. . . . ‘Wesleyan’ is really a nineteenth-century usage for one part of the then divided Methodist churches, but is a convenient shorthand term for Wesley’s followers in the eighteenth century.” Ibid.

contended that God alone had predestined each individual to either salvation as the elect or damnation as a reprobate.

Beginning in the late 1730s, Wesley worked tirelessly to close the gap between heart religion and reason in Wesleyan Methodists. However, the gap between the two was never fully closed. Instead, Wesley, at the center of the Wesleyan Enlightenment, provided the tethers of reading resources and spiritual direction in order to prevent extremism, which he claimed was caused by either the over-use of reason or the under-use of reason in Christian faith. In some instances, the enlightenment of Wesleyan Methodists was not successful. Two of Wesley's itinerant preachers, George Bell and Thomas Maxfield, created crises that damaged the credibility of Wesleyan Methodism in the 1760s because they preached that Christians could attain "angelic perfection."¹⁵ However, in many ways the Wesleyan Enlightenment influenced not only the working class, but also the artisans and an upward moving middle class who had much to gain by accessing the technology of media in the rapidly expanding print culture of eighteenth-century England.

Although this study is not a biography of Wesley, it attempts to overcome the same challenge faced by all of Wesley's interpreters. According to Rack, the problem with Wesley is "the need to penetrate the Wesley legend created by his followers and biographers and the smoke-screen which Wesley himself, consciously or unconsciously, created by his *Journals* and other portrayals of himself and his movement. But it is also partly the problem of the tendency

¹⁵ In his letter to "To the Rev. Thomas Maxfield" on 2 November 1762, Wesley was clear: "I like your doctrine of *perfection*, or pure love—love excluding sin. Your insisting that it is merely by *faith*; that consequently it is *instantaneous* (though preceded and followed by a gradual work), and that it may be *now*, at this instant. But I dislike your supposing man may be as perfect 'as an angel,' that he can be *absolutely* perfect; that he can be *infallible*, or above being *tempted*; or that the moment he is pure in heart he *cannot fall* from it." Letter to "Thomas Maxfield" (November 2, 1762), *Works*, 27:306.

of writers on Wesley to concentrate too exclusively on his personal history.”¹⁶ Although the Wesley legend will be addressed to some degree through an analysis of the historiography of Wesley studies, the vetted biographical information on Wesley’s life included throughout this study relies significantly on the two most important late-twentieth-century biographers of John Wesley, Henry D. Rack and Richard P. Heitzenrater.¹⁷

In order to provide the necessary historical context for Wesley and the Wesleyan Enlightenment, this study supplies not only a chronology of John Wesley and the English Enlightenment (see Appendix A), but also the essential biographical information that highlights Wesley’s engagement with the English Enlightenment throughout the body of the text. Because Wesley revealed many of his purposes for engaging the Enlightenment in the prefaces to his publications, this study includes extracts from the following important examples: *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation or A Compendium of Natural Philosophy* (1763) (see Appendix B), the annual edition of the *Arminian Magazine* (1781) (see Appendix C), and the annual edition of the *Arminian Magazine* (1784) (see Appendix D). In addition, this study provides two illustrations of Wesley’s ongoing personal dialog with the Enlightenment not only through what he disciplined himself to read, Wesley’s “Scheme of Studies” (1727) (see Appendix E), but also through the books he purchased, such as Hobbes’s *Historia ecclesiastica* (1671), which included what Hobbes referred to as “My Confession of Faith” (see Appendix F). Lastly, this study attaches two reading lists Wesley prescribed that facilitated the enlightenment of Wesleyan

¹⁶ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, xiv. In addition, Rack claimed that the tendency of Wesley’s authors has included not only focusing so much on Methodism that they overlooked the larger movement in which it participated, but also concentrating too narrowly on Wesley and Methodism together that they failed to consider the changing society that contributed to the fates of both. Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. and Richard P. Heitzenrater, *Wesley and the People Called Methodists* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, rev. ed., 2013).

Methodists, one for his niece, Sarah (see Appendix G), and one for the libraries located in three of Wesley's most important Methodist societies (see Appendix H).¹⁸

What Rack concluded in 2001 continues to summarize adequately the state of Wesley studies in 2017. Rack ultimately provided the rationale for this study when he argued: "The Wesley problem . . . lies in the need for fresh interpretations rather than new facts."¹⁹ Thus, the remainder of this introduction will detail how this study will provide a new interpretation for understanding better the complex relationship between Wesley and the Enlightenment otherwise referred to as the Wesleyan Enlightenment.

In Chapter two, this study will analyze the juxtaposition of two historiographies, Wesley studies and Enlightenment studies. Surprisingly, Wesley scholars did not study John Wesley as an important theologian until the mid-1960s. Furthermore, because social historians in the 1970s began to explore the unique ways people experienced the Enlightenment in different local, regional and national contexts, the plausibility of an English Enlightenment emerged for the first time in the early 1980s. As a result, in the late 1980s, scholars began to integrate the study of John Wesley and the Enlightenment. In other words, historians and theologians began to consider Wesley as a serious thinker in the context of an English Enlightenment that was not hostile to Christianity.

¹⁸ John Wesley, "Preface" to *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation; Or, A Compendium of Natural Philosophy* (Bristol, England: William Pine, 1763), iii-vi. John Wesley, "Preface" to *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 4 (1781): iv-v. John Wesley, "Preface" to *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 7 (1784): v-vi. Heitzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, 54. Thomas Hobbes, *A True Ecclesiastical History; from Moses, to the Time of Martin Luther, in Verse* (London, England: E. Curll, 1722), 77, 109.

¹⁹ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, xvi.

In Chapter three, this study provides an analysis of the integration of two historiographies, the histories of Wesley and Enlightenment studies. After locating Wesley on the periphery of Enlightenment studies and the Enlightenment on the periphery of Wesley studies, six links are identified that scholars have introduced through their research of Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment. The historical trajectory of each of the following links between Wesley and the Enlightenment will be traced and discussed: socio-political affinities, epistemology, pietism, the reconciliation of enlightenment and enthusiasm, the amalgamation of reason and religion, and finally, the thought forms of the Enlightenment.

In addition, the research of Chapter three reveals two problems, one obstacle and one omission that have hindered new innovation and further study. The first problem, the obstacle of philosophy at the center of the traditional definition of enlightenment, has prevented historians of the Enlightenment from considering Wesley in the context of the Enlightenment. In the historiography of Enlightenment studies, the majority of Enlightenment historians, intentionally or unintentionally, have maintained a philosophical definition of enlightenment regardless of whether they have used a single Enlightenment or a multiple Enlightenments approach in their research. As a result, this obstacle has restricted historians from developing new approaches that are necessary to determine more accurately the complex relationship between Wesley and the Enlightenment.

The second problem was the omission of any consideration of John Wesley in relation to the unique historical context of the English Enlightenment. Although a few scholars have published books or articles that have considered Wesley in the context of the Enlightenment in England or Britain, their results have been unsatisfactory, particularly to historical theologians of Wesley studies. The obvious reason Wesley scholars were disappointed was because the new

representations of Wesley were considered ahistorical. However, the hidden cause, highlighted by this study, was that those attempts to locate Wesley in the English Enlightenment were skewed unknowingly because the traditional philosophical definition of the Enlightenment was presupposed to be suitable for defining an English or British Enlightenment. Therefore, in response to these historiographical roadblocks, this study will address the two main problems that need to be solved before historians and theologians can consider the Wesleyan Enlightenment as a plausible concept.

In Chapter four, this study will present four new lenses for examining the English Enlightenment that historians of the Enlightenment have recently introduced, which remove philosophy from the center of their definitions for enlightenment. Over the past two decades, historians Roy Porter, John Pocock, Jonathan Sheehan and William Bulman have each provided a new approach, suitable to the study of England's Enlightenment that has avoided exclusively using a philosophical definition of enlightenment. In addition to the work of Porter and Pocock, the two leading historians of the English Enlightenment, Sheehan and Bulman have challenged two presuppositions of historians who uphold a traditional definition for the Enlightenment. On the one hand, Sheehan has argued against using secularization as an interpretive lens for the Enlightenment. On the other hand, Bulman has challenged the belief that the origins of modernity were located in the Enlightenment. Thus, by either disregarding traditional suppositions about the Enlightenment that have been applied to the English Enlightenment or by treating them as optional instead of exclusive, these four historians have created new opportunities for considering Wesley not only as compatible with the Enlightenment, but also as a central figure in the English Enlightenment. As a result, future students of the Enlightenment

who use these new approaches will have better vantage points from which to do research regarding Wesley in the unique historical context of the English Enlightenment.

In Chapter five, the Wesleyan Enlightenment is defined and a new lens is introduced that provides the missing link between the ideas of the Enlightenment and the theological reflection of John Wesley. Historical theologian Randy L. Maddox described this lens in his article “Honoring Conference,” which emphasized Wesley’s practice of conferring or dialoguing with non-theological sources in order to move beyond the limits of what he understood about not only the Bible, but also the natural sciences, including natural philosophy.²⁰ For the purpose of this study, the language of “engagement” will be used following the precedent Maddox has set in his recent scholarship to highlight how Wesley engaged the ideas and values of the Enlightenment.²¹

Next, this study will utilize a combination of the four lenses from Enlightenment studies with the new lens from Wesley studies in order to demonstrate the enlightenment of John Wesley by locating Wesley in the context of the English Enlightenment. Finally, Chapter five ends with an inspection of how Wesley facilitated the enlightenment of Wesleyan Methodists by including in his *Works*, the writings and examples from important figures of the English Enlightenment such as philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), natural

²⁰ Randy L. Maddox, “‘Honoring Conference’: Wesleyan Reflections on the Dynamics of Theological Reflection,” *Methodist Review*, vol. 4 (2012): 77-116.

²¹ Randy L. Maddox, “John Wesley’s Precedent for Theological Engagement with the Natural Sciences,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vol. 44, no. 1 (Spring, 2009): 23-54. Randy L. Maddox, “Wesley’s Engagement with the Natural Sciences,” in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, eds., Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 160-175.

philosopher and mathematician Isaac Newton (1642-1727) and politician and author Edmund Burke (1729/30-1797) (see Appendix A).²²

Finally, in Chapter six, this study will offer an answer for three questions that have helped to guide the research of this dissertation. Why did Wesley, throughout his life, read so voraciously from many of the important works of the Enlightenment? Why did Wesley abridge, edit and publish many of those same non-theological works for Wesleyan Methodists? Why should Wesley be considered a central figure of the English Enlightenment in the eighteenth century?

²² See Appendix A for a Chronology of John Wesley and the English Enlightenment, which includes not only biographical information, particularly about the central figures Locke and Hobbes, but also important European events that were behind the scenes of the narratives of Wesley and the Enlightenment presented in this study.

Chapter 2

The Historiographies of John Wesley and the Enlightenment:

A Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to locate John Wesley and the Enlightenment within their respective historiographies, Wesley studies and Enlightenment studies. The chapter will begin by critically analyzing how scholars expanded the traditional interpretation of John Wesley in Wesley studies to include a consideration of Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment following a significant turning point. In addition, this chapter will analyze how historians expanded the traditional approach to studying the Enlightenment as a single, secular European Enlightenment after a significant turning point in Enlightenment studies. As a result, the consensus of historians changed from believing that the Enlightenment was hostile to Christianity to considering the role of Christianity within various regional or national enlightenments. Finally, what this review will show is the current need for a historiography of the integration of Wesley and Enlightenment studies, which provides the comparative analysis of the historical literature that is necessary for a more nuanced study of Wesley's complex relationship to the Enlightenment.

The Historiography of Wesley Studies

Wesley Studies: Before the 1960s

Following his death, John Wesley's biographers established a precedent for not only magnifying the greatness of Wesley's person and practice but also neglecting the importance of his thought. As a result, this pattern continued well into the twentieth century. Wesley's former

Methodist preacher John Hampson (bap. 1753, d. 1819) wrote Wesley's first biography, *Memoirs of the late Rev. John Wesley* (1791). On the one hand, Hampson praised the delivery of Wesley's preaching but criticized the inconsistent content of his daily sermons. On the other hand, he praised the infinite good of Wesley's published works but criticized the quality of his writing. Ultimately, according to Hampson, "If usefulness be excellence; if public good is the chief object of attention, in public characters; and if the greatest benefactors to mankind are most estimable, Mr. John Wesley will long be remembered as one of the best of men, as he was for more than fifty years the most diligent and indefatigable."¹ Hampson anticipated the criticism his biography of Wesley would receive but he could not have foreseen the trend his portrayal of Wesley's virtues and abilities would establish.²

The men who subsequently revised Hampson's inaugural and controversial presentation of Wesley included biographer John Whitehead (1739/40-1804), Methodist minister and biographer Henry Moore (1751-1844), and British Wesleyan Methodist minister and author Luke Tyerman (1820-1889). Despite their dissatisfaction with Hampson's depiction of Wesley, they all emulated his approach by reserving their highest praise for Wesley's character and practice, not his thought.³ Although Whitehead acknowledged Wesley's intellectual talents as a scholar and tutor at Oxford, he, like Hampson, emphasized Wesley's character and ministry in *The Life*

¹ John Hampson, *Memoirs of the Late Rev. John Wesley, A.M. with a review of his Life and Writings and a History of Methodism, From it's [sic] Commencement in 1729, to the present time*, vol. 3 (London, England: Sunderland, 1791), 163-164, 168-171, 185.

² *Ibid.*, 228-229.

³ John Whitehead, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.* (London, England: Printed by Stephen Couchman, 1793). Henry Moore, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.*, 2 vols. (London, England: Printed for John Kershaw, 1824). Luke Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M. A.*, 3 vols., 3rd ed. (London, England: Hodder and Stoughton, 1876).

of the Rev. John Wesley (1793).⁴ Similarly, Moore highlighted how others held a high opinion of Wesley because of his mastery of the learned languages, his skill in the art of reasoning and his election as the Greek Lecturer. However, he ultimately argued in *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley* (1824) that Wesley should be admired for his life of virtue and piety as well as his long and successful labor as a minister of the Gospel.⁵ More than fifty years later, Tyerman, following the precedent of Whitehead and Moore, argued in *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley* (1876) that Wesley was a man of one idea.⁶ According to Tyerman, “[Wesley’s] sole aim was to save souls. This was the philosophy of his life. All his actions had reference to this. . . . The man is best known by what he *did*; not by what philosophers may suspect he *thought* [Tyerman’s emphasis].”⁷ Although these three biographers differed with one another in their opinions about the importance of Wesley’s thought, they were united in their conviction about the significance of Wesley’s practice. Their collective efforts produced, according to historical theologian Albert C. Outler, a common image of Wesley: “the sometime Oxford don turned pietist whose most significant achievement was the founding and forming of yet another denomination in Protestantism.”⁸ Despite, this persistent stereotype of Wesley, there were a few notable exceptions to this trend.

⁴ Whitehead, 548-549, 547-559.

⁵ Moore, vol. i, 140.

⁶ Tyerman, v.

⁷ Tyerman, v.

⁸ Albert C. Outler, *John Wesley* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1964), iii.

An early exception to the typical presentation of Wesley was *The Life of Wesley*, a biography written by the poet Robert Southey.⁹ Southey, unlike other Wesley biographers, attempted to be more critical in his historical treatment of Wesley. In *The Life of Wesley*, he not only listed all of his bibliographical sources in the preface to begin volume one, but he also interjected intermittently analytical comments about Wesley's "mind" throughout the biography. For example, Southey not only highlighted Wesley's "keen logic" in his exchange with the leader of the Moravians, Count Zinzendorf (1700-1760) at Herrnhut in Saxony, but also argued that English Moravian Peter Boehler (1712-1775) had the greatest intellectual influence on Wesley: "No other individual during any part of his [Wesley's] life, possessed so great an ascendancy over the mind of Wesley as this remarkable man [Peter Boehler]."¹⁰

Although other biographers criticized Southey's work, the most important evaluation of Southey's interpretation of Wesley's mind came from the theological writer, Alexander Knox, who after leaving Wesley's Methodism, corresponded with Wesley on numerous occasions. Knox not only defended Wesley's character in response to Southey's biography, but he also, according to Outler, claimed that Wesley was "a major theologian who managed to fuse the best of St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom!"¹¹ Although Knox's conviction about the competency of Wesley's theology was very favorable, it was not uncritical and must be interpreted along with

⁹ Robert Southey, *The Life of Wesley: And the Rise and Progress of Methodism*, vol. 1 (London, England: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1820).

¹⁰ Ibid., v-x (Preface), 194 and 349. According to Rack, Peter Boehler "was converted through Zinzendorf. He became a minister and later a bishop in the Moravian church. On the way to Oxford in February 1738 he grew fond of Wesley and, though convinced that Wesley did not really 'know the Saviour,' thought that he was willing to be taught and would become 'completely ours [Moravian].'" Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 138.

¹¹ Outler, *John Wesley*, iii.

Knox's insights into what he called the "anomaly" of Wesley's mind, which he argued was particularly evident in Wesley's correspondence with women.¹² Although Knox generally accepted Southey's depiction of Wesley's mind, he specifically corrected Southey's opinion about Wesley's personal character.¹³ In 1820, Knox wrote a defense of Wesley entitled, *Remarks On The Life and Character of John Wesley by the Late Alexander Knox*, which included his response to Southey's biography of Wesley. According to Methodist historian, Peter Nockles, "Southey himself was so impressed with Knox's defence [of Wesley] that he decided that any new edition of his own biography of Wesley should carry it as an appendix."¹⁴ Later, Southey followed through on this mandate and published Knox's *Remarks* on Wesley in 1858 at the end of volume two in Southey's reprinted edition of *The Life of Wesley*.¹⁵

Still, biographies exclusively featuring the piety and practice of Wesley continued with great popularity well into the twentieth century. Perhaps, for the purpose of this study, the biography that Wesleyan preacher and author William Henry Fitchett (1841-1928) composed

¹² Charles Cuthbert Southey, ed., *The Life of Wesley: And [sic] Rise and Progress of Methodism: New Edition with Notes by the Late Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Esq. and Remarks on the Life and Character of John Wesley by the Late Alexander Knox, Esq.*, vol. 2 (London, England: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1858), 295. Knox observed, "To his female correspondents, therefore, (as it strikes me,) he writes with peculiar effluence of thought and frankness of communication. . . . Accordingly, in those prompt effusions, all Mr. Wesley's peculiarities are in fullest display: his confident conclusions, from scanty or fallacious premises; his unwarrantable value for sudden revolutions of the mind; his proneness to attribute to the Spirit of God what might more reasonably be resolved into natural emotions, or illusive impressions: these and such-like evidences of his intellectual frailty, are poured forth without reserve; in strange union, however, with observations on persons and things, replete with acuteness and sagacity. But amid this anomaly of mind, there is no anomaly of heart." *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 305.

¹⁴ Peter B. Nockles, "Knox, Alexander (1757-1831)," s.v. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed August 14, 2016, Oxford DNB online.

¹⁵ Southey, 305.

best epitomized the culmination of the ongoing elevation of Wesley's historical significance without any serious regard for Wesley's thought. As both the founding president of the Methodist Ladies' College in Kew, Australia, and the elected president of various Conferences, Fitchett rode the wave of Methodism's success that spread not only to Australia, but to the world. In the opening litany of his 1912 biography, *Wesley and His Century: A Study in Spiritual Forces*, Fitchett recounted the stupendous claims not only of Southey, but also those of nineteenth-century historian Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859) and author as well as Chief Secretary for Ireland, Augustine Birrell (1850-1933). According to Fitchett, Southey asserted that Wesley was the "most influential mind of the last century; . . . Macaulay said that Wesley had 'a genius for government not inferior to that of Richelieu' and Birrell declared 'no other man . . . did such a life's work for England; you cannot cut him out of our national life.'"¹⁶ Based on the foundation of these assertions and others, Fitchett seemed poised to offer his explanation for the phenomenon of Wesley in the century that he believed was best defined by Wesley alone.

¹⁶ William Henry Fitchett, *Wesley and His Century: A Study in Spiritual Forces*, 2nd ed. (Cincinnati, OH: Jennings and Graham, 1912), 1-2. Fitchett was born in England (1841), moved to Geelong, Australia (1849), became an accredited local preacher by 1865 and served as a Wesleyan local minister for short stints in several locations in Australia until 1881. He was elected president of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference of Victorian and Tasmania (1886), the first president of the United Methodist Victorian and Tasmanian Conference (1902) and the first president, after the reunification of Methodism's five branches, of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia. According to A. G. Thomson Zainu'ddin's entry on Fitchett in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*: "He became a popular figure in world Methodism, addressing the Methodist Conference in London in 1899 and attending various British conference meetings in 1905, when he gave the 35th Fernley Lecture on 'The Unrealised Logic of Religion'. He was a delegate at the Ecumenical Conference in Toronto in 1911." A. G. Thomson Zainu'ddin, "Fitchett, William Henry (1841-1928)," *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/fitchett-william-henry-6179/text10621>, published first in hardcopy 1981, accessed online August 24, 2016.

However, Fitchett was not to be outdone. He added two accolades to the list, one literary and the other spiritual. First, he argued that “since the forces which stream from religion are mightier than anything literature knows, it is a reasonable theory that, in determining the history of the English-speaking race, Wesley counts for more than Shakespeare.”¹⁷ Second, Fitchett argued that in the history of Christianity not only the Anglican Church and the evangelical tradition, but also the Roman Catholic Church was indebted to Wesley for what he created directly or indirectly by the church he founded.¹⁸ Even more stunningly, Fitchett claimed that in the eighteenth century only George Washington rivaled Wesley for the greatest influence on the English-speaking race and even then Wesley’s impact was more enduring. The reason was not the genius of Wesley, but the fact that Wesley operated in a realm that exceeded Washington’s sphere of influence. In other words, Wesley was greater, according to Fitchett, because he, “Who awakens the great energies of religion, touches the elemental force in human life; a force deeper than politics, loftier than literature, and wider than science.”¹⁹ Thus, in the course of Wesley studies, Fitchett was another example of an author who wrote his biography of Wesley in order to explain that “while Wesley had not the genius of Milton or the luminous imagination of Bunyan or the analytical intellect of Locke, he has yet left a deeper mark on English history than the other three Johns put together.”²⁰ Wesley’s historical significance and religious influence

¹⁷ Ibid., 2.

¹⁸ Ibid., 284-289.

¹⁹ Ibid., 10.

²⁰ Ibid., 7.

were not based on his intellectual abilities, but rather on the secret spiritual forces that were at work behind the scenes of both Wesley's life and ministry.²¹

In the first half of the twentieth century, biographers of Wesley expanded their depiction of Wesley's influence in the eighteenth century. From the vantage point of being chairman of one of the districts of the Methodist Church in Wales, biographer Maldwyn Edwards believed that what had been overlooked in earlier depictions of Wesley was his social and political influence. In 1933, Edwards attempted to bring a corrective to the previous depictions of Wesley that had intentionally or unintentionally allowed Wesley to be separated from his identity as an Anglican priest or a Tory.²² Instead, Edwards argued that Wesley was devoted to England's church and state. Wesley was a Tory, and his Toryism never changed. However, Wesley did not become a Tory because he exercised his ability to reason politically, he simply inherited this view from his family. Equally, Wesley was loyal to the Church of England. However, Wesley's churchmanship changed when the needs of Wesleyan Methodism compelled him not only to do field preaching in England, but also to ordain preachers in America. In particular, Wesley's changing views on people, politics, and ecclesiology were greatly influenced by what he read. Still, according to Edwards, Wesley's general attitude continued undeterred because "It was determined by his birth, education, and temperament, and was not the result of independent

²¹ Ibid., 6, 8-10.

²² According to Rack, "Certainly, Wesley claimed to be a Tory like the rest of his family. In 1785 he rejected the charge made against his brother Samuel [1690-1739] of having been a Jacobite [a person with sympathies or an agenda for restoring the Stuart dynasty to England's throne]. 'Most of those who gave him this title did not distinguish between a Jacobite and a Tory; thereby I mean [Wesley said] one that believes God, not the people, to be the origin of all civil power.'" Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 371. For a different and more nuanced view see the discussion on Theodore Weber and Wesley's socio-political affinities with the Enlightenment in Chapter three.

judgment.”²³ Once again, despite being portrayed as having great political and social influence on his century, Wesley was also presented as not having the intellectual fortitude to escape the greater influences of the institutional environments that shaped his permanent disposition.

Although religious historians in the 1950s and early 1960s were highlighting in various ways the importance of reason in England’s eighteenth century, the neglect of Wesley’s thought still persisted in Wesley studies. The historians analyzing Wesley at this time were not only Protestant, but also Catholic. In 1950, Catholic historian Ronald A. Knox argued in his book, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* that by the mid-1700s, “The Methodism of Whitefield and the Wesleys [John and his brother Charles] had set England aflame, from Newcastle to Penzance, and when men spoke of Enthusiasm, those great names were the target of their attack.”²⁴ Like the reaction of the England he portrayed, Knox’s response to Wesley was unsympathetic. In fact, Knox spent more than one hundred consecutive pages of his six-hundred-page treatise expounding how Wesley best exemplified an eighteenth century that was more an age of enthusiasm, than an age of reason.²⁵

Unlike Ronald Knox, Protestant historian V. H. H. Green was sympathetic to Wesley in two biographies, *The Young Mr. Wesley: A Study of John Wesley and Oxford* (1961) and *John Wesley* (1964), because in part, he, like Wesley, was a Fellow and Tutor at Lincoln College, Oxford. Therefore, Green was careful to qualify Wesley’s emphasis on Christian experience as

²³ Maldwyn Edwards, *John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century: A Study of His Social and Political Influence*, rev. ed. (London, UK: The Epworth Press, 1955), 14.

²⁴ Ronald A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion: With Special Reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries* (Oxford, UK: At The Clarendon Press, 1959 [from corrected sheets of the first edition, first published in 1950]), 5, 8.

²⁵ Sheridan Gilley, “Christianity and Enlightenment: An Historical Survey,” *History of European Ideas*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1981): 113.

the best witness to Christian truth with the claim that Wesley neither opposed the importance nor questioned the use of reason in justifying Christian truth. Yet, like the Wesleyan biographers who came before him, Green ultimately downplayed Wesley's capability to reason. Although he acknowledged that Wesley read widely, Green stressed in his first book that the young Wesley was progressively restricted in his intellectual interests and clearly not a creative thinker.²⁶ Again, even though Green emphasized in his second book that Wesley was best understood as juxtaposed against the intellectual crisis of deism in England, Wesley's antidote was not intellectual, it was the pursuit of holiness.²⁷ According to Green, "He [Wesley] may have lacked a creative mind, but he was a genius at adaptation, a masterly opportunist, an inspired borrower."²⁸ In other words, what was significant about Wesley was his resourcefulness, not his reason.

Wesley Studies: Beyond the Turning Point

Albert C. Outler and Methodist historian Frank Baker were the two primary catalysts for a major turning point in the historiography of Wesley studies. Outler provided the premise for a new consideration of Wesley as a theologian, while Baker compiled the bibliography and supplied the edited texts for a new critical edition of Wesley's collected works.²⁹ In 1980, Baker

²⁶ V. H. H. Green, *The Young Mr. Wesley: A Study of John Wesley and Oxford* (London, UK: Edward Arnold, 1961), 11.

²⁷ V. H. H. Green, *John Wesley* (London, UK: Nelson, 1964), 5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 155.

²⁹ This new critical edition became known as the *Bicentennial Edition of The Works of John Wesley*. Oxford University Press began publishing the first volume of this definitive edition in the 1970s. However, faced with a severe economic crisis, they were forced to abdicate

claimed that Outler “has proved far and away the most captivating and compelling protagonist of Wesley’s unique importance as a theologian and exponent of the components of that importance. Nor has this been confined to academic and Methodist circles, whether national or international, but Albert Outler has been respected as the Methodist theologian par excellence both in Vatican II and the World Council of Churches.”³⁰ Later, in 1985, Outler recalled that “In Frank Baker . . . I had finally found a Wesley specialist such as I could never be but who was ready and able to help with my project [an anthology of Wesley’s thought discussed in the next paragraph]. He, too, had discovered the limited usefulness of Wesley Studies [the need in 1957 for a critical edition of Wesley’s works].”³¹ According to their mutual colleagues, Outler and Baker were opposites in their personalities and did not pretend to get along. However, together and united in mission, Outler’s power of persuasion and Baker’s primary sources spearheaded a new era of scholarly study in Wesley studies.

Beginning in his seminal article, “Towards a Re-appraisal of John Wesley as a Theologian” (1961) and reiterated more fully in his landmark anthology, *John Wesley* (1964), Outler began an unprecedented campaign arguing that Wesley was an important theologian in the history of Christian thought.³² During his critical study of Wesley, Outler uncovered a

the publishing rights to Abingdon Press in the early 1980s. Work on the completion of this edition continues under the guidance of its current General Editor, Randy L. Maddox.

³⁰ Frank Baker, “Unfolding John Wesley: A Survey of Twenty Years’ Studies in Wesley’s Thought,” *Quarterly Review* 1, no. 1 (1980): 55.

³¹ Albert C. Outler, “A New Future for Wesley Studies: An Agenda for ‘Phase III,’” in *The Future of the Methodist Theological Traditions*, ed., M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 43.

³² Albert C. Outler, “Towards a Re-appraisal of John Wesley as a Theologian,” *Perkins School of Theology Journal*, vol. 14 (1961): 5-14. Outler, *John Wesley*.

different Wesley than the embellished evangelist and founder of Methodism that he had learned from Wesley's biographers. Instead, Outler claimed: "what I had found in Wesley was a theologian who looked better without his halo."³³ Using better scholarship and sources than previous Wesley biographers, Outler went behind the curtain of Victorian Methodist sensibilities to discover Wesley not only as a more complex and demythologized person but also as a serious thinker. Moreover, Outler found that earlier interpreters of Wesley's theology in the twentieth century had overlooked Wesley's uncanny ability to borrow from a palette of diverse and seemingly unrelated theological sources. As a result, they had attempted to force the rich and colorful tapestry of Wesley's theology into a single whitewashed template created by other theologians and the movements they inspired.³⁴ By contrast, Outler argued that Wesley was an eclectic theologian who was a master at borrowing from other theological sources in order to develop his own practical blend of theology.³⁵ Yet, even more significant and unique in the

³³ Outler, "A New Future for Wesley Studies," 44.

³⁴ Outler, "Towards a Re-appraisal of John Wesley," 6. Specifically, Outler listed the following: "Cell discovered the Calvinist in him; Piette identified his Catholic emphases but misidentified them as Roman; Cannon's Wesley resembles a mid-nineteenth century American Methodist, Hildebrandt's a Lutheran pietist; in Dillenberger and Welch's Protestant Christianity he gets lost amongst the 18th century evangelicals; Lee makes him out a fore-runner of the 19th century liberalism; Knox finds him amongst the enthusiasts, Rupp amongst the Puritans; Otto Nall represents the majority view in seeing him as a theological indifferentist whose favorite motto was 'Think and Let Think.' There is, of course, a core of fact in each of these images but none of them displays the man in sufficient depth." Ibid.

³⁵ Outler described Wesley's principle of "election" as *evangelical catholicism* and then proceeded to list the following theological elements that Wesley chose to fuse together (using the following terminology and capitalization): Puritans, Nonjurors, Caroline divines and Latitudinarians from seventeenth-century English theology; William Law, Michael Molinas and the French Quietists in his early years; patristics, Fathers of the Desert, "Macarius the Egyptian" (though unaware that this was a composite corpus of Alexandrine and Cappadocian ascetical theology) and Ephraim Sirus as well as Beveridge's *Synodikon* (a collection of Eastern canons and liturgies). Ibid., 7-8.

history of Christian thought, Wesley was a “folk-theologian,” who demonstrated his prowess as a serious theologian by effectively communicating the gospel through “plain truth (or words) for plain people.”³⁶ In the end, Outler believed the best approach to understanding Wesley’s theology was to consider him as a serious thinker and theologian.

Armed with this new conviction, Outler persuaded his reluctant fellow members on the editorial board of *A Library of Protestant Thought* to include his anthology of Wesley’s theology in their series.³⁷ Unlike the other traditional portraits of systematic or speculative Protestant theologians, such as Luther and Calvin, Wesley came to have his place in the history of Christian thought for the first time as a “folk-theologian.” Through the popularity of his anthology, Outler not only affirmed the work of past biographers who had secured Wesley’s eminence as a founder, evangelist, reformer, and practical or organizational genius, but also helped to direct the attention of future scholarship to the importance of Wesley’s thought.³⁸

Congruent with the campaign of his article and anthology, Outler joined with another board of scholars representing theological schools of Methodist-related universities in America

³⁶ Albert C. Outler, ed., Preface to *The Works of John Wesley: Sermons I*, Bicentennial ed., vol. 1 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), 104.

³⁷ Outler, *John Wesley*, ii. The other members of the editorial board for *A Library of Protestant Thought* that Outler (Southern Methodist University) persuaded included: John Dillenberger (Chairman, San Francisco Theological Seminary), Sydney E. Ahlstrom (Yale University), Robert T. Handy (Union Theological Seminary), Winthrop S. Hudson (Colgate Rochester Divinity School), Paul L. Lehmann (Union Theological Seminary), James H. Nichols (Princeton Theological Seminary), Jaroslav J. Pelikan (Yale University), Leonard J. Trinterud (San Francisco Theological Seminary) and Claude Welch (University of Pennsylvania).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, v-xii. Reflecting on the popularity of his anthology in 1985, Outler recalled, “Thus, with his [Baker’s] aid and that of many others (historians, classicists, specialists in English literature) Wesley got his volume in the *Library* – and, for all its flaws (plainer now after twenty years more study), it has continued to outsell the other volumes by a ratio of ten to one and remains the only volume of the eighteen still in print.” Outler, “A New Future for Wesley Studies,” 43.

to form a planning committee that enlisted scholars for a different project, the Wesley Works Editorial Project. The goal of the project was to produce the first truly critical edition of Wesley's *Works*, which was first published by Wesley in thirty-two volumes (1771-1774). Baker, who had already been working on an updated bibliography of Wesley's complete writings, became the text editor for the entire project. As part of his responsibilities, he supplied the various editors for each volume of Wesley's works with an accurate and critical edition of Wesley's text. In addition to being appointed by the board to be the Editor-in-Chief for the overall project in 1969, Baker also served as the editor for the first two volumes of John Wesley's *Letters* published in 1980 and 1982.³⁹ Although he discontinued his work on Wesley's *Letters*, he spent the remainder of his life (d. 1999) attempting to update his bibliography for all of Wesley's *Works*.⁴⁰ Through his cumulative efforts as a bibliographer, editor, professor and Methodist historian, Baker advocated effectively for the serious study of Wesley's thought.

As an outgrowth of the changing evaluation of Wesley's theology that Outler, Baker and other Wesley scholars came to champion, Wesley Studies (upper case "S") emerged as a new academic subject in its own right. In the decades that followed, Wesley scholars formed new theological societies, conducted seminars, and published new peer review journals. Major universities in the United States, such as Duke, Southern Methodist and Vanderbilt, established

³⁹ Cragg, ed., *The Works of Wesley: The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion*, v-vi.

⁴⁰ Frank Baker, *A Union Catalog of the Publications of John and Charles Wesley*, 2nd ed., rev. (Stone Mountain, GA: George Zimmerman, 1991).

Chairs of Wesley Studies and began to produce professors and scholars who contributed to the collective work of Wesley studies (lower case “s”).⁴¹

What these aggregate developments created for the historiography of Wesley studies in the 1960s and 1970s were two new considerations of Wesley in his historical context. On the one hand, scholars began to consider Wesley as a theologian in new ways because they had access to a truly critical edition of *The Works of John Wesley*. On the other hand, scholars began to consider Wesley increasingly as a serious thinker in new ways within the intellectual context that Locke continued to influence in Eighteenth Century England. As a result, Wesley became decoupled from the dominant, traditional interpretive framework of his earlier biographers as Wesley scholars began to explore new horizons in Wesley’s relation to the religion and reason of his age. Ironically, this untethering process began most intensively after scholars published a new history of Britain’s Methodist Church that highlighted Wesley’s tie to Methodism.

In 1965, British Methodist scholar Rupert Davies and church historian Gordon Rupp served as the general editors for a three-volume collection of essays, *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, which offered a new narrative of the story of Methodism from an ecumenical perspective. The first volume reconsidered not only Methodism during Wesley’s lifetime, but also Wesley in the context of the Church of England. Since the death of Wesley, biographers of Wesley’s Methodism and historians of Great Britain’s Church had obscured the historical Wesley in order to defend their points of view. Therefore, Davies, Rupp and their

⁴¹ Randy L. Maddox, “Reclaiming an Inheritance: Wesley as Theologian in the History of Methodist Theology,” in *Rethinking Wesley’s Theology for Contemporary Methodism*, ed., Randy L. Maddox (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1998), 224, 252 n47.

ecumenical revisers set out to relocate Wesley as an Anglican priest in an Anglican Church, the one in which he chose to live and die.⁴²

Like the other contributors to their collection, Davies and Rupp, each in his own way, confirmed Outler's premise that Wesley was an important theologian. Davies had already portrayed Wesley as a practical theologian in his book, *Methodism* (1963). In his history of Methodism, he argued not only that Wesley was a pioneer, along with others of popular education in England, as well as a Tory and monarchist, but also that Wesley was a theologian in contrast to Anglican Bishop Joseph Butler who considered Wesley an "enthusiast."⁴³ As a corrective to the evangelist image that circumscribed the study of Wesley to his role in the Methodist Revival, Davies argued: "John Wesley was a theologian before he became an evangelist, and he remained a theologian all through the years of his evangelistic mission. In fact, it would be true to say that his primary interest never ceased to be theological."⁴⁴ However, Rupp argued in his introduction that Wesley's theology was practical and it brought together different theological strands from the Catholic and Protestant traditions in England and Western Europe. In addition, Rupp claimed that although Wesley extracted, edited and published fifty volumes of practical divinity (theology) by other theologians in his *Christian Library* (1749-1755) in order to influence Methodism and train Methodist preachers, what proved to be the most important result of that monumental effort was the influence that those sources as a whole

⁴² Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp, eds., *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, vol. 1 (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1965), v-vi.

⁴³ Rupert E. Davies, *Methodism*, 2nd ed. (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1963, 1985), 65, 78, 92.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 81.

had on Wesley's mind.⁴⁵ Thus, Davies, Rupp and some of the scholars included in their collection of essays began the difficult task of locating Wesley as a theologian in the historical context of his age.

In chapter one entitled, "England in the Eighteenth Century," British historian Herbert Butterfield not only placed Wesley within the great secularization movement that was flooding the eighteenth century, but he also located some of the generous and charitable ideas of its secular enlightenment within the thought of Wesley and the efforts of his Methodist movement, which brought about religious and social reform. Wesley lived in a century that was transitioning from the old world with a politico-ecclesiastical society where Christian ethics regulated economic activity and individuals had hope in an after-life, to a new world with a secular society where capitalistic enterprise became increasingly unrestricted and individuals hoped for social and cultural improvement in this present life. In response to this transition, Wesley and Methodism were influential in the eighteenth century because Wesley was able to integrate what was useful from both worlds. Butterfield acknowledged this integration by stating that "In the case of John Wesley it is interesting to see how many elements of the new kind of world were brought into combination with so many of the old."⁴⁶ Unlike Wesley's biographers who highlighted Wesley as traditional in his ecclesiology, but relentless as a controversialist in his defense of Methodism, Butterfield featured Wesley as conservative in his politics, but ardent as a reformer in his efforts to improve society.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Davies and Rupp, *A History of the Methodist Church*, xxviii, xxx-xxxi.

⁴⁶ Herbert Butterfield, "England in the Eighteenth Century," in *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, vol. 1, eds., Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1965), 6.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 26.

Even though Butterfield's definition of the Age of Reason sets up a false dichotomy of sacred versus secular between Wesley and England's Enlightenment, his main argument was still convincing. The impact that Wesley and Methodism had on England's Age of Reason, particularly in the sphere of social reform, can be explained, only partially, by the effect of religious revivals, because, according to Butterfield, the results also "show. . . the effect of the secular enlightenment, the ideas of which are often to be found percolating into the outlook of religious men."⁴⁸ In other words, what Wesley and Methodism accomplished in the eighteenth century came about not only through an evangelical change of heart but also through an enlightened change of thought. Wesley was not only compatible with his Age of Reason in many ways, but he was also in many ways relevant and effective in his Age of Reason, in part, because he was able to adapt and use many elements of England's secular enlightenment for his purposes.

Particularly helpful for this study was Butterfield's detailed description of some of the ideas and values of the enlightenment that Wesley may have used. The characteristics of England's Age of Reason that Butterfield summarized included: a prevailing mood of optimism, the idea of progress, human nature viewed as conditioned, the belief that some evils could be removed by remedying the conditioning circumstances, the idea of the perfectibility of man, confidence in how the earth and human life worked as great machines, a laissez-faire approach to conducting the economic world, the understanding of liberty as a political ideal and the considerable advancement of science.⁴⁹ Despite the fact that the secularization theory Butterfield affirmed in this chapter in 1965 has recently been disputed by some scholars as an inadequate

⁴⁸ Ibid., 28.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 32.

interpretation of England's eighteenth-century religion because it presupposes an enlightenment that undermined Christianity, Butterfield's insights into the relationship that Wesley had as a social reformer in his Age of Reason has continued to be important for Wesley studies.

Other essayists in Davies and Rupp's collection that influenced the historiography of Wesley studies by illustrating how Wesley could be understood as a serious thinker in the intellectual context of his age included Maldwyn Edwards, Jean Orcibal and John Walsh. First, Maldwyn Edwards, who earlier in his 1933 seminal work had argued that the source of Wesley's social and political influence was his devotion to England's church and state, now claimed in 1965 that Wesley was the "greatest social reformer of his age" because the secret of his Samson-like strength lay in the logical power of his ability to reason.⁵⁰ According to Edwards, "some dismissed him [Wesley] as an enthusiast but the strength of his preaching lay in his refusal to despise the [*sic*] reason. His appeal to the heart lay through the mind."⁵¹ Edwards' new story of Wesley revealed how Wesley's mind had been inspired by his grandfathers, recognized by his parents, nurtured by his mother, educated by the Charterhouse in London and prepared by Oxford in particular to be a letter-writer, pamphleteer and preacher. Wesley's logic became powerful not only because he was appointed during his years at Oxford to be a lecturer in Greek, philosophy and logic, but also because he served as the moderator of student disputations.⁵² As a result, Wesley used his logical power to secure his legacy not only as an evangelist and leader of

⁵⁰ Maldwyn Edwards, "John Wesley," in *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, vol. 1, eds., Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1965), 42, 63.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 41-42.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 37-42.

Methodism, but also as a social reformer primarily in his service to education.⁵³ In the end, Edwards linked Wesley to the educational values of England's Age of Reason and joined a growing number of scholars in Wesley studies that now emphasized the important role of Wesley's thought in British history.

Second, Catholic historian Jean Orcibal crafted a sympathetic portrayal of Wesley in 1965 that presented Wesley as an original thinker. In his essay, "The Theological Originality of John Wesley and Continental Spirituality," Orcibal brought a corrective to an earlier work by prominent Catholic historian Ronald Knox who indicted Wesley of enthusiasm in the 1950s. By contrast, Orcibal argued that to discover Wesley's originality, he must be placed in the context of the Age of Enlightenment.⁵⁴ To make his point, the French historian traced the attention Scottish and English divines gave to the spirituality of France and the continent beginning in the seventeenth century and culminating with Wesley who published throughout his life an ongoing library of mysticism for Methodism.⁵⁵ Orcibal juxtaposed Wesley's thought against the height of the Enlightenment that he believed produced an age of spiritual aridity in Great Britain that could not be overstated. Against that backdrop, Wesley's originality was revealed as striking, not because it was creative, but because what Wesley borrowed and assimilated from a variety and breadth of sources was paradoxical. According to Orcibal, what Wesley achieved that was

⁵³ Ibid., 64-67.

⁵⁴ Jean Orcibal, "The Theological Originality of John Wesley and Continental Spirituality," in *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, vol. 1, eds., Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1965), 83.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 83-88, 95-96. The works that Wesley published for Methodism are here listed in the chronological order that Orcibal considered in the formation of his argument: "Renty, Poiret, Fleury, Pascal, A. Bourignon, Fénelon, and Brother Lawrence, Molinos, John d'Avila, Gregory Lopez, Saint-Cyran, Mme Guyon, Armelle Nicolas." Ibid., 83n1.

revolutionary was “to complete the doctrine of justification by faith by means of the teaching of the synoptic gospels on sanctification, and even more so to preach to Protestants the ideal of perfection—a perfection also attained by faith—as the grand *depositum* which the Methodists were specially called to uphold among their fellow Protestants.”⁵⁶ As a result, Wesley engaged the Age of Enlightenment in a bold way. He demonstrated theological originality when he borrowed the idea of human perfection that rationalism had used to undermine Christian faith and adapted it as Christian perfection in a way that rehabilitated mysticism, the same mysticism that had been the casualty of the idea of human perfection in the first place. In other words, Wesley proved he was an original thinker each time he took the reason of his age and used it to benefit the religion of his age.

Finally, the Anglican Church historian, John Walsh, compared Wesley to the political leaders and idealistic thinkers of his enlightened age in an essay, “Methodism at the End of the Eighteenth Century.”⁵⁷ On the one hand, Wesley, like other great statesmen, was not only decisive, tactical, conservative or opportunistic in his decisions as the leader of Methodism, but also a watchful procrastinator. On the other hand, Wesley was like other rationalist Utopians who believed in the possibility of man’s perfectibility, but with two important qualifiers. According to Walsh, “Wesley believed not in the perfection of the *natural* man, but of the *regenerate* man. He believed in perfection not through unaided human reason, but through . . . the supernatural strength of grace [emphasis is Walsh’s].”⁵⁸ In addition, Walsh argued in 1965

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

⁵⁷ John Walsh, “Methodism at the End of the Eighteenth Century,” in *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, vol. 1, eds., Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1965), 277-315.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 278, 314.

that social historians had overlooked the fundamental optimism that made Methodism appealing to Wesley's age because they had focused too excessively on the Sabbatarian practices and hell-fire preaching of Methodism.⁵⁹ In the end, Wesley and Wesleyan Methodism were relevant in Britain's age of reason, in part, because they exuded an attitude of optimism and promoted an idealism of Christian perfection.

Like Rupp before him, historian John Camel English, found Wesley's *Christian Library* useful for locating Wesley's Christian thought in the theological heritage of the seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Anglican Church. In his 1968 article, "The Cambridge Platonists in Wesley's 'Christian Library,'" English argued that even though Wesley (who with qualification agreed with Locke that knowledge came solely through the experience of the senses) was far removed from the philosophical position of the Cambridge Platonists (seventeenth-century Anglican divines who believed people had innate ideas and common notions about God), he found some of the ideas and qualities of their theology useful. Like Wesley in the eighteenth century, the seventeenth-century Cambridge Platonists were attempting to combine the reason of their age with their religion. What either influenced or simply reflected Wesley's theology, he selected and abridged to be published for Methodists. What Wesley judged as dangerous or disruptive to his agenda for the spiritual growth of his Methodists, he omitted or edited. However, in the end what John English offered in his article was an approach to understanding better Wesley's relation to England's age of reason by analyzing the many common themes and similar definitions of "religion" found in both the writings of the Platonists and the works of

⁵⁹ Walsh's allusion here was to E. P. Thompson. The trenchant response of both John Walsh and David Hempton to E. P. Thompson and his provocative presentation of Methodism in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) in the chapter they co-authored, "E. P. Thompson and Methodism" in Mark Noll's book, *God and Mammon: Protestants, Money, and the Market, 1790-1860* (2002) has informed the review of E. P. Thompson in this study.

Wesley that integrated the philosophy of England's Enlightenment. For example, English demonstrated that the popular idea of human perfectibility in the age of reason was reinterpreted as the perfection of the believer and the goal of the Christian life in the published works of both Wesley and the Platonists.⁶⁰ Although the arguments in English's article were particularly significant at this stage in the historiography of Wesley studies, his most important contribution to understanding Wesley's link to England's Enlightenment would not come for another two decades.

Perhaps the best example of how scholars changed their view of Wesley as they began to consider him increasingly as a theologian or serious thinker was the scholarship of church historian Gerald R. Cragg. In 1960 and 1964, Cragg placed John Wesley in the story of two different accounts of England's eighteenth-century history. In his first book, *The Church and the Age of Reason*, Cragg highlighted how Wesley and his Methodist movement helped bring about the repudiation of deism in eighteenth-century England. Specifically, Cragg emphasized that "Wesley shattered the facile supposition that religion is merely an intellectual hypothesis. He recalled men to the fact that faith is a divine power, and one which can transform human lives."⁶¹ However, this view of Wesley still relegated him to only playing an affective role in counteracting the forces of faith in reason by revitalizing the immediacy of religion in England. Because Cragg had not yet been influenced as he would later by Outler and the turning of Wesley studies, the only intellectual heroes of England's Church in Cragg's 1960 narrative were

⁶⁰ John C. English, "Cambridge Platonists in the 'Christian Library,'" *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, vol. xxxvi (Oct., 1968): 161-168. English analyzed the similarities between Wesley and the Cambridge Platonists he abridged, which included Ralph Cudworth, Nathanael Culverwel, Henry More, Simon Patrick, John Smith and John Worthington.

⁶¹ Gerald R. Cragg, *The Church and the Age of Reason 1648-1789* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1960, 1970), 14.

William Law, Joseph Butler and George Berkeley. Any account of the role of Wesley's thought in preventing deism and the overuse of reason in Wesleyan Methodism would have to wait.

In Cragg's second book, *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century*, Wesley's traditional place outside the fraternity of Christian theologians was reiterated when Cragg claimed that Wesley was not a profound scholar.⁶² No attempt by Cragg to balance his underwhelming appraisal of Wesley's reason or to qualify Wesley's uncompromising belief in the authority of the Bible as the Word of God was enough to present Wesley as intellectually capable of influencing his enlightened England. Cragg depicted Wesley as compatible with his age by claiming "Wesley reacted against the excessive rationalism of his age, but he had no intention of depreciating the valid role of reason."⁶³ However, Wesley was still no match for an intellectual foe, which Cragg summarized: "Both the new science and the new philosophy encouraged the belief that truth can be established only by the verdict of the enlightened and emancipated mind. The caution and sobriety of the new age, its tolerant outlook and its faith in reason united to discredit all reliance on ancient forms of authority."⁶⁴ Yet, like other scholars who were influenced in the 1960s and 1970s by the turning point in Wesley studies, Cragg's view of Wesley's thought and theology changed.

Frank Baker became the greatest influence on Cragg's reappraisal of Wesley after Cragg was selected to be the editor of an upcoming volume in the new definitive edition of Wesley's

⁶² Gerald R. Cragg, *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century* (London, UK: Cambridge At The University Press, 1964), 162.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 158.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

Works.⁶⁵ As a result, in 1975, in the introduction to his edited volume, *The Works of John Wesley: The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion*, Cragg finally admitted that Wesley was a serious theologian.⁶⁶ Moreover, Cragg's volume revealed not only Wesley's skill as a controversialist trained by his responsibilities as a moderator of disputations at Lincoln College, Oxford, but also how significant religious controversy was in the intellectual life of Eighteenth Century England. Still, more useful to this study, Cragg argued "It is important to remember that John Wesley became a Methodist without ceasing to be a man of his age."⁶⁷ In other words, Wesley, in part, exemplified a typical Englishman of the eighteenth century because he was too intellectually reasonable to tolerate irrationality in the way he practiced his religion.⁶⁸

In addition to these early pioneering interpretations of how Wesley was competent intellectually in his age, Cragg was also one of the first historians to argue that Wesley had an identifiable epistemology (his own theory of knowledge) that had been shaped primarily by the influence of Locke (a consideration that will be analyzed in Chapter three). Despite being mentioned only once in a single footnote as an editorial comment, Cragg argued with little or no precedent that: "Wesley's interpretation of the senses is a part of the epistemology he derived from John Locke. He accepts the fact that innate ideas do not exist; all knowledge comes from

⁶⁵ Cragg, *Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion*, ix. Cragg claimed, "My first and greatest debt is to Professor Frank Baker. His wide familiarity with everything connected with Wesley's life and his minute knowledge of the text of Wesley's works have made his help invaluable at every point. It is obvious that he knows a great deal more about the text than anyone since Wesley: indeed, he probably knows more about many aspects of it than did Wesley himself." Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 98.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 10, 98.

sense impressions or reflection upon them. Sense impressions report on the physical world, and cannot transcend their own limitations. Wesley emphasizes this, because it clears the way for his interpretation of faith.”⁶⁹ Cragg’s claims confirmed that scholars of Wesley studies in the mid-1970s were attempting to understand the influence of Locke, not on Wesley’s religion, but on his thought.

Congruently, in 1975, historical theologian Laurence Wood wrote one of the first articles devoted entirely to analyzing Wesley’s epistemology.⁷⁰ What Cragg had only mentioned in a footnote the same year, Wood developed more fully, although he was more careful than Cragg to clarify that Wesley did not explicitly articulate an epistemological theory. Unlike Orcibal who simply associated the age of reason in Great Britain with the ideas of the *philosophes* in France, Wood used the insights of Enlightenment historian Ernst Cassirer (discussed in the next section of this chapter) in order to define Wesley’s historical context as a philosophical age or age of criticism against which he juxtaposed Wesley.⁷¹ As a result, Wood highlighted how Wesley not

⁶⁹ Ibid., 57n1. Cragg also added, “The ‘evidence of things not seen’ has its appropriate way of registering on the soul an understanding of spiritual truths. . . . Wesley argues by analogy from our senses and knowledge based on their reports to faith and the assurance based on its testimony.” Ibid.

⁷⁰ Laurence Willard Wood, “Wesley’s Epistemology,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vol. 10 (1975): 48-59.

⁷¹ Ibid., 48. According to historian Alan Charles Kors, “In a France that was highly stratified by birth and title, there emerged by the middle of the eighteenth century a community of thinkers and writers of quite diverse social origins who shared attitudes favorable toward the new philosophy and critical toward arbitrary authority and the French Catholic Church. They saw themselves as part of a Republic of Letters, a phrase widely used from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries to describe the world of writers and educated readers. Within that Republic, in theory, authors would be judged by merit, not by birth. . . . The word *philosophe* [emphasis mine] was merely the French noun for ‘philosopher,’ but eighteenth-century French Enlightenment authors took the word for their own. They detached it from any sense of being a student of abstract, metaphysical philosophy as taught in the universities of Europe. Rather, it came to stand for a thinker who possessed a critical spirit informed by the intellectual revolution

only addressed metaphysical issues in his writings, but also valued the study of metaphysics, which he indicated in his journal.⁷² Therefore, in the historiography of Wesley studies, Wood's article was an important early sign of a movement by some Wesley scholars toward a serious consideration of the Enlightenment in their study of Wesley.

However, before an integration of Wesley studies and Enlightenment studies could take place in the 1980s, the historiography of the Enlightenment would have to experience its own turning point. Like the shift that occurred in the way scholars viewed Wesley in Wesley studies, many historians of the Enlightenment would also significantly change the fundamental approach they used to study the Enlightenment. Therefore, the next section of this chapter will analyze not only the historiography of Enlightenment studies, but also the turning point that opened the door to the possibility of understanding Wesley's complex relationship with the Enlightenment more fully through a new integration of Wesley and Enlightenment studies.

of the seventeenth century, above all in its empirical and practical modes." Alan Charles Kors, "Philosophes," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed., Alan Charles Kors, vol. 3 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 267-268.

⁷² Ibid., 48. Wood qualified the following list of Wesley's writings and journal references by cautioning that Wesley's critical remarks about metaphysics were not intended for an audience of philosophical scholars: "A look at some of the titles of Wesley's writings show his metaphysical interests—'A compendium of Logic,' 'The Case of Reason Impartially Considered,' 'The Imperfection of Human Knowledge,' 'Remarks upon Mr. Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding,"' 'Thoughts upon Taste,' and 'Of the Gradual Improvement of Natural Philosophy.' In his journals, there are many references to his having read most of the significant philosophers of his day—Voltaire, Locke, Malebranche, D'Alembert, Montesquieu, Hume, Reid." Ibid.

The Historiography of Enlightenment Studies

Enlightenment Studies: Before the 1980s

Although the term “Enlightenment” appeared as an English equivalent to the French word *aufklärung* (“illumination”) and the German word *éclaircissement* (“a clearing up or revelation of what is obscure or unknown”) to describe an age or era for the first time early in the nineteenth century, Wesley remained invisible as a theologian or thinker in the intellectual history of the Enlightenment until the end of the twentieth century.⁷³ Even though some historians of the Enlightenment continued to acknowledge Wesley’s importance in the eighteenth century primarily as an evangelist, revivalist or founder of Methodism, most concluded that Wesley was not only an anti-intellectual enthusiast, but also a reactionary or counter-Enlightenment figure. In this section, the historiography of Enlightenment studies will be analyzed in order to determine why Wesley was judged by historians to be incompatible with the intellectual history of the Enlightenment well into the late twentieth century.

Histories sympathetic to Wesley in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were still tainted with the caricatures of Wesley’s eighteenth-century legacy that Wesley’s biographers continued to perpetuate. Two scholars, author Leslie Stephen (1832-1904) and historian William Edward Hartpole Lecky (1838-1903) provided notable exceptions. By comparison, historian Crane Brinton claimed that “On Wesley and the Methodist movement Stephen is much more succinct than his contemporary Lecky . . . ; but the wise reader will go to Lecky also, especially

⁷³ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “enlightenment,” accessed September 26, 2016, OED Online.

for the social and political effects of Methodism.”⁷⁴ Together, Stephen and Lecky helped set a precedent for historians of Eighteenth Century England that depicted Wesley well into the twentieth century.

In *The History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, first published in 1876, Stephen argued that “Wesleyanism [or Wesleyan Methodism] is, in many respects, by far the most important phenomenon of the century.”⁷⁵ Against the backdrop of England’s eighteenth-century age of criticism and acute skepticism, Stephen juxtaposed Wesley, not as a theologian or philosopher, but as a religious reformer who reacted to the dry rationalism that threatened his Methodists. Moreover, the epoch that eighteenth-century English writers created was not an age of poetry and theology like the seventeenth century, but an age of prose and reason.⁷⁶ Still, Wesley’s mind was influenced most by the Christian devotional literature he read, particularly the writings of Thomas à Kempis, Jeremy Taylor and William Law.⁷⁷ As a leader, Wesley had spiritual influence not only because he excelled in Christian practice, but also because he exerted literary power through the clear and concise practical theology he wrote for Methodists. However, Stephen claimed, “As the guide of a religious movement—the highest duty which can fall to a human being—he was . . . deficient in the speculative insight which is so rarely combined with unusual practical energy; but for the immediate purpose of stirring the stagnating

⁷⁴ Crane Brinton, “Preface to the Harbinger Edition,” in *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, Leslie Stephen, vol. 2 (London, UK: Harbinger Books, 1962), v.

⁷⁵ Leslie Stephen, *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 2 (London, UK: Harbinger Books, 1962), 330.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, ix, 312.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 325, 330-331.

currents of religious emotion, no man could have been more admirably endowed.”⁷⁸ In the end, Stephen portrayed Wesley as so consumed with his religious movement and so efficient in his reaction to the rationalist theology of his century that he left no room in his account to consider how Wesley may have related to the thought of his age outside either the demands of Methodism or the realm of practical theology.

In *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century* published in eight volumes (1878-1890), Lecky, unlike many of Wesley’s biographers, did not overlook Wesley’s superstition, enthusiasm, credulity and reiterated belief in witchcraft. Instead, Lecky qualified each particular criticism of Wesley’s thought and practice with his own overall assessment of Wesley’s legacy: “What the [established] Church lost in numbers it more than gained in vitality. The Evangelical movement, which directly or indirectly originated with Wesley, produced a general revival of religious feeling, which has incalculably increased the efficiency of almost every religious body in the community, while at the same time it has not seriously affected party politics.”⁷⁹ Wesley was superstitious in his practice of bibliomancy (randomly opening the Bible and letting the text that one’s glance or attention first falls upon guide one’s decision or determine one’s direction), but more importantly he had what Lecky called a “superstitious reverence” for the practices of the Church of England, which he upheld along with the doctrines of its Articles and Homilies.⁸⁰ Although Lecky believed that Wesley was unquestionably an enthusiast, he defended “Wesley,

⁷⁸ Ibid., 348.

⁷⁹ William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, New ed., vol. III (New York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1892), 144.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 51, 53. Lecky believed Wesley was “sincerely attached to the liturgy of his Church, but at the same time altogether independent of ecclesiastical control. To Wesley’s mind, the ecclesiastical aspect of things appeared always extremely important.” Ibid., 57.

whose strongest enthusiasm was always curbed by a powerful will, and who manifested at all times and on all subjects an even exaggerated passion for reasoning.”⁸¹ In addition to pointing out Wesley’s gullibility for believing certain details in the recorded lives of Catholic saints, Lecky emphasized that “in all matters relating to Satanic interference, Wesley was especially credulous.”⁸² Still, despite Wesley’s credulity and his outspoken belief in witchcraft, Lecky was convinced that what Wesley accomplished would have been far less if he “had not been very credulous and very dogmatic, utterly incapable of a suspended judgment, and utterly insensible to some of the highest intellectual tendencies of his time.”⁸³ In the end, Lecky not only acknowledged Wesley’s extraordinary administrative and organizational abilities, but he also argued that Wesley’s influence on the practice of religion in England was greater than any other man since the sixteenth century.⁸⁴ However, Lecky ultimately arrived at the same conclusion about Wesley’s thought as his contemporaries in the nineteenth century: “[Wesley] has, it is true, no title to be regarded as a great thinker. His mind had not much originality or speculative power, and his leading tenets placed him completely out of harmony with the higher intellect of his time.”⁸⁵

Lecky’s most important contribution to the later integration of Wesley and Enlightenment studies was his belief that Wesley and the Evangelical movement that he influenced saved England from experiencing a revolution like France at the end of the eighteenth century.

⁸¹ Ibid., 54.

⁸² Ibid., 91.

⁸³ Ibid., 140.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 137.

According to Lecky, “Many causes conspired to save her, but among them a prominent place must, I believe, be given to the new and vehement religious enthusiasm which was at that very time passing through the middle and lower classes of the people, which had enlisted in its service a large proportion of the wilder and more impetuous reformers, and which recoiled with horror from the anti-Christian tenets that were associated with the Revolution in France.”⁸⁶ Through the revitalization of religious feeling, Wesley and Methodism were able to help prevent revolution in England because their religious enthusiasm was not disruptive to England’s political system. However, Lecky’s argument had both intended and unintended historiographical results. On the one hand, Lecky created a new consideration of Wesley’s role in the politics that some future historians of the Enlightenment embraced (which will be discussed later in the next chapter). On the other hand, Lecky circumscribed or at least postponed any future consideration of Wesley as having a relationship with the Enlightenment that was anything but oppositional because Lecky had convincingly defined not only Wesley and Methodism as a remedy, but also the Enlightenment as an anti-Christian contagion that had produced revolution in France.

Although Lecky used the term enlightenment, usually coupled with toleration, in his English history, Sir Stephen did not. However, by the 1930s, the English word, enlightenment, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), came to be understood academically as “the action or process of freeing human understanding from the accepted and customary beliefs sanctioned by traditional, especially religious, authority, chiefly by rational and scientific inquiry into all aspects of human life, which became a characteristic goal of philosophical writing in the

⁸⁶ Ibid., 144, 146.

late 17th and 18th centuries.”⁸⁷ Therefore, according to the OED, when professors described an “Age of Enlightenment” that was defined by this climate of thought, they were referring to the “dominant European intellectual culture in the eighteenth century, which typically emphasized freedom of thought and action without reference to religious and other traditional authority, proposed a deistic understanding of the universe, insisted on a rationalist and scientific approach to the understanding of human society. . . and had as an important aim the development of new theoretical methods and practical reforms.”⁸⁸ In response to the consensus of scholars who accepted this general definition, two professors produced important revisionist histories of the Enlightenment in 1932. On opposite sides of their mutual topic as well as the Atlantic Ocean, American Carl Becker and German Ernst Cassirer, independent of each other, published enduring, but conflicting interpretations of the Enlightenment. As a result, these two historians together helped fuel the fire of Enlightenment studies in the twentieth century.

At first glance, Wesley would appear to have been an exemplary candidate for inclusion in the narrative, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*, in part, because Becker argued that Wesley’s age of reason could also be understood as an age of faith.⁸⁹ In the eighteenth century, Becker believed “passionate faith and an expert rationalism were apt to be united.”⁹⁰ Thus, for Becker this possibility was not a paradox because rationalism and reason properly understood in the eighteenth century was not necessarily opposed to Christianity.

⁸⁷ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "enlightenment," accessed September 26, 2016, OED Online.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Carl L. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1932, 2003).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

Although Wesley was not included in Becker's book, Becker's insights provide this study with a possible paradigm for considering not only the complexity of Wesley's thought and practice in the context of his age, but also the compatibility of Wesley's standard for Methodism with his age because he was intentional about joining reason and religion in his practical theology.

However, Becker's story was not an affirmation of those like Wesley who knowingly used reason to promote religion. Instead, Becker's account was a criticism of those like the French *philosophes* who unknowingly used the preconceptions of the Christian thought they opposed from the Middle Ages in order to invent a new religion of reason. Unaware of the Christian philosophy they were using, they simply reconstructed their own enlightened version of the medieval Heavenly City of Saint Augustine that they were attempting to demolish. For example, Becker claimed: "They had put off the fear of God, but maintained a respectful attitude toward the Deity. . . . They renounced the authority of church and Bible, but exhibited a naïve faith in the authority of nature and reason. . . . They defended toleration valiantly, but could with difficulty tolerate priests. They denied that miracles ever happened, but believed in the perfectibility of the human race."⁹¹ Ironically, the only person in Becker's chronicle to realize this adaptation of medieval Christian philosophy by the international climate of opinion that the French *philosophes* helped to create refused to admit or publish his findings.⁹² Becker's "true

⁹¹ Ibid., 29-31.

⁹² Ibid., 77-78, 82-83. According to Becker, Scottish philosopher and historian David Hume "certainly took no pleasure in being regarded as the cold and finished skeptic, a destroyer of illusions. . . . and the fact that his history was for him the popularity he craved naturally confirmed him in the belief that it was useless to search into 'those corners of nature that spread a nuisance all around.' These are, no doubt, the reasons why Hume locked his *Dialogues* away in his desk, the reason why his contemporaries, could they have looked into that locked desk, would have found a most extraordinary, a most perplexing conclusion to the brilliant argument that demolished the foundations of natural religion; the conclusion, namely, that any 'person seasoned with a just sense of the imperfections of natural reason, will fly to revealed truth with

children of the Enlightenment” included a number of representatives from the English-speaking world—Locke, Hume, Bolingbroke, Ferguson, Adam Smith, Price, Priestley, even Jefferson—but not Wesley.⁹³

Like Becker, Cassirer believed that the *philosophes* and philosophers of the eighteenth century could not be understood historically apart from their intellectual heritage. Unlike Becker, Cassirer argued in his book, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, that continuity came from individuals such as Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, Leibniz, Bacon, Hobbes and Locke in the seventeenth century, not Aquinas in the thirteenth century.⁹⁴ However, the philosophical content that the eighteenth century inherited was neither a summation nor eclectic mixture of seventeenth-century ideas. Instead, Cassirer believed there was unity to the ideas of the Enlightenment. Therefore, Cassirer argued that the philosophy of the Enlightenment was “in fact dominated by a few great fundamental ideas expressed with strict consistency and in exact arrangement. Every historical account of the Enlightenment must begin with these ideas, for only so can it discover the sure key to the labyrinth of individual dogmas and doctrines.”⁹⁵ For Cassirer the idea that shaped the basic view of religion in the philosophy of the Enlightenment was religious certainty.

the greatest avidity.’ [*Dialogues*, 191] Hume did not exactly fly to revealed truth; but he refused to publish his *Dialogues*, and never, in public at least, failed to exhibit a punctiliously correct attitude toward the Author of the Universe.” *Ibid.*, 77-78.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

⁹⁴ Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951 English translation by Fritz C.A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove [German edition first published in 1932]), xii-xiii.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, xi, xvi-xvii.

In Eighteenth Century England the ideas of the Enlightenment collided with the traditional doctrines of Protestant Christianity. Yet, the response in the age of Enlightenment was not only negative, having an attitude of criticism and skepticism as most historians believed in the 1930s, but also positive, having a desire to retain what was reasonable in religion. Based on the reality of this mixed response, Cassirer argued that the stronger intellectual force in the philosophy of the Enlightenment was not the rejection of religious belief but the reshaping of religion's form of faith.⁹⁶ Therefore, English deism attempted to remove metaphysics from theology, such as the doctrine of original sin, in order to meet the demands of religious certainty in England's enlightened age.

In the historiography of Enlightenment studies, Cassirer's seminal work helped lay the foundation for a single, unified Enlightenment approach to intellectual history in the study of the Enlightenment that not only culminated in the 1960s, but also continued into the twenty-first century. Although Wesley, like the English deists, addressed the issue of religious certainty in his preaching and publications using the language of assurance, Cassirer excluded Wesley from his narrative. For Cassirer, the philosophy of the Enlightenment "attributes to thought not merely an imitative function but the power and the task of shaping life itself. Thought consists not only in analyzing and dissecting, but in actually bringing about that order of things which it conceives as necessary, so that by this act of fulfillment it may demonstrate its own reality and truth."⁹⁷ Based on that definition of philosophy, Cassirer's omission of Wesley, which most

⁹⁶ Ibid., 135-136.

⁹⁷ Ibid., iv. Historian Peter Gay (discussed later in this chapter) who was influenced significantly by Cassirer's understanding of Enlightenment philosophy, certainly believed that the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment were capable not only of reshaping the philosophical arguments used by theologians against them, but also of using those reshaped ideas against their intellectual opponents as well as the ideas of their own philosophy.

likely occurred simply because Cassirer was only looking for examples from English deists to illustrate his argument, provides this study with an important question to consider regarding Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment. Have other historians who used Cassirer's seminal definition of philosophy overlooked Wesley like Cassirer, not because Wesley rejected the rationalism that attempted to reshape what he believed was essential to the Christian faith, which he did, but because they overlooked even the possibility of Wesley using the same kind of philosophy to shape Methodism and reshape Christian perfection in his age of Enlightenment? In the end two presuppositions delimit Wesley from Cassirer's philosophical tale. First, Cassirer believed not only that the few ideas that held the central position in the age of Enlightenment were united, but also that the Enlightenment was fundamentally the same regardless of whether it took place in France or in England. Second, Cassirer ultimately held to his conviction that the strongest intellectual force that shaped the problem of religion in the philosophy of the Enlightenment was secularization, despite claiming that the prevailing force amidst the tension of the Enlightenment's response to religion was positive in England and Germany, unlike France.⁹⁸

In *The Crisis of the European Mind: 1680-1715*, French historian Paul Hazard argued that the transition from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century in Europe was the most sudden and most contrasting transition in intellectual history.⁹⁹ Like Cassirer, Hazard came to believe

⁹⁸ Ibid., xi. Although Cassirer's conclusions appear contradictory, he insisted in the preface to his book that he had been consistent in the interpretive lens he used: "The tensions and solutions, the doubts and decisions, the skepticism and unshakable conviction of this philosophy must be seen and interpreted from one central position if its real historical meaning is to be made clear. Such an interpretation is the aim of this book." Ibid.

⁹⁹ Paul Hazard, *The Crisis of the European Mind: 1680-1715* (New York, NY: New York Review Books, 1961 [First published in French in 1935, this English translation was first published in England in 1953]), xiii.

(and hope) in the power of ideas, in part because Adolf Hitler drove each of the two men from their homelands. After he researched the contribution of the “intellectual giants” such as Spinoza, Malebranche, Fontenelle, Locke, Leibniz, Bossuet, Fénelon, Bayle and Descartes who prepared Europe for Voltaire’s Enlightenment by changing the attitudes people had toward hierarchical authority and religious dogma, Hazard was convinced: “As we study the birth of their ideas, or at least their changing forms; as we follow them along their road noting how feebly they began but how they gathered strength and boldness as they went along; as we note their successive victories and their crowning triumph we are forced to the conviction that it is not material advantages, but moral and intellectual forces that govern and direct the life of man.”¹⁰⁰ What Hazard claimed these ideas created during the transition between the two centuries was a moral and spiritual crisis. Therefore, in his narrative of the battle for men’s souls, Hazard recorded not only the winners, the champions of Reason, but also the losers, “the pastors of the peoples” who had been the champions of Religion.¹⁰¹

In addition to the seventeenth-century pastors who were weighed in the balance and found wanting, Hazard argued in his sequel, *European Thought in the Eighteenth Century: From Montesquieu to Lessing*, that the Enlightenment put Christianity on trial in the eighteenth century.¹⁰² Unlike Becker and Cassirer, Hazard included John Wesley in his narrative of the Enlightenment. Although he waited until the conclusion of his book, Hazard made two revealing, but passing remarks about Wesley. On the one hand, he claimed that France had

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., xviii.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., xiv-xv.

¹⁰² Paul Hazard, *European Thought in the Eighteenth Century: From Montesquieu to Lessing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1954 [First published in French in 1946]).

given little attention to either Wesley's spiritual experience or his revivals, which for the most part may simply have been because Wesley was both Protestant and English. Hazard, the Frenchman, however, ended his opening snub comment by highlighting Wesley's mystical experience: "Whenever by chance she [France in the eighteenth century] happened to hear of him, France showed but very little respect for John Wesley, who, about the year 1738, had been visited by a sudden illumination of the spirit."¹⁰³ On the other hand, Hazard drew attention to what France should have noticed that Wesley accomplished, which was important not only to Eighteenth Century England, but also to Hazard's thesis. First, Hazard detailed Wesley's practice: "Regularly, every day of his life, he went forth preaching the Gospel to the miners of Newcastle, or the weavers of Bristol, or the poor of London, or making his way from town to town, from village to village, bringing back belief in the Saviour to those who had lost it, and giving new hope to the poor and the oppressed, bidding them, in their depths of desolation, never to despair; and all this in the name of Christ."¹⁰⁴ Second, he emphasized Wesley's influence: "A crusade among the lowly; but the result of it was that, through Methodism, England found its moral basis once again."¹⁰⁵ For Hazard, Wesley did not influence the high and mighty through philosophy or theology. Instead, he changed the moral fabric of this nation by preaching the Gospel and giving hope to those in despair.¹⁰⁶ As a result, Hazard inferred in this intellectual history that moral forces such as Wesley and Methodism worked along with or maybe even

¹⁰³ Ibid., 453.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 453-454.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

together with, but not necessarily against ideas in the Enlightenment to help govern and direct European life in the eighteenth century.

Whatever door Hazard may have opened in his consideration of Wesley's contribution to the Enlightenment at least in England, historian Peter Gay would slam closed in his landmark, two-volume work, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation: The Rise of Paganism* (vol. 1) and *The Science of Freedom* (vol. 2) published in the late 1960s.¹⁰⁷ In many ways, Gay's manifesto was the culmination of Cassirer's study of the Enlightenment that had greatly influenced Gay. In the *Rise of Modern Paganism*, Gay credited Cassirer by revealing: "My greatest debt is to the writings of Ernst Cassirer both in philosophy and in intellectual history. His central distinction between critical and mythical thinking lies at the heart of my interpretation."¹⁰⁸ However, Gay constructed his own testament to the Enlightenment not only by rejoicing over the work of Cassirer, but also by raging over the lectures of Becker.¹⁰⁹

Whereas Cassirer argued that the ideas of the Enlightenment had a unity, Gay made the most convincing argument to that point in the historiography of Enlightenment studies that the Enlightenment was a single, unified phenomenon. Gay began the overture to his first volume of *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* by declaring: "THERE WERE MANY philosophes in the

¹⁰⁷ Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation: The Rise of Modern Paganism*, vol. 1 (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1966) and Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation: The Science of Freedom*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1969).

¹⁰⁸ Gay, *The Rise of Modern Paganism*, 423.

¹⁰⁹ According to historian Daniel Gordon, "Gay's antipathy for Becker is nearly as important as his revulsion for Nazism. Becker's amoral skepticism and the Nazi's authoritarian fanaticism are two extremes that Gay believes the Enlightenment wisely managed to avoid." Daniel Gordon, "Peter Gay," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, Alan Charles Kors, ed., vol. 2 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 103.

eighteenth century, but there was only one Enlightenment [the emphasis is Gay's]."¹¹⁰ Gay's argument was not original. However, the enduring result of Gay's scholarship was to provide a portrait of the Enlightenment that was not only defined by a French model of the Enlightenment, but also dominated by its key French figures, the *philosophes*. Gay masterfully and convincingly argued as a professor in America during the 1960s (a decade in American history riddled with the popularity of a "God is dead" theology) that everyone everywhere in eighteenth-century Europe who represented or participated in the family of the Enlightenment was hostile to Christianity.

Like Hazard, Gay emphasized how the eighteenth-century Enlightenment differed from the rationalism of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz in the seventeenth century. However, unlike Hazard, Gay argued that "the Enlightenment was not an Age of Reason but a Revolt against Rationalism."¹¹¹ Furthermore, Gay defined the Enlightenment synonymously as both an age of criticism and an age of philosophy, because he untraditionally viewed philosophy in the eighteenth century as the "organized habit of criticism."¹¹²

Although Gay accentuated the tension between Christianity and the Enlightenment, he also acknowledged the Enlightenment's dependence on Christianity.¹¹³ Unlike Becker, who argued that the *philosophes* unknowingly attempted to build a new faith in reason on the old foundation of religious faith, Gay retorted that the *philosophes* were not naïve about the age of religion that reigned in their dubious battle against Christianity. Although Gay acknowledged

¹¹⁰ Gay, *The Rise of Modern Paganism*, 3.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 130.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 535-536.

that secularization took place during the Enlightenment, he pointed out that philosophic propaganda did not dissolve either religious concerns or clerical establishments. Instead, Gay clarified that “Not only the poor, not only ignorant country clerics, but also professors and even bishops continued to believe in the Christian God. . . . [Therefore,] to speak of secularization . . . is to speak of a subtle shift of attention: religious institutions and religious explanations of events were slowly being displaced from the center of life to its periphery.”¹¹⁴ Thus, for Gay, the main culprit for the growing disenchantment in Britain’s Christianity came not from the opposition of the *philosophes*, but from the neglect of the Anglican clergy.

Unlike Hazard’s “pastors of the people” who were losers to the champions of reason, Gay portrayed the clerics in England’s eighteenth-century established Church as guilty of treason. According to Gay, “The rise of Methodism in this environment must be taken as a devastating criticism of the Anglican clergy, as proof that Christians were aware of the treason of the clerks while philosophes were taking advantage of it.”¹¹⁵ For Gay, Methodism played a useful role in the religious life of Britain not only because Methodists preached plainly enough to those who were disconnected from the sermons of their educated Anglican clergy, but also because Methodists were constantly on alert for their worst enemy, the rationalism that had infiltrated the Anglican Church to which they belonged.¹¹⁶ As a result, Wesley was presented in Gay’s narrative as a counter-Enlightenment figure, a theme that would be echoed by many scholars that followed Gay’s example of intellectual history. However, Wesley did not escape unscathed from Gay’s assessment of Methodism. Gay indicted him of treason because Wesley had been

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 338.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 346.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

“touched” or tainted by pagan classicism: “John Wesley . . . studied his ancients as assiduously as his Bible; he had to be recalled from his ‘philosophy’ by a stern Moravian.”¹¹⁷ In this backhanded comment, Gay seems to be responding to Becker’s criticism that the *philosophes* unknowingly continued to use the framework of Christianity they opposed, by offering his own suggestion that Wesley was unaware of his treason of Christianity, which was the inevitable result of his reading classical literature.¹¹⁸

Although Cassirer, Hazard, Gay and possibly Becker were the four most important intellectual historians of the Enlightenment in the twentieth century before 1980, two social historians, John Harold Plumb and Edward Palmer Thompson, also help to illustrate how Wesley was presented in the historiography of Enlightenment studies during the same period. In *England in the Eighteenth Century*, Plumb organized his narrative around three of England’s most powerful prime ministers: Robert Walpole, the Earl of Chatham and William Pitt. In his section on the Age of Chatham (1742-1784), Plumb devoted an entire chapter to Wesley, claiming that Wesley’s significance demanded that level of consideration. In his description of Wesley, Plumb expressed high praise not only for the genius of Wesley’s organizational abilities, but also for the greatness and complexity of Wesley’s character, which he compared surprisingly with other notable historical figures that included Luther, Lenin, Gandhi and Napoleon.¹¹⁹ By

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 346-347. According to Rack, “At Oxford on 18 February [1738] Wesley ‘conversed much’ with [Moravian] Böhler but ‘understood him not, and least of all when he said . . . ‘My brother, my brother, that philosophy of yours must be purged away.’” No doubt this is a reference to Wesley’s usual logic-chopping when faced with ideas and demands which disturbed him. But it may also reflect Böhler’s rejection of ‘natural’ knowledge in favour of the Bible and Christ as the standard of Christian knowledge.” Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 139.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 347.

¹¹⁹ J. H. Plumb, *England in the Eighteenth Century* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1950, 1963), 90.

contrast, Plumb also argued that Wesley as an intellectual was not representative of his enlightened age. Because Wesley believed in witches, the Devil and possession by devils, his Methodism appealed to the uneducated and superstitious, who responded with socially unacceptable enthusiasm. According to Plumb, “There was nothing intellectual about Methodism; the rational attitude of the day, was absolutely absent.”¹²⁰ In addition, Plumb argued that Wesleyanism posed a threat to society: “Everywhere in early Methodism one meets the prejudices of the uneducated, which always seem to be hardened by success. There was an anti-intellectual, philistine quality which attracted the dispossessed but was dangerous for society.”¹²¹ Although Plumb exaggerated the distance between the greatness of Wesley’s character and the anti-intellectual quality of his influence, other historians would echo the same disparity between Wesley and his age of reason.

Like Plumb, E. P. Thompson, in *The Making of the English Working Class*, not only defined the Enlightenment as rational and intellectual, but also described Wesley as ignorant and superstitious. According to Thompson, Wesley and the English Evangelicals were more than unreasonable in their religion: “Indeed, between old superstition and new bigotry, it is proper to be cautious when meeting the claims of the Evangelicals to have been an agency of intellectual enlightenment.”¹²² Although Thompson has garnered much attention with his outlandish Freudian indictments of Wesley’s Methodism, most of his argument about the influence of

¹²⁰ Ibid., 95-96.

¹²¹ Ibid., 96.

¹²² E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1963), 412.

Methodism after Wesley's death lies outside the scope of this dissertation.¹²³ Yet, what Thompson did illustrate for this study was the ongoing disregard for Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment by historians who presupposed Wesley to be an anti-intellectual enthusiast and Wesley's Methodism to be sustained not only by the emotionalism of revivals, but also by the discipline of Methodist societies.¹²⁴

Enlightenment Studies: Beyond the Turning Point

Social historian Roy Porter's seminal chapter, "The Enlightenment in England" marked the turning point in the historiography of Enlightenment studies toward an English Enlightenment in 1981.¹²⁵ Coedited with social historian Mikuláš Teich, Porter's book, *The Enlightenment in National Context*, capped a historiographical trend that social historians had established in the 1970s by exploring the unique ways the Enlightenment was experienced in different geographical locations. Beginning in 1971, historian Franco Venturi, a student of Hazard, expanded the scope of Enlightenment studies by exploring penal laws and the right to punish as well as other attempts to bring social reform in Eastern Europe, which included the nations of Italy, Poland and Russia.¹²⁶ Although Venturi would later acknowledge a Scottish

¹²³ Ibid., 362, 368

¹²⁴ Ibid., 353, 365, 38-39.

¹²⁵ Roy Porter, "The Enlightenment in England," in *The Enlightenment in National Context*, eds., Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 1-18.

¹²⁶ Franco Venturi, *Utopia and Reform in the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1971).

Enlightenment, he would not accept the idea of an English Enlightenment.¹²⁷ In 1976, Henry F. May contributed to a growing consideration of the Enlightenment outside the continent of Europe. By taking the baton from Gay's brief introduction (1969), May portrayed the Enlightenment in early America as a religion, which by his broad definition excluded two important eighteenth-century revival figures, New England's Jonathan Edwards and old England's John Wesley.¹²⁸ May juxtaposed his own working definition of America's Enlightenment as a religion against early American Protestantism. Broadly, May claimed the American Enlightenment consisted of two propositions, "[first,] that the present age is more enlightened than the past; and second, that we understand nature and man best through the use of our natural faculties."¹²⁹ Thus, he excluded Wesley as well as Edwards from being treated as enlightened figures in his narrow narrative because they, like others, believed either that revelation, tradition or illumination was the best guide for human beings.¹³⁰ Finally, in 1979, French historian, Robert Darnton went beyond considering the ideas of the Enlightenment to attempting to understand how those ideas were disseminated in various social contexts.¹³¹

¹²⁷ John Pocock, "Post Puritan England and the Problem of the Enlightenment," in *Culture and Politics From Puritanism to the Enlightenment*, ed., Perez Zagorin (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 93.

¹²⁸ Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1976), xiv. Peter Gay introduced the uniqueness of an American Enlightenment in *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation: The Science of Freedom* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton Co., 1969), 558-563.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the Encyclopédie, 1775-1800* (Cambridge, UK: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979).

Darnton argued that the Enlightenment not only belonged to intellectual elites, but also to ordinary people who exchanged enlightened ideas in unrefined settings and through unconventional mediums.

In the summer of 1979, several historians, including T. C. W. Blanning and Owen Chadwick as well as Porter gathered in Cambridge, England, to consider the Enlightenment in thirteen particular national contexts. They shared common concerns about: any approach to intellectual history that detached ideas from their social settings, any stereotype or unique characteristic of the French Enlightenment that was imposed on the interpretation of other national contexts and the overlooked differences between the roles that elites played in various countries.¹³² However, more significant for this study, one of the main purposes for revising and publishing the essays from the seminar for publication in Porter's book was to give greater consideration to the relationship between religion and the Enlightenment in various national contexts.¹³³ According to Porter, "The simple fact is that Enlightenment goals—like criticism, sensibility, or faith in progress—throve in England *within* piety [Porter's emphasis]. There was no need to overthrow religion itself, because there was no pope, no inquisition, no Jesuits, no monopolistic priesthood with a stranglehold on children through education and on families through confession."¹³⁴ Porter was the first to argue boldly for an English Enlightenment. Although Porter credited Wesley as well as Swift and Blake with an ability to decode and debunk the Enlightenment's language of liberty, interest and consensus for the English society,

¹³² Roy Porter, "Preface" to *The Enlightenment in National Context*, eds., Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981), vii.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, viii.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

he also believed that each one of them only played a marginal role in England's Enlightenment.¹³⁵

Earlier, in 1980, historian John Pocock, another important proponent of England's unique Enlightenment, may have been the first to use the label "English Enlightenment" in his chapter, "Post-Puritan England and the Problem of the Enlightenment," in Perez Zagorin's *Culture and Politics from Puritanism to the Enlightenment*.¹³⁶ However, Pocock's initial purpose for explicitly using the terminology was to acknowledge the difficulty he had in a Gay-dominated era of interpreting what took place in England before or during Europe's eighteenth-century Enlightenment as an English Enlightenment. In 1980, according to Pocock, "There was an Enlightenment, and England and the English had much to do with it, and yet the phrase 'the' (or 'an') 'English Enlightenment' does not ring quite true."¹³⁷ In 1989, Pocock claimed, "I shall be challenging the paradigm of Enlightenment as radical liberation which has made it so hard to speak of an English Enlightenment at all."¹³⁸ Although Pocock was comfortable in 1980 and 1989 with describing the unique developments of the Enlightenment that took place in England as "conservative" and primarily clerical in nature, he would wait another decade before he used

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹³⁶ J. G. A. Pocock, "Post-Puritan England and the Problem of the Enlightenment," in *Culture and Politics from Puritanism to the Enlightenment*, ed., Perez Zagorin (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹³⁸ J. G. A. Pocock, "Conservative Enlightenment and Democratic Revolutions: American and French Cases in British Perspective," *Government and Opposition*, vol. 24, no. 1 (1989): 84.

the label “English Enlightenment” confidently.¹³⁹ Finally, in 1999, in his award-winning book, *Barbarism and Religion: The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764*, Pocock convincingly stated from the outset of his book: “the English Enlightenment of which Gibbon was part was an ecclesiastical as well as a secular phenomenon, one of several Protestant Enlightenments distinct from that of the Parisian *philosophes*, and an aspect of the reconstitution of Europe after the wars against Louis XIV.”¹⁴⁰ Although Pocock was initially hesitant to label the Enlightenment in England, he eventually provided a working definition of the English Enlightenment that encouraged further study. By contrast, Porter moved in the opposite direction. By 2000, he had become less convinced about an English Enlightenment that operated within piety and more convinced about a British Enlightenment that rationalized religion and made England not only more modern, but also more secular.

Consequently, the new multiple-enlightenments approach that Porter, Pocock and other historians helped to establish evoked two important developments in the historiography of Enlightenment studies. On the one hand, some historians continued to follow the precedent of Gay’s classic work, which portrayed the Enlightenment as a unified, single Enlightenment that was hostile to Christianity. On the other hand, the historians who focused on understanding the relationship between nations such as England to the Enlightenment gave greater impetus to the study of how Christianity and the Enlightenment were compatible not only generally throughout all of Europe, but also uniquely within Europe’s national or regional contexts, including southern France. Both types of responses will be analyzed in the remainder of this section because both

¹³⁹ Pocock, “Post-Puritan England,” 105-106. Pocock, “Conservative Enlightenment,” 82, 84.

¹⁴⁰ J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion: The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), i.

reactions continue to fuel the ongoing debate over the nature and definition of the Enlightenment.

Enlightenment and Christianity: A Conflict of Interests

Despite the consensus among historians that quickly developed around Porter's new multiple-enlightenments approach in the 1980s, a minority group of historians continued to argue for a single, unified Enlightenment that was hostile to Christianity. Although historians, such as Louis Dupré and Dan Edelstein, working from a single-enlightenment approach have introduced new origins and causes for the Enlightenment, they still continued to argue for the same grand narratives of modernization or secularization that rationalized or replaced religion during the Enlightenment.¹⁴¹ In *Religion and the Rise of Modern Culture*, Dupré argued that the first stage or the origins of modern culture were located in humanism and the Renaissance. During the second stage, the Enlightenment, the relationship between culture and religion that had previously become independent during the Renaissance, now became oppositional. Although piety and mystical fervor did not come to an end, Dupré argued that the Enlightenment produced a religious crisis: "The impact of the Enlightenment was undoubtedly felt most deeply in the area of religion. It was particularly severe in France and in England, where for a long time skeptical philosophies had undermined the foundations of Christian beliefs."¹⁴² Like Dupré, Edelstein's book, *The Enlightenment: A Genealogy*, also yielded no consideration of Christianity's (or Wesley's) compatibility with the Enlightenment because in 2010 he attempted

¹⁴¹ Louis Dupré, *Religion and the Rise of Modern Culture* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 1-2.

¹⁴² Louis Dupré, *The Enlightenment and the Intellectual Foundations of Modern Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 229-230.

not only to reemphasize the usefulness of Gay's classic approach to the Enlightenment, but also to reestablish the origins of the Enlightenment in France.¹⁴³ Although Edelstein conceded that Enlightenment was a heterogeneous phenomenon, he insisted that all seemingly homegrown regional or confessional Enlightenments were instead simply the adaptation of a singular concept of the Enlightenment by different cultures. Moreover, the ideas of Enlightenment thought did not originate in the seventeenth- or eighteenth-century controversies of religious or political thought, but in the monotheism that Voltaire and the French *philosophes* argued existed before Christ as well as the natural religion that John Toland and the English Deists used to oppose Christianity. Thus, in Edelstein's history of the Enlightenment, he concluded that "on religious matters, philosophical 'progress' was not simply about leaving superstitious beliefs behind but about recovering the religious practices of the Ancients."¹⁴⁴ In the end, Edelstein offered an understanding of the relationship between Christianity and the Enlightenment that proved to be very similar to Gay's interpretation in *The Rise of Modern Paganism*, in part, because he was circumscribed by using the same French-centered, single-enlightenment approach.

Although the works of Dupré and Edelstein provided recent and poignant examples, historians Margaret C. Jacob and Jonathan I. Israel have contributed most significantly to the antithesis of the ongoing dialectic focused on the relationship between Christianity and the Enlightenment that began following the turning point in Enlightenment studies in the early 1980s. Unlike Edelstein, historian Margaret Jacob located the origins of the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment outside Catholic France in the historical context created by the

¹⁴³ Dan Edelstein, *The Enlightenment: A Genealogy* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 3-4, 19-23.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 67-68.

scientific revolution and the Glorious Revolution in seventeenth-century Protestant England. For Jacob, the term, enlightenment, “presumes a taxonomy of eighteenth-century ideas, . . . that rightly, but abstractly, places the science of Newton at the heart of enlightened discourse and adds to it contract theory, associated with the writings of John Locke, as well as rational religiosity, oftentimes described as deism and frequently combined with anti-clericalism.”¹⁴⁵ Like Hazard and Gay, Jacob left Hobbes, Newton and Locke out of her definition of the Enlightenment, preferring to treat them as pre-enlightenment transitional figures. For Jacob, the relationship between science and Christianity in late-seventeenth-century England was initially compatible for English scientists, such as Robert Boyle and Newton. During the transition period before the Enlightenment (1680-1720), the latitudinarian clergy in the Church of England effectively used Newton’s natural philosophy to defend Christianity against the more mechanical natural philosophy of Descartes and Hobbes.¹⁴⁶ Yet, what the “Newtonians” (second-generation adherents of Newton’s natural philosophy) unintentionally helped to create by 1720 was a Radical Enlightenment in Europe that according to Jacob, “existed simultaneously in harsh dialogue with the more dominant and moderate version of enlightened belief and practice, a dialectic that owes much to its English and revolutionary origins. Before there was a High Enlightenment in Europe, during that violently anti-Christian post-1750 climate . . . there was a Radical Enlightenment.”¹⁴⁷ Politically, Jacob described the radicals as republicans,

¹⁴⁵ Margaret C. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment: Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1991), 19.

¹⁴⁶ Margaret C. Jacob, *The Newtonians and the English Revolution 1689-1720* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), 15-21.

¹⁴⁷ Margaret C. Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (London, UK: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 25.

philosophically as pantheists, and religiously as Freemasons who challenged the established Church.¹⁴⁸ More recently in 2006, Jacob argued in her chapter, “The Enlightenment critique of Christianity,” that “the Enlightened critique of Christianity emerged first in Protestant circles, and while plenty of Catholics could criticize their church, Protestant thinkers tended to be in the vanguard that pushed anticlericalism into open heterodoxy, finally deism, atheism, and pantheism.”¹⁴⁹ In other words, Protestants played an important role in letting the “anti-Christian” genie out of the bottle that created not only the Radical Enlightenment, but also the European Enlightenment that Jacob, like others before her, believed was hostile to Christianity.¹⁵⁰

Since 2001, historian Jonathan Israel, in his colossal volumes on the Enlightenment, has perhaps made the most convincing argument for the continued use of a single, unified approach to the study of the Enlightenment.¹⁵¹ Unlike Porter and Pocock, Israel was adamant that the proper understanding of a European phenomenon, such as the Enlightenment, could not be ascertained by focusing on national contexts.¹⁵² In fact, Israel argued, “However difficult it may be to achieve a balanced coverage across a region as culturally diverse as Europe, it is essential

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Margaret C. Jacob, “The Enlightenment critique of Christianity,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660-1815*, vol. VII, eds., Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), 268.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 265.

¹⁵¹ Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001). Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670-1752* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press). Jonathan I. Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750-1790* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁵² Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, 863-865.

to work in that direction if so crucial a manifestation of European history and culture is not to be largely overlooked and marginalized simply because it is too far-ranging and pervasive to be coped with in terms of traditional notions of ‘national history.’”¹⁵³ Like Jacob, Israel made a case for a Radical Enlightenment. However, unlike Jacob, Israel’s interpretation featured predominantly the intellectual cohesion that was established around Spinoza, an atheistic and Jewish, Dutch philosopher.¹⁵⁴ Therefore, Israel, from the vantage point of a broad European view, argued that rationalization and secularization posed challenges to Christianity after 1650, which “rapidly overthrew theology’s age-old hegemony in the world of study, slowly but surely eradicated magic and belief in the supernatural from Europe’s intellectual culture, and led a few openly to challenge everything inherited from the past—not just commonly received assumptions about mankind, society, politics, and the cosmos but also the veracity of the Bible and the Christian faith or indeed any faith.”¹⁵⁵ Because Israel believed the radical stream of the Enlightenment (not the moderate Enlightenment of Locke or Newton) had the greatest impact on modernity since the eighteenth century, and because Israel contended that focusing on subcultural enlightenments such as an Anglican or a Methodist Enlightenment completely obscured the main goal of understanding the chief ideological controversies of the Enlightenment in a balanced fashion, Israel’s single, unified approach precluded any consideration of Wesley’s relation to an English Enlightenment.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 22.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 22. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, 867.

¹⁵⁵ Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 4.

¹⁵⁶ Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, 864-866. According to Israel, the major ideological controversies of the Enlightenment included “toleration, press freedom, aristocracy, biology, the Glorious Revolution, Jacobitism, Orangism, the Bekker furore about magic and witchcraft, the

Finally and most recently, historian Anthony Pagden, in *The Enlightenment: And Why It Still Matters* presented his own version of a European Enlightenment. According to Pagden, “it is undeniably true that the Enlightenment was profoundly anti-religious.”¹⁵⁷ He primarily defined the Enlightenment as an intellectual project that was concerned with social reform.¹⁵⁸ In addition, Pagden argued geographically that “the Enlightenment was an exclusively European phenomenon, shared only with Europe’s overseas settler populations, and it could never have arisen except in a broadly Christian World. It was, in a sense, a form of secularized Christianity.”¹⁵⁹ Yet in 2016, historian Dale K. Van Kley criticized not only Pagden, but also Jacob and Israel, claiming that “the recent fragmentation of the Enlightenment into enlightenments more porous to religion has not gone uncontested, as Jonathan Israel’s *Enlightenment Contested* amply attests. Besides Israel’s megavolumes on what he and Margaret Jacob have christened the ‘radical’ enlightenment, Anthony Pagden has also entered the lists in defense of the thesis of a single and antireligious enlightenment.”¹⁶⁰ Although Pagden was not as compelling as either Jacob or Israel in his defense of a single, unified Enlightenment, he believed along with his cohorts that the Enlightenment created the modern world.¹⁶¹ As a result,

Wertheim Bible, marriage, sexuality, and, indeed, as many contemporary sources show, about Newtonianism in general or Deist freethinking, great controversies, which infused the whole of society.” *Ibid.*, 865.

¹⁵⁷ Anthony Pagden, *The Enlightenment: And Why It Still Matters* (New York, NY: Random House, 2013), xiv.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, xiv-xvi.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹⁶⁰ Dale K. Van Kley, “Conclusion: The Varieties of Enlightened Experience,” in *God in the Enlightenment*, eds., William J. Bulman and Robert G. Ingram (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016), 304-305.

Pagden joined the ranks of Dupre, Edelstein, Jacob, Israel and other historians who continue to allow the metanarrative of modernization or secularization or both, perpetuated by a single, unified approach to the Enlightenment, to relegate Christianity as well as Christian figures to an intellectual or philosophical role of counter-Enlightenment or anti-intellectualism.

Christian Enlightenment

Although some historians using a single-enlightenment approach have continued to portray the Enlightenment as exclusively hostile to Christianity, the majority of historians, since the turning point toward a plural-enlightenments approach in the early 1980s, have increasingly regarded the role of religion, and in particular, the compatibility of Christianity with the Enlightenment in various regional and national contexts. These developments were not only preliminary, but also necessary steps toward the consideration of a Christian Enlightenment with its multiple forms, which began to be explored in the opening decade of the twenty-first century. As a result, the historians included in this section each helped to provide a matrix for the consideration of a Wesleyan Enlightenment.

Before the 1980s, any consideration of a compatible relationship between Christianity and the Enlightenment was rare. However, one important forerunner, historian Hugh Trevor-Roper analyzed the relation of religion to the Enlightenment as early as the 1950s. In his essay,

¹⁶¹ Pagden, 408. According to Pagden, "None of this [cosmopolitan world] was achieved, and nothing in the future will ever be achieved, by shutting ourselves up in communities, by measuring out our lives by the horizons of what our fathers and our forefathers have set down for us, or by regulating our actions, and our desires, according to the dictates of those who have appointed themselves to be the representatives on earth of a highly improbable divinity. . . . But our ability even to frame our understanding of the world in terms of something larger than our own small patch of ground, our own culture, family, or religion, clearly does. And in that, we are all, inescapably, the heirs of the architects of the Enlightenment 'science of man.' For this, then, if for no other reason, the Enlightenment still matters." Ibid., 415.

“The Religious Origins of the Enlightenment” (1967), Trevor-Roper argued that the ideas of the Enlightenment were not secularized forms of Christianity such as Calvinism or radical Protestantism.¹⁶² In other words, the English Puritans neither modernized England in the seventeenth century nor paved the way for the capitalism that flourished in the industrial revolution that followed during the eighteenth century.¹⁶³ Instead, Trevor-Roper claimed that Calvinist societies in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries contributed to the intellectual revolution that ultimately led to the Enlightenment. According to Trevor-Roper, “each of those Calvinist societies made its contribution to the Enlightenment at . . . the moment when it repudiated ideological orthodoxy. In fact, . . . the separate Calvinist societies of Europe contributed to the Enlightenment only in so far as they broke away from Calvinism.”¹⁶⁴ Thus, the advance of a single European Enlightenment came about, not by means of Calvinist Churches or Calvinist ideas, but rather at the expense of Calvinist orthodoxy. At first glance, Trevor-Roper appeared to reestablish only that Christianity was an enemy to the Enlightenment by clarifying that the new ideas that spawned a pre-Enlightenment across Europe came not from Calvinism, but from individuals that true Calvinists considered to be heretics.¹⁶⁵ He claimed:

¹⁶² H. R. Trevor-Roper, *The Crisis of the Seventeenth Century: Religion, the Reformation and Social Change* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1968).

¹⁶³ In part, Trevor-Roper’s essay (1967) was confronting the popular Tawney-Weber Thesis, which he described as: “the thesis that Calvinism, in some way, created the moral and intellectual force of the ‘new’ capitalism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. . . . It has been called in to support the theory that English Puritanism was forward-looking ‘capitalist’ ideology, and also the theory that capitalism had to wait for Calvinist, or at least Puritan, inspiration before it could ‘conquer the world.’” *Ibid.*, xi.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, xiv, 198, 204, 206. With flare, Trevor-Roper further distanced Christianity and Calvinism from the ideas of the Enlightenment by adding that these individuals were “heretics whom the true Calvinists, if they could, would have burnt.” *Ibid.*, 206.

“The eighteenth-century Enlightenment, when it came, would be a reunion of all the heretics, the reintegration of a movement which religious revolution [Europe’s religious wars in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries] had arrested and transformed, but could not destroy.”¹⁶⁶ However, in the end, Trevor-Roper concluded that Calvinism had played an important political role in the formation of the Enlightenment. Because Calvinism had been at war with the ideology of Europe’s pre-Enlightenment and lost, a new political landscape was created for Europe’s eighteenth-century Enlightenment.¹⁶⁷

In the decades after Trevor-Roper published his essay, historians of Enlightenment studies began finding new ways to consider the relationship between Christianity and the Enlightenment that went beyond intellectual histories and the understanding that the ideologies of Christianity and the Enlightenment were incompatible. What the findings of those historians revealed about Wesley or Wesleyan Methodism will be analyzed in the next chapter. However, before Wesley can be juxtaposed against the historical context of an English Enlightenment that was compatible in some ways with Christianity, the remainder of this section will focus on the recent development of a Christian or religious Enlightenment that emerged in the historiography of Enlightenment studies.

Significant for this study, historian Helena Rosenblatt argued in her chapter, “The Christian Enlightenment” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, that the term, “Christian Enlightenment,” was no longer considered by historians to be an oxymoron.¹⁶⁸ Moreover, the late-twentieth-century consensus of historians who believed that the defining characteristic of the

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 233.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 233-236.

¹⁶⁸ Rosenblatt, “The Christian Enlightenment,” 283.

Enlightenment was hostility toward Christianity no longer existed. In 2006, Rosenblatt claimed, “It has become clear that earlier interpretations [including Hazard and Gay] were based on an impoverished view of religious traditions and perhaps even an outright disdain for them.”¹⁶⁹

After highlighting how Germany’s Enlightenment had been recognized for some time as being a Protestant phenomenon, Rosenblatt further clarified that “it is becoming increasingly evident that in a great many other places in Europe, the Enlightenment was also not at war with Christianity. Rather, it took place *within* the churches themselves. [Rosenblatt’s emphasis]”¹⁷⁰ To illustrate her point, she highlighted Protestant examples in England, Geneva and Germany as well as the Catholic Enlightenment that took place in certain regions of France, alongside the Enlightenment of those who supported the *philosophes* and the Counter-Enlightenment of those who opposed the *philosophes*.¹⁷¹

For both Protestants and Catholics, however, Rosenblatt believed that “England’s role in the elaboration and dissemination of the Christian Enlightenment was seminal.”¹⁷² Regardless of the different national contexts, some of the common defining characteristics of the Christian Enlightenment throughout Europe included: a reconciliation of Christian faith with the new sciences, an emphasis on the reasonableness of faith, a championing of tolerant and moral religion, a relative optimism about human nature, a general positive regard for reform and progress, and perhaps most importantly a commitment to a middle way that avoided the extremes of fanaticism and irreligion. Viewed in this way, Rosenblatt believed that the Christian

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 288-291.

¹⁷² Ibid., 284.

Enlightenment “forces us to abandon the widespread assumption that the influence of religion on other realms of thought is always conservative or retrograde. Throughout history, Christian writings have served as vehicles for progressive political and social ideas.”¹⁷³ Although Christian Enlightenment in Europe typically aligned itself with the state, the politics it supported were varied.

In addition to politics, proponents of the Christian Enlightenment across Europe opposed the religious enthusiasm they encountered in their own regional contexts, superstition on the one hand and atheism or deism on the other hand. However, according to Rosenblatt, “One thing is clear: throughout Europe and over the course of the long eighteenth century, the Christian Enlightenment was heavily influenced by the type of ‘enthusiasm’ it saw itself as combating.”¹⁷⁴ Ironically, in contrast to this dissertation, the primary example Rosenblatt used for English fanaticism was Wesley and Wesleyan enthusiasts. The enlightened Protestants in England who reacted with hostility toward Wesley included Anglican Bishops William Warburton and Joseph Butler. Because Warburton and Butler were horrified by the enthusiasm of Methodism, Rosenblatt claimed they “shied away from excessive appeals to feelings and emotions.”¹⁷⁵ However, what she failed to mention in her brief, but important account of the Christian Enlightenment, which this study aims to demonstrate, was that Wesley not only exemplified many of the characteristics of the Protestant Enlightenment in England, but also had concerns, like his Anglican critics, about enthusiasm both inside and outside Methodism.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 284-285.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 297.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

Recently, Jewish historian David Sorkin expanded the consideration of a Christian Enlightenment to include Judaism in his book, *The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics From London To Vienna* (2008). By looking at the Enlightenment through the lens of religion, Sorkin hoped to reorient Enlightenment studies, fixed on a unitary, secular Enlightenment, with a new narrative, which understood that “the Enlightenment could be reverent as well as irreverent, and that such reverence was at its very core.”¹⁷⁶ To demonstrate how religion was at the core of the Enlightenment, he crossed confessional boundaries to compare six individuals who represented six different European regions in order to ascertain four common characteristics of Western Europe’s religious Enlightenment, two based on ideas and two that engaged the socio-political realm. For London, England, Sorkin analyzed what he labelled as the “Heroic Moderation” of William Warburton, a Bishop in the Church of England.¹⁷⁷ Although Warburton’s religious context and socio-political actions were in some ways unique, the religious Enlightenment, from Sorkin’s broad view approach, shared four defining elements: reasonableness, toleration, the public sphere and a state nexus.¹⁷⁸ According to Sorkin, these elements emerged not only in response to the religious wars following the

¹⁷⁶ Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment*, xiv.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 8-11. In addition to Anglican Bishop William Warburton (1698-1779) in London, Sorkin selected the following: Calvinist theologian Jacob Vernet (1698-1789) in Geneva; German Protestant theologian Siegmund Jacob Baumgarten (1706-1757) in Halle; Jewish Philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) in Berlin; Reform Catholic professor Joseph Valentin Eybel (1741-1805) in Vienna; and Reform Catholic priest and seminary professor Adrien Lamourette (1742-1794) in Paris. *Ibid.*, 8-11.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 11-19.

Reformation and the stalemate that resulted from confessional state ideals, but also coincided with Newtonian science and Locke's empiricism.¹⁷⁹

Useful to this study, Sorkin's analysis of how Warburton represented each of the four elements provides another helpful grid for comparing Wesley not only to Warburton, but also to the religious Enlightenment on the continent. Despite the fact that Warburton attempted to defend the faith against the enthusiasm of Wesleyan Methodism, Wesley and Warburton held much in common. Based on Sorkin's portrayal of the religious Enlightenment, Wesley clearly met the requirements of three of the four defining elements, because in his own way, he also: "searched for the middle way of reasonable belief," "embraced [Protestant] toleration," and "engaged in multiple pursuits" in the public sphere.¹⁸⁰ However, two things must be understood in order to consider Sorkin's fourth identifying characteristic. First, in the early years of his ministry, Wesley did not directly gain the support of the state in England. Yet, despite being charged with enthusiasm, Wesley eventually became popular socially and trusted politically during the later years of his life in England. Second, Wesley did indirectly advocate for the state church throughout his life by ensuring that Methodism remained within the Church of England until after his death.¹⁸¹

As important as the matrices for a Christian Enlightenment and religious Enlightenment are to the purpose of this study, Rosenblatt and Sorkin do not provide any explicit evidence for a Wesleyan Enlightenment. Further insight into the complex relationship between Wesley and the Enlightenment requires an integration of the two topics. Therefore, the next chapter will explore

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 6.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 11.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

the historiography of how historians have integrated not only Wesley in Enlightenment studies, but also the Enlightenment in Wesley studies.

Chapter 3

The Integration of Wesley and Enlightenment Studies

Before theologians in the 1960s seriously considered Wesley as either a thinker or theologian in his own right and before historians in the 1980s accepted the plausibility of an English Enlightenment that was compatible in some ways with Christianity, scholars were already attempting to understand how Wesley related to the Enlightenment. As a result, the integration of Wesley studies and Enlightenment studies began long before the second half of the twentieth century. Although these pioneers worked within the limitations of the historiography they inherited, which at times provided more obstacles than bridges between the two topics, they still produced enduring insights that influenced later considerations of Wesley's relationship to the Enlightenment. However, most significantly for the argument of this dissertation, scholars, beginning in the late 1980s, began to study John Wesley using an integration of the two approaches that emerged following the major turning points in both Wesley studies (early 1960s) and Enlightenment studies (early 1980s). In other words, historians, for the first time, began to consider Wesley as a theologian and serious thinker in the context of an English or British Enlightenment that was no longer regarded as hostile to Christianity. The scholarship that resulted from those stages of integration will be discussed in the remainder of this section under two subheadings, "Wesley on the Periphery of Enlightenment studies" and "The Enlightenment on the Periphery of Wesley studies." The latter will include an analysis of the trajectories of six links between Wesley and the Enlightenment.

Wesley on the Periphery of Enlightenment Studies

Wesley in the Enlightenment

On the periphery of Enlightenment studies, most historians who used a single-enlightenment approach not only acknowledged John Wesley positively by highlighting his role in the English Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century, but also negatively by describing him personally as unenlightened, anti-intellectual or an enthusiast (a derisive term used to describe an irrational person or religious fanatic). Whether sympathetic or not, the verdict was the same. These historians not only banished Wesley to exile outside their definition of the Enlightenment as an intellectual or philosophical movement, but also reduced him to enemy status inside their understanding of the Enlightenment's agenda. As a result, they typically portrayed Wesley's relationship to the Enlightenment as oppositional.

At first glance, Margaret Jacob, in 1976, seemed to imply that Wesley was not only the opposite of enlightened, but also oppositional to the Enlightenment because he was a millenarian.¹ Like other Protestant Christians in England who were millenarians, Wesley not only weighed the possibility that each national tragedy was the judgment of God for the sins of a nation, but also believed that Christ would one day return to the earth in order to initiate a millennial reign over all the kingdoms of this world. However, Jacob misrepresented Wesley by using an obscure source to infer that he had predicted the year that Christ would return.

According to Jacob, "After 1714 millenarianism appears to be in complete decline in church

¹ For Jacob, millenarians believed that the events of politics and nature corresponded to God's providential plan for his chosen nation. Therefore, Jacob claimed that "millenarian speculation, whether among churchmen or radical sectaries, arose as an almost standard response to political and social instability and upheaval." Jacob, *The Newtonians*, 101. In addition, Jacob defined millenarianism as "a common psychological response (which could be either optimistic or pessimistic) to political instability in seventeenth-century England." *Ibid.*, 139.

circles although it can readily be found even later in sectarian Protestantism. John Wesley set the date 1836 for the probable destruction of the antichrist and the coming of the new heaven and the new earth.”² Thus, Wesley appeared unenlightened because he had not learned what others during England’s eighteenth-century Enlightenment had learned, mainly, that millenarianism was unreasonable.³ However, that explanation is too facile.

Instead, Jacob highlighted that Wesley as a millenarian was not only like Newton and other pre-enlightenment figures (1688-1720) who found science and natural philosophy compatible with Christianity, but also like other intellectual elites in the eighteenth century that she claimed maintained esoteric beliefs, such as millenarianism. Even though preachers probably stopped preaching millenarian doctrine during this period to avoid being charged with inciting social and political upheaval, Jacob did not believe this fully explained the decline of millenarianism in England’s early eighteenth-century Protestant churches.⁴ Thus, Jacob

² Jacob, *The Newtonians*, 129.

³ Jacob cited LeRoy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers: The Historical Development of Prophetic Interpretation* (Washington, D.C., 1948), II, chap. 26. Jacob, *The Newtonians*, 129. Whether you indict Jacob or Froom (whom she cited), scholarship in this instance was lacking. Wesley did use some of the works of Lutheran New Testament scholar Johannes Albrecht Bengel (Bengelius) (1687-1752) as sources for his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (1755). However, in the “Notes on the Revelation of Jesus Christ” that preceded the book of “The Revelation,” Wesley was careful to include a disclaimer that stated: “The following notes are mostly those of that excellent man [Bengelius]; a few of which are taken from his *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, but far more from his *Ekklarte Offenbarung*, which is a full and regular comment on the Revelation. Every part of this I do not undertake to defend. But none should condemn him without reading his proofs at large.” Therefore, based on the evidence Jacob provided, Wesley can only be found guilty of millenarianism by association with Bengelius because he allowed Bengelius’ complete timetable, which included a prediction of Christ’s return in 1836, to be printed on the page immediately following the end of his notes on the book of Revelation. John Wesley, *The Explanatory Notes of the New Testament*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1755, 1983). Wesley published both volumes of these two-volumes of annotations on the New Testament without page numbers.

⁴ Jacob, *The Newtonians*, 129.

confessed that “it is tempting to see a relationship between the decline of speculations so manifestly ‘unscientific’ and the rise of Newtonian science. The temptation fails, however, when we realize that the followers and associates of Newton and his natural philosophy, as well as the master himself, belonged, by and large, to the millenarian circle within the church.”⁵ Ultimately, by inferring that Wesley was like other pre-enlightenment figures who successfully balanced Newtonian science and natural philosophy with millenarian beliefs, Jacob actually portrayed Wesley not as a person who was against the Enlightenment, but rather as a candidate for Enlightenment. This argument becomes even more significant for understanding Wesley’s relationship to the Enlightenment when Jacob’s pre-enlightenment figures (such as Locke), which she defined by using a single-enlightenment approach, are considered as central to an English Enlightenment, which others have deduced by using a plural-enlightenment approach.

In 1991, however, Jacob closed the door to Wesley and Wesleyan Methodism for inclusion in a single, unified Enlightenment. According to Jacob, the requirements for consideration were clear: “From the historiographic tradition represented by Cassirer and later and more subtly by Gay, we get the best litmus test yet devised for assessing participation in the European Enlightenment, whether conservative, moderate, or radical, namely, the willingness to accept the new science, particularly in its Newtonian form.”⁶ In her conclusion, Jacob made no distinction between Wesleyan and Calvinistic Methodists (as discussed in Chapter one). Moreover, she did not consider that the opinions of Methodist preachers were not always consistent or approved by Wesley. As a result, without any note or citation to verify her claim, Jacob dismissed Methodism with a passing statement: “Methodists were known to attack

⁵ Ibid., 130.

⁶ Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 218.

Newton as a symbol of a social order they distrusted.”⁷ Although Jacob believed that Methodism accepted many converts beginning in the late 1730s from what she described as a lax and worldly Anglican Church, she assumed that Wesley and Methodism rejected Newton and the new science completely and consistently.⁸

Social historian Thomas Munck, in *The Enlightenment: A Comparative Social History 1721-1794*, argued that Wesley was effective in communities neglected by the Church of England as a populist evangelical preacher and as an editor who popularized devotional material.⁹ He claimed that Methodism was very effective using mass communication as a revivalist movement within the established Church under Wesley’s leadership. However, despite Munck’s claim that Methodism’s popular appeal was irrefutable because an estimated 60,000 supporters broke away from the Anglican Church after Wesley’s death in 1791, he concluded that Methodism was yet another Protestant splinter-group whose separation from the established Church in England had been fueled by the so-called Age of Reason.¹⁰ “In the eyes of critics,” Munck argued that Wesley’s Methodism could appear “at least as dictatorial, morally self-righteous and potentially divisive as the preachings of the zealots of earlier times—and quite incompatible with the supposedly rational/liberal value-system of enlightenment.”¹¹ In the final assessment, Munck believed that Wesley and Wesleyan Methodism were popular because they

⁷ Ibid., 220.

⁸ Ibid., 55.

⁹ Thomas Munck, *The Enlightenment: A Comparative Social History 1721-1794* (London, UK: Arnold, 2000).

¹⁰ Munck, 33-34.

¹¹ Ibid., 34.

opposed the very agenda that Munck believed defined the Enlightenment from the vantage point of social history, namely, the emancipation of inherited traditional Christian ideas and values that impacted ordinary Europeans.¹²

Historian Michael Heyd, in his entry, “Enthusiasm,” in the *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment* (2003), argued that the relationship between the Enlightenment and enthusiasm was dialectic.¹³ Working from this premise, he surmised that Methodism was “the most important ‘enthusiastic’ movement of the eighteenth century.”¹⁴ However, despite being emphatic in his conclusions about Methodism, Heyd hesitated to describe Wesley as an enthusiast because he found no consensus regarding Wesley as an enthusiast in the historiography of enthusiasm. According to Heyd, Wesley’s Methodism, like other eighteenth-century enthusiastic and revivalist movements, “criticized what they took to be an excessive reliance on ‘cold’ reason in that culture, and wished to return to an Evangelical type of Christianity. They laid emphasis on the religion of the heart, on personal religious experience, and sometimes on direct divine inspiration, in short, on precisely what was designated by critics as ‘enthusiasm.’”¹⁵ As a result, Heyd located Wesley on the periphery of Enlightenment studies

¹² Ibid., viii.

¹³ Michael Heyd, “Enthusiasm,” in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed., Alan Charles Kors, vol. 2 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 5. Heyd defined enthusiasm as “A recurrent label in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries . . . used to designate groups and individuals, who claimed to have direct divine inspiration, who prophesied about future events, particularly the approaching millennium or the end of the world, who claimed to perform miracles, and whose activities often involved physical manifestations such as convulsions. In the Enlightenment, the accusation of ‘enthusiasm’ became almost a battle cry, alongside ‘fanaticism’ and ‘superstitions,’ against the irrational tendencies of radical or revivalist religious movements.” Ibid., 1.

¹⁴ Ibid., 4-5.

¹⁵ Ibid., 5-6.

not only because he designated Wesley's Methodism as an antithesis to the Enlightenment, but also because he highlighted his reservations about Wesley being an enthusiast.¹⁶

In 2011, Jonathan Israel, still championing a single, unified irreligious Enlightenment, surprisingly included Wesley in the third installment of his Enlightenment narrative entitled *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750-1790*.¹⁷ On the one hand, Israel, like other historians using a single-enlightenment approach, not only acknowledged that Wesley was an organizational genius and immensely popular preacher, but also believed that Wesley was a counter-Enlightenment figure.¹⁸ According to Israel, "Wesley, though [he] sometimes claimed to be a 'man of the Enlightenment,' was actually a leading precursor of Counter-Enlightenment in the transatlantic, English-speaking world. A fervent believer in miraculous healings as well as providence, visions, witchcraft, and ghosts, the *philosophes* he considered enemies of God."¹⁹ On the other hand, Israel differed from other historians who worked from the supposition of a single Enlightenment because he argued that Wesley was also an immensely popular theologian. To support his claim, Israel provided the following analysis of Wesley's thought: "If he admired John Locke's thought, especially his religiosity and Englishness, he roundly repudiated every other great Enlightenment thinker."²⁰ According to Israel, Wesley's repudiation included: "reviling Voltaire, considering Montesquieu

¹⁶ Historian and editor Alan Charles Kors also included Frederick Dreyer's entry on "John Wesley" in his *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment* (2003) that will be discussed later in this chapter.

¹⁷ Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment*, 42-43, 48, 465.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

‘dry, dull, unaffecting and unentertaining: at least to all but Frenchmen’, and dismissing Buffon’s natural history as ‘atheism barefaced’, ranking the great naturalist well below Hume who at least, or so he supposed (by no means unreasonably), acknowledged the being of a God.”²¹ Thus, in the end, Israel, by conceding that Wesley was a theologian, was able to insist ultimately that Wesley not only opposed the Enlightenment spiritually, but also intellectually.

Despite providing the working definition of the Enlightenment used in this study (see Chapter one), historian Dorinda Outram also circumscribed Wesley and Methodism through a single-Enlightenment approach to a role of counter-Enlightenment. In her excellent survey, *The Enlightenment*, Outram dismantled the overly simplistic misconception that the complex relationship between religion and the Enlightenment was best understood as the rise of modern paganism.²² Important to note, according to Outram, was the fact that “in the Enlightenment almost all major faiths developed internally generated reforming movements. Where Lutheranism had pietism, Catholicism had Jansenism, and Anglicanism had Methodism.”²³ However, Outram created a false dichotomy when she contrasted the rationalism of deism with the enthusiasm of Methodism as alternate responses to the problem of theodicy for Christian teaching in the eighteenth century.²⁴ As a result, Outram claimed: “One way out was Deism, with its total hostility to revelation. Another was to reject the attempt to make Christianity ‘reasonable’, and return to a view of religion which emphasized faith, trust in revelation, and

²¹ Ibid.

²² Outram, *The Enlightenment*, 114-129.

²³ Ibid., 128.

²⁴ Outram defined theodicy, a term introduced during the Enlightenment by German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz [1646-1716], as “the repeated attempts to ‘solve’ the problem of evil, or provide an explanation of its existence consistent with the possibility of a ‘reasonable’ religion and of a benevolent and omnipotent creator.” Ibid., 126.

personal witness to religious experience. In this way came much impetus for the new ‘enthusiastic’ religious sects, such as Methodism.”²⁵ Yet, for Wesley and the Wesleyan Methodism he envisioned, as this study will demonstrate, a belief in revelation and an attempt to make Christianity reasonable were not mutually exclusive. Ironically, although Outram’s updated twenty-first century introduction to the Enlightenment has featured new insights into many of the important issues that must be considered in order to gain a proper understanding of the complex relationship between religion and the Enlightenment, her portrayal of Wesley has only recapitulated the popular view promoted first by Wesley’s late-eighteenth-century and early-nineteenth-century biographers, namely, that Wesley was a great evangelist and the founder of Methodism.²⁶

Wesley in Christianity and the Enlightenment

Further insight into Wesley’s relation to the Enlightenment can be gained by analyzing the work of historians who have included Wesley or Wesley’s Methodism on the periphery of their consideration of the relationship between Christianity and the Enlightenment. Since the 1950s, historians of the Enlightenment have argued that the Enlightenment not only responded to Christianity with hostility, but also enlightened Christianity, rationalized Christianity, engaged Christianity in a dialectical relationship and polarized Christianity. As a result, historians have indirectly inferred, whether intentionally or not, that Wesley was an enlightened enthusiast, a student of the Enlightenment, a defender of Christianity’s superstition, a participant in the dialectic between the Enlightenment and Christianity as well as a partner with the Enlightenment

²⁵ Ibid., 126-127.

²⁶ Ibid., 157.

in the polarization of Christianity. Some of the evidence that historians have used to make these arguments or inferences will be reviewed in the remainder of this section.

In 1950, historian Crane Brinton suggested in *The Shaping of the Modern Thought* that the reason the Enlightenment may have been hostile to traditional Christianity was because the Enlightenment was a child of Christianity.²⁷ Thus, building on the precedent of Carl Becker's *Heavenly City* (discussed earlier in Chapter two), Brinton argued that: "Of formal parallels between traditional Christianity and the Enlightenment there are no end, for both are efforts, shared by many men and women, to give some sort of systematized set of answers to the Big Questions: both are systems of moral values, of ends and means, or, if you prefer, both are religions."²⁸ Although, Brinton believed the nature of the Enlightenment was hostile toward Christianity, he claimed that many Christians, including Methodists, survived the Enlightenment not only by actively counterattacking the new ways through the press or from the pulpit, but also by quietly continuing to live in the old ways.²⁹ Although Brinton did not explicitly mention Wesley in his narrative on the development of modern thought, he did imply some things about Wesley in his portrayal of Wesley's Methodism. On the one hand, Wesleyan Methodism avoided the corrosiveness of the Enlightenment by refusing to become rationalist in bias or revolutionary in social or political outlook. On the other hand, Wesleyan Methodism stood

²⁷ Crane Brinton, *The Shaping of Modern Thought* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1950, 1963), 115.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 136.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 134.

against the Enlightenment as an evangelical movement not only by doing God's work, but also by retaining what Brinton described as "the essential other-worldliness of Christian tradition."³⁰

In the same year that historians gained a greater understanding of religion in the eighteenth-century by a new consideration of the Enlightenment in various national contexts (1981), ecclesiastical historian Sheridan Gilley argued that a century of Christian history had been lost because the Enlightenment had been considered too exclusively as secular and hostile to Christianity.³¹ As a solution to this problem, Gilley insisted that the boundaries between Christianity and the Enlightenment had to become more fluid in order to reclaim what had been overlooked in the history of Christianity. After reviewing, at the time, recent scholarship in the historiography of Enlightenment studies, Gilley recommended the following subcategories for recovering the missing narrative, which included, in addition to a secular enlightenment: a deist enlightenment, a Protestant enlightenment, a Catholic enlightenment and most significantly for the conceptualization of the Wesleyan Enlightenment argued in this study, an enthusiasts' enlightenment.³²

Earlier in his survey, Gilley recited a more particular list of enthusiasts in the eighteenth century, including German pietists and Moravians, French camisards and convulsionaries, English Methodists and other evangelicals as well as participants in the Great Awakening in America. With these enthusiasts in mind, Gilley posed an important question: "Is the enlightenment enlightening here?"³³ Unprecedentedly, his answer was yes. Unexpectedly,

³⁰ Ibid., 134-135.

³¹ Gilley, "Christianity and Enlightenment," 103-121.

³² Ibid., 115.

³³ Ibid., 113.

Gilley answered emphatically by saying: “Just how the enlightenment can enlighten even the darkness of enthusiasm has been demonstrated by Roger Anstey’s book on the slave trade: Evangelicals threw themselves into the anti-slavery campaign, he argues, because slavery violated an Evangelical conception of human freedom and happiness.”³⁴ Although additional evidence supporting Gilley’s argument has surfaced since 1981 (and will be analyzed later in this chapter), Gilley’s inference that Wesley was an enlightened enthusiast, like Porter’s introduction to an English Enlightenment, helped open the door initially to a greater consideration of Wesley’s relation to the Enlightenment.

In 2000, European historian Timothy Blanning argued in his introduction to *The Short Oxford History of Europe: The Eighteenth Century* that although Christianity in Europe seemed to be one of the main casualties of the eighteenth century, in part, because Christian ideologies and institutions had been challenged by rationalism and marginalized by secularization, the period was best characterized by religion not reason.³⁵ For the most part, Blanning made his claim based on historian Derek Beales’ assertion that Europe’s eighteenth century was the Christian Century. In the chapter he wrote for Blanning’s book, entitled, “Religion and Culture,” Beales argued that “Until at least the 1740s the influence of Christianity and Christian Churches [Catholic or Protestant] still pervaded the lives of Europeans, in some respects even more than in previous centuries.”³⁶ For example, the education that produced an increase of literacy in

³⁴ Ibid., 113. In his endnotes, Gilley cited Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition 1760-1810* (London, UK: [Macmillan], 1975), 91-199, especially 162-199 and a critique of Anstey’s book by Eamon Duffy, *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 29 (April, 1978): 234-236.

³⁵ Timothy C. W. Blanning, *The Short Oxford History of Europe: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 8.

³⁶ Ibid., 132

Britain's Enlightenment took place primarily in a religious context that inculcated Protestant Christianity. Therefore, Beales was not surprised that "the largest new popular movement to develop in Britain during the period should have been religious, and stridently opposed to most of the tendencies of the Enlightenment: Methodism."³⁷ However, Beales' assessment that Wesley's Methodism was a form of revolt against Enlightenment presupposed several unqualified static things about Wesley: he revived doctrine and deliberately worked to stem the weakening of dogmatic belief; he strictly organized and autocratically exercised authority over Methodism; and he not only ardently espoused loyalism, royalism and social conservatism, but also instilled these ideologies in his followers.³⁸ Although he crowned a new winner in the struggle between Christianity and the Enlightenment in Europe's eighteenth century, Beales confined Wesley and Methodism to their old role of opposing the Enlightenment in every way possible, even England's conservative form of Enlightenment.

Two years later Blanning highlighted the ongoing significance of Beales' claim. In *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660-1789*, Blanning argued that "This realization has been one of the major gains of recent historiography."³⁹ Blanning emphasized the contrast between Beales' corrective and Gay's classic definition of the Enlightenment by reiterating that in Beales' claim: "the related notions that the eighteenth century was the 'Age of Enlightenment' and that the Enlightenment represented 'the rise of modern paganism' are contradicted by the intense—and intensifying—religiosity of the period.

³⁷ Ibid., 165-166.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Timothy C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660-1789* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2002), 289.

Better sobriquets would be 'the age of religion' and 'the Christian century,' not least in England."⁴⁰ As a result, the ongoing idea that religion, particularly Christianity, triumphed over the reason of the Enlightenment in Europe's eighteenth century, continued to invite a new consideration of how Wesley contributed to England's part in Europe's Christian century.

In 2007, Blanning further extended the application of Beales' thesis to Europe's long eighteenth century (1648-1815). In addition to redefining the scope of the period, Blanning renamed the era claiming that "a case could be made for calling it 'the age of faith,' for it was marked by a number of powerful religious revivals, including Jansenism, Pietism and Methodism, and religious literature had never been more popular."⁴¹ More importantly, Blanning suggested that the relationship between Christianity and the Enlightenment in the cultural history of Europe was best understood as a dialectical exchange. Thus, he argued that "it makes more sense to conceptualize cultural developments not as a linear progression from faith to reason but as a dialectical encounter between a culture of feeling [or passion] and a culture of reason."⁴² To illustrate this phenomenon in England, Blanning located Wesley at the intersection of his discussion on these two cultures. On the one hand, Wesley, like others in England's culture of feeling, believed in witchcraft. According to Blanning, Wesley argued that giving up his belief in witchcraft was like giving up the Bible because he along with "most men and women of all classes believed that what they read in the Bible was literally the Word of God."⁴³

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Tim Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory: The Five Revolutions that Made Modern Europe: 1648-1815* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2007), xxvii.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 465.

On the other hand, Wesley, like others in the culture of reason, believed in supernatural forces, not only because they were mentioned in Scripture, but also because evidence for their existence had been endorsed by scholars and confirmed by eye-witnesses. Thus, Blanning claimed that “Wesley believed in witchcraft for what seemed to him to be utterly compelling reasons but was uncomfortably aware that both non-believers and a large number of his fellow Christians did not agree with him. As an intelligent and well-educated man, he supplies a salutary warning to later ages not to scoff at discredited systems of belief.”⁴⁴ Together, Beales’ portrayal of Wesley as an antithesis to a European Enlightenment and Blanning’s representation of Wesley as a synthesis of passion and reason in the cultural history of Europe’s long eighteenth century, provided new matrices for considering not only Christianity’s general relation to the Enlightenment in Europe, but also Wesley’s specific relation to the Enlightenment in England.

In 2006, another duet of historians Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett offered their assessment of Wesley’s place in Christianity and his unique relationship to the Enlightenment in the editorial comments of their introduction of *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660-1815*.⁴⁵ According to Brown and Tackett, “The Christian awakenings [including Protestant awakenings in Britain] were not initially opposed to the contemporary movements of scientific investigation and the Enlightenment, and indeed many of those embracing the new religious zeal [like the Methodists] also shared in the fervent hopes of social improvement raised by science and reason.”⁴⁶ For Brown and Tackett,

⁴⁴ Ibid., 468.

⁴⁵ Stewart J Brown and Timothy Tackett, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution 1660-1815*, eds., Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-11.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 8.

Wesley represented both of the responses that Evangelicals in Britain had to the Enlightenment. On the one hand, Wesley was a keen student of the Enlightenment, which he demonstrated by his study of science, philosophy and psychology. On the other hand, Wesley, according to Brown and Tackett, was like other evangelical Christians not only because he opposed deism and skepticism, but also because he abhorred “the tendency of Enlightened philosophers to promote a moderate, rational and ethical Christianity, which downplayed the doctrines of human sinfulness, eternal damnation, and Christ’s atonement on the cross.”⁴⁷ Although Brown and Tackett confirmed that Wesley was clearly opposed to the Enlightenment’s rationalization of Christianity, they also highlighted the ambiguity surrounding what Wesley believed was the proper relationship between the reason of the Enlightenment and the religion of his Methodists.

Wesley in the English Enlightenment

In the *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, Roy Porter portrayed Wesley as a man who not only countered the rationalism of England’s Enlightenment, but also championed some of the pragmatism of the English Enlightenment. On the one hand, Porter juxtaposed Wesley against the secularization of English society, the rationalization of Christianity, the ineptness of the established Church and the worldliness of the clergy. According to Porter, “The public domain was growing increasingly secular. The Church’s once overwhelming place in communal life was being eroded.”⁴⁸ In addition, the rationality of religion had not only produced religious pluralism and toleration, but also religious indifference, which enticed people to look elsewhere

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Roy Porter, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century*, Rev. ed. (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1982, 1990), 226.

outside the Church.⁴⁹ In response, Wesley worked relentlessly as an evangelist of heart religion, a scriptural fundamentalist of practical theology and an autocratic leader of Methodist spirituality. Wesley was like Moses. He gave the tablets of the law to his Wesleyan societies and itinerant preachers.⁵⁰ On the other hand, Porter aligned Wesley with: the persecution of minority groups in England, the idiom of the people, the efforts of Christian zealots to reform social abuses such as slave trade, and the influence of Methodism as a populist movement that brought respectability to artisans as well as self-help, education and benevolence to mining communities and fishing villages.⁵¹

As a result, Porter demonstrated that Wesley's relationship to the English Enlightenment was more than what the intellectual history of his narrative revealed. Wesley opposed the rationalism of Enlightenment that compromised Christianity and the philosophical theology of moderates in the Church of England. However, Wesley also embraced some of the pragmatism of the Enlightenment that improved the English society. Thus, Wesley, like Samuel Johnson (discussed in Chapter four) provided social historians of the English Enlightenment, such as Porter, a window for viewing not only the social vices and the lack of morality or religious vitality in an increasingly profane or secular age, but also the social reforms and the new opportunities that emerged for the working class and artisans within the social hierarchy of an evolving eighteenth-century English society.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 176-178, 278-279.

⁵¹ Ibid., 101, 183-184. Porter defined the idiom of the people as the earnest language of religion that even England's polite society spoke when faced with natural or political earthquakes. Ibid., 184.

Wesley in the British Enlightenment

Unlike the juxtaposition of Wesley and the English Enlightenment, some historians who have located Wesley or Wesleyan Methodism on the periphery of a British Enlightenment have unintentionally skewed Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment. As a result, on the one hand, historians who hold to a single, unified Enlightenment, like Jonathan Israel, have questioned not only the plausibility of a British Enlightenment, but also the credibility of what a particular study of British Enlightenment might contribute to the general understanding of the Enlightenment as a whole. On the other hand, scholars of Wesley studies have simply disregarded the arguments of historians who have either misunderstood or misrepresented Wesley or Wesley's Methodism in their study of the British Enlightenment. Because the juxtaposition of Wesley and the British Enlightenment has produced mixed results, this section will analyze two recent attempts made by two historians who have included Wesley in their history of the British Enlightenment.

In 2000, Porter expanded his earlier social history from an English Enlightenment as a secularizing force that eroded the central role of the established Church in English society to feature the prominent role of a British Enlightenment as a modernizing force that lead other regional or national Enlightenments in the creation of a modern world. In *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*, Porter claimed: "The Enlightenment is not a good thing or a bad thing, to be cheered or jeered. . . . because, as I shall insist *ad nauseam*, there never was a monolithic 'Enlightenment project.'"⁵² Instead, he argued that the Enlightenment "should be seen as a cluster of overlapping and interacting élites who shared a mission to

⁵² Roy Porter, *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2000), xxi.

modernize.”⁵³ Therefore, according to Porter, children of the Enlightenment should attempt to understand their parents: “This is a particularly important undertaking because the world they were making is the one we have inherited, that secular value system to which most of us subscribe today which upholds the unity of mankind and basic personal freedoms, and the worth of tolerance, knowledge, education and opportunity.”⁵⁴ However, the vantage point or blind spot of a British Enlightenment in the historiography of Enlightenment studies did not arrive apparently until Porter introduced it at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Because he based much of his introduction to a British Enlightenment on the foundation of his earlier work on the English Enlightenment, Porter’s portrayal of Wesley remained much the same. According to Porter, he employed “the terms ‘English’ and ‘British’ somewhat interchangeably when referring to ideas and developments broadly shared by élites living in the British Isles, since practically all enlightened thinking was then actually coming out of English heads, especially during the first third of the eighteenth century.”⁵⁵ However, even though he also included Scottish thinkers in his British story, Porter was careful to delineate not only between the terms ‘English’ and ‘Scottish,’ but also between the English Enlightenment and the Scottish Enlightenment. This subtle clarification had significant ramifications for accurately understanding Wesley’s relationship to the Enlightenment.

Because Porter avoided this pitfall, he was consistent in the general way he explicitly related Wesley to the Enlightenment. Like the English Enlightenment, Porter claimed that

⁵³ Ibid., xxii.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., xviii-xix.

“Enlightenment in Britain took place within rather than against Protestantism.”⁵⁶ In 1981, Porter introduced Wesley as a marginal figure in the English Enlightenment.⁵⁷ In 2000, he described Wesley as a marginal figure in the British Enlightenment. However, in the latter, Porter clarified why Wesley was located outside the mainstream of society: “The Locke-Addison trinity of liberty, self-interest and polish gained a firm hold in polite society, being devalued and debunked only by dogged self-marginalizers like Swift, Wesley and Blake.”⁵⁸ In other words, Wesley’s fate was self-inflicted. Because Porter argued that the British Enlightenment was a leader in the creation of a modern world, he highlighted the rhetoric and reality of rational Christians and deists who regarded Wesley with antipathy because he believed in witchcraft and supernatural forces.

Although Wesley’s commission of countering the rationalization of Christianity set him on the perimeter of the British Enlightenment, Porter’s omission of Wesley’s role in the pragmatism of the British Enlightenment implied that Wesley and Wesley’s Methodism did not contribute to the creation of modernity. One trait that Porter emphasized as consistent in both the English and British Enlightenments was pragmatism, which Porter claimed partnered well with English piety that held works in higher esteem than words.⁵⁹ Although Porter had argued in an earlier book that Wesley’s Methodism had contributed to the social reforms of the English society, which served as an example of the pragmatism of Enlightenment, Porter excluded Wesley in his later narrative from the pragmatism of a more specified British Enlightenment.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 99.

⁵⁷ Porter, “The Enlightenment in England,” 16.

⁵⁸ Porter, *Enlightenment*, 482.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 14-15.

Generally, “British pragmatism,” according to Porter, “was more than mere worldliness: it embodied a philosophy of expediency, a dedication to the art, science and duty of living well in the here and now.”⁶⁰ Left to that definition, Wesley’s contributions to social reform in the British society would have, at least in part, illustrated Porter’s British pragmatism. However, Porter’s further designation of pragmatism eliminated any consideration of Wesley when he expounded that “The Enlightenment thus translated the ultimate question ‘How can I be saved?’ into the pragmatic ‘How can I be happy?’ thereby heralding a new praxis of personal and social adjustment.”⁶¹ Incongruously, eudaemonism (the implied form of social ethics), which proved to be an obstacle to Porter’s consideration of Wesley as a contributor to the pragmatism of the British Enlightenment, was not an obstacle for Wesley.⁶² Wesley not only believed that salvation and true happiness were not mutually exclusive agendas in this world, but he also claimed that “true religion, or a heart right toward God and man, implies happiness as well as holiness.”⁶³ Ultimately, the inferred obstacle for Porter’s portrayal of Wesley was the modernity that Porter claimed the British Enlightenment was creating.

Ironically, in 2004, intellectual historian Gertrude Himmelfarb attempted to put Wesley and the social religion of Wesley’s Methodism back into the story of the British Enlightenment, which Porter had omitted in 2000. In *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French, and American Enlightenments*, Himmelfarb, like Porter, recognized the legitimacy of the British

⁶⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁶¹ Ibid., 22.

⁶² “eudaemonism: that system of ethics which finds the foundation of moral obligation in the tendency of actions to produce happiness.” *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “eudaemonism,” accessed November 11, 2016, OED Online.

⁶³ Sermon 7, “The Way to the Kingdom,” §8-10, *Works*, 1:222-223.

Enlightenment.⁶⁴ However, she exceeded Porter in her attempt to restore the British Enlightenment to the center stage of history as the progenitor of the Enlightenment.⁶⁵ Unlike Porter, she stated, “I do not go so far as to credit the British Enlightenment, as Roy Porter does, with ‘the creation of the modern world.’ . . . But I do find that the British (not only the Scots) confronted the modern world with the good sense—the ‘common sense,’ as their philosophers put it.”⁶⁶ Paradoxically, to accomplish her purpose, Himmelfarb as a historian of ideas redefined the British Enlightenment like social historians who viewed the Enlightenment as a social movement that was more than a group of ideas.⁶⁷ In addition to affirming the importance of reason and the role of religion that Britain’s historical circumstances had established in the seventeenth century, Himmelfarb argued that a “sociology of virtue” with its social ethos of compassion, benevolence and sympathy distinguished the British Enlightenment from the “ideology of reason” that shaped the French Enlightenment and the “politics of liberty” that drove the American Enlightenment.⁶⁸ The leaders of Himmelfarb’s social movement, the British Enlightenment, were moral philosophers of the Scottish Enlightenment, which Himmelfarb argued could be appropriately redressed as British.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity: The British, French, and American Enlightenments* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2004), 116-131.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 5, 14.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 18-19, 50-51.

⁶⁹ According to Himmelfarb, “The term ‘Scottish Enlightenment,’ . . . was first coined in 1900 to describe the Scottish philosophers known as ‘moral philosophers’ (who literally bore that title, as professors).” These included Adam Smith, Francis Hutcheson, Thomas Reid, Dugald Stewart, and Adam Ferguson. David Hume was not a professor, but he was raised in

Most important for this dissertation, Himmelfarb was the first person this study found who argued indirectly for some form of a Wesleyan Enlightenment. In her description of “Wesley’s Enlightenment,” Himmelfarb argued that “If Wesley did not think to apply to his movement that label of ‘Enlightenment’ . . . he certainly thought of himself as enlightened, and he believed his mission to be not only the spiritual salvation of the poor but also (which for him was the same thing) their intellectual and moral edification. He even appealed to reason as a corrective to excessive emotionalism and enthusiasm.”⁷⁰ To make her point, she first had to offset the impression among Enlightenment historians that Wesley was an anti-intellectual. Therefore, Himmelfarb highlighted four things about Wesley: his conversations with Samuel Johnson, his praise of Locke as well as his publishing of extracts from Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, his rebuke of Methodist preachers who overvalued feelings and undervalued reason, and finally, his published letter in which Wesley claimed that reason and religion must be joined to overcome not only passion and prejudice, but also wickedness and bigotry.⁷¹

In addition, Himmelfarb attempted to demonstrate that Wesley’s Methodism not only shared the social ethos of Britain’s Enlightenment, but also socialized Britain’s religion. According to Himmelfarb, “Whatever the differences between moral philosophers and the Methodists—philosophical, theological, temperamental—in important practical matters, they tended to converge. . . . While the philosophers were invoking the moral sense as the basis for

Edinburgh. Hume not only Anglicized his name, but also, like some of the others in this group, preferred to identify himself with the North Britons rather than the Scots. *Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 126-127.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* The latter, Wesley’s letter, will be discussed later in this chapter under the subheading “The Amalgamation of Reason and Religion.”

the social affections, Methodist preachers were giving practical effect to that idea by spreading a religious gospel of good works, [and] engaging in a variety of humanitarian causes.”⁷²

Although Wesley did say, “Christianity is essentially a social religion,” he did not use the language of morality that Himmelfarb does to link him and his Methodism as a social movement to her British Enlightenment.⁷³ Moreover, even though Wesley modeled and encouraged Methodists to “Gain all you can,” “Save all you can,” and “Give all you can,” these pithy statements were not, as Himmelfarb claimed, the basis of the moral life Wesley proclaimed.⁷⁴

Where Himmelfarb’s argument broke down as it related to Wesley and Methodism was not in the outward form of social reform or the common practices of similar social ethics, but in the inward convictions regarding human nature. Wesley did not share the core beliefs that moral philosophers had about the goodness of man. Therefore, the practical theology or ideology that motivated the social actions of Methodism was not the same as the “common sense” taught by moral philosophers. Wesley’s relationship to the Enlightenment was complex and the proper representation of Wesley and his Methodism in the British Enlightenment required an interpretive nuance that Himmelfarb’s portrait failed to deliver. Although Wesley’s Methodism contributed to the unique orthopraxy that Himmelfarb claimed defined the British Enlightenment, the orthodoxy or moral philosophy of the British (Scottish) philosophers that defined Britain’s orthopraxy when applied to Wesley or Methodism misrepresented both the man and the movement. Although Wesley’s practical theology was eclectic, as Himmelfarb claimed, Wesley was very selective and did not pretend to defend or represent any of the views he did not

⁷² Ibid., 120.

⁷³ Ibid., 121. Sermon 24, “Sermon on the Mount, IV,” §5, *Works*, 1:533.

⁷⁴ Himmelfarb, 121. Sermon 50, “The Use of Money,” I.1-III.2, *Works*, 2:268-277.

specifically or intentionally borrow from the moral philosophers, including Francis Hutcheson.⁷⁵ In other words, just because Wesley borrowed from moral philosophers did not mean that Wesley was a moralist.

In the end, Himmelfarb's honest attempt to locate Wesley and Wesley's Methodism within a British Enlightenment yielded disappointing results. For different reasons, religious and Enlightenment historians disregarded Himmelfarb's attempt to aggrandize what she defined as a British Enlightenment. On the one hand, religious historians criticized Himmelfarb for not having an adequate understanding of Methodism.⁷⁶ On the other hand, historians of the Enlightenment were harsh in their criticism of Himmelfarb.⁷⁷ In part, because she audaciously included Wesley, a counter-Enlightenment figure and Methodism, an anti-Enlightenment movement in her argument, some historians defending a single-enlightenment approach insisted that the British Enlightenment she imagined and expounded in her book never existed.⁷⁸

Unexpectedly, the first argument this study found for a Wesleyan Enlightenment was located on the periphery of Enlightenment studies. Without the establishment of Porter and Pocock's English Enlightenment (discussed in Chapter two), Himmelfarb's redefinition of

⁷⁵ Himmelfarb, 120.

⁷⁶ My mentoring professor, religious historian Robert D. Linder made this observation in a conversation I had with him in the spring of 2015.

⁷⁷ Jonathan Israel, "Enlightenment! Which Enlightenment?" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 67, no. 3 (July 2006): 531-533, 523-545. Israel clarified: "Himmelfarb's contention, echoing those of Norman Hampson, Roy Porter, and many others who precede her in this respect, that the 'French themselves credited that venerable English trinity, Bacon, Locke and Newton with the ideas that inspired their own Enlightenment' is actually only true with respect to *philosophes* like Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Turgot who aimed to reconcile 'reason' with tradition, and with organized religion, and who were anxious to use Locke's epistemology and Newton's physico-theology to limit the scope of philosophy and help shore up aristocracy, monarch, and a measure of ecclesiastical authority." *Ibid.*, 532.

⁷⁸ Himmelfarb, 6.

Porter's recently conceived British Enlightenment would not have produced a consideration of what she described as "Wesley's Enlightenment." In the next section, this study will analyze the Enlightenment on the periphery of Wesley studies.

The Enlightenment on the Periphery of Wesley Studies

In the remainder of this chapter, this study will analyze the trajectories of the links between Wesley and the Enlightenment as they were introduced chronologically in the historical literature of Wesley studies. For the purpose of this study, these links have been identified and organized into six general categories: socio-political affinities, epistemology, pietism, the reconciliation of enlightenment and enthusiasm, the amalgamation of reason and religion, and thought forms of the Enlightenment. Within each category, this study will review the scholars who contributed to the trajectory of these links in the historiography of Wesley studies.

Socio-Political Affinities

In 1876, Lecky helped to set off a chain reaction of historians who began to explore the socio-political affinities between Wesley and the Enlightenment. For more than a century, historians of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England continued to support or oppose the idea that Methodism prevented England from experiencing a violent revolution similar to France at the end of the eighteenth century. For Lecky, Wesley was not a schismatic or subversive social or political revolutionist. However, he believed that Wesley influenced an Evangelical revival that produced not only a religious revolution in England's established Church

and dissenting churches, but also a moral revolution in English society that helped England escape the revolutionary spirit that spread from France to other parts of Europe.⁷⁹

In 1913, Lecky's claim took on new life as the Halévy Thesis when the Frenchman and historian of European socialism and modern English history, Élie Halévy, argued in his classic work, *England in 1815*, that "Methodism was the antidote to Jacobinism."⁸⁰ More specifically, as historian Bernard Semmel (who will be discussed later in this section) concisely explained in his summary of Halévy's book, Halévy emphasized that "while Methodism was the grand source of the crucial religious influence, that influence was exerted, in the main, indirectly, by the infiltration of the Methodist spirit into the ranks of the Dissenters and, through the Evangelicals, into the established Church, and by the imposition of a new morality upon *all* classes by means of the activities of voluntary associations."⁸¹ Since World War I, many of the historians already included in this study have indirectly referred to Wesley's socio-political link to the Enlightenment in revolutionary terms that reflected their response to Halévy's claim.⁸²

⁷⁹ Lecky, 100, 141, 144, 146.

⁸⁰ Élie Halévy, *England in 1815*, translated by E. I. Watkin and D. A. Barker (New York, NY: Barnes and Noble Inc., 1961 [First published in French in 1913]), 590-591. See also 200, 383, 387, 389-390, 410, 415, 417, 423-428, 433-434, 450-452.

⁸¹ Élie Halévy, *The Birth of Methodism in England*, translated [into English] and edited by Bernard Semmel (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 12.

⁸² For example, Brinton argued that England's eighteenth-century Wesleyan Methodism, "in times not to be called revolutionary, . . . was politically conservative on the whole, and not directed against a given social and political system." Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution*, rev. ed. (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1965), 185. See also the responses of other scholars included in this study such as Maldwyn Edwards, John Walsh, E. P. Thompson, Gertrude Himmelfarb as well as Bernard Semmel in Gerald Wayne Olsen, ed., *Religion and Revolution in Early-Industrial England: The Halévy Thesis and Its Critics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990).

In 1973, Semmel, in his book, *The Methodist Revolution*, offered his own explanation for how Wesley's Methodism may have helped England, at the end of the eighteenth century, avoid its own democratic revolution in the trans-Atlantic world between 1760 and 1815.⁸³ First, Semmel qualified Halévy's Thesis by claiming that "historians have intuited—given the lack of 'hard' evidence, no other word can be used—that England was spared a violent counterpart to the French Revolution by the widespread effects of the evangelical Revival which Wesley and Whitefield initiated in 1739."⁸⁴ Second, Semmel extended Halévy's Thesis by exploring two things that he claimed historians had failed to recognize, the nature of England's Evangelical Revival and the role of Wesley's theology.⁸⁵ According to Semmel, historians failed to recognize "the Revival as both a spiritual Revolution of a progressive and liberal character and as a counter to revolutionary violence, a circumstance growing out of the ideology and structure of Methodism."⁸⁶ Moreover, Semmel argued that Methodist doctrine was the theological form of liberal ideology in England during an Age of Democratic Revolutions. In other words, for Semmel, Wesley's theology was essentially an ideology that was both liberal and progressive, which Semmel defined as "in the sense of both confirming and helping to advance the movement

⁸³ Bernard Semmel, *The Methodist Revolution* (London, UK: Heinemann, 1973). In addition to thanking historian John D. Walsh of Jesus College, Oxford for his advice in the preface of his work, Semmel also thanked Professor Gertrude Himmelfarb of the City University of New York not only for reading his manuscript, but also for discussing his book with him. Apparently, as Himmelfarb demonstrated thirty years later in her own attempt to integrate Wesley's Methodism and the British Enlightenment, the apple, in fact, does not fall far from the tree. *Ibid.*, vii-viii.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 3. Halévy inaccurately credited Wesley and George Whitefield as being leaders who were equally responsible for the rise of early Methodism in England. Halévy, *England in 1815*, 263, 282, 289, 416, 419, 433, 434, 436, 462.

⁸⁵ Olsen, x-xi.

⁸⁶ Semmel, 4-5.

from a traditional to a modern society.”⁸⁷ Finally, Semmel concluded that the Methodist Revolution helped not only to preempt the appeal and objective of the French Revolution in England, but also to counter the threat of its revolutionary violence.⁸⁸

Most important for this study, Semmel claimed that Wesley’s theology had affinities with the ideology of England’s politics. Thus, with a purpose similar to this study, Semmel carefully articulated that “In attempting to understand Wesley as a man of the Enlightenment, I am not suggesting that Wesley felt any strong affinity for the ideas of the leading *philosophes*. Indeed, he regarded them as enemies to God and disturbers of the peace. Of the great philosophers of the Enlightenment, only Locke won Wesley’s admiration.”⁸⁹ On the one hand, Semmel acknowledged that Wesley criticized most of the key figures associated with the Enlightenment such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau and Hume. On the other hand, Semmel argued that “in many ways, Wesley’s ties with the liberal Enlightenment were substantial.”⁹⁰ As a result, Semmel’s argument provided an early, if not the earliest, explicit example of a link for considering Wesley’s socio-political affinities with the Enlightenment.

For Semmel, Wesley’s Arminian theology, which emphasized universal redemption (salvation made available to all, not just to the elect), free will and religious tolerance (for Protestants, but not for papists) had great affinity with the Enlightenment’s liberal political theory, which featured individualism, free contract and natural rights. According to Semmel, “In his attitude toward slavery, . . . Wesley fully emerged as a figure of the Enlightenment, . . .

⁸⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 6-7.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 87.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

preaching equality and natural rights.”⁹¹ Moreover, Semmel claimed that “On the matter of slavery, Wesley had become a complete advocate of natural rights.”⁹² The evidence he gave for his claim was how Wesley argued in his tract, *Thoughts on Slavery* (1774). First, Wesley, uncharacteristically, did not use Scripture in the tract to make his case against slavery. Second, Wesley borrowed extensively from Quaker Anthony Benezet’s anti-slavery writings to make his appeal.⁹³

Although Semmel highlighted the fact that Wesley used the arguments of natural rights and natural justice in what he published to oppose slavery, he assumed that Wesley had become a champion for natural rights or natural rights theory. Perhaps Wesley’s reason for using an argument based on the idea of natural rights was simply pragmatic because others were at a stalemate over how to interpret the ambiguity found in the Scriptures concerning slavery.

Although Wesley changed his tactic to argue against slavery and advocated for civil liberty in this particular instance, Semmel seemed to press the evidence too far to imply that somehow Wesley had not only promoted modernity, but also become representative of the Enlightenment. Still, Semmel demonstrated that in some ways Wesley’s theology—such as the doctrines of assurance of one’s salvation that was equally available to all and Christian perfection that was possible in this lifetime for all by God’s grace—shared affinities with the political ideology of what he portrayed as a liberal, eighteenth-century Enlightenment.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Ibid., 94.

⁹² Ibid., 95.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 96-101.

In 2001, historical theologian Theodore R. Weber not only brought greater clarity to Semmel's claims, but also greater understanding of how Wesley shared political affinities with the Enlightenment. In his analysis of Wesley's political thought entitled *Politics in the Order of Salvation: New Directions in Wesleyan Political Ethics*, Weber argued that Semmel was "on the right track in replacing the hard-Tory picture of Wesley with one that affirms the central importance of liberty."⁹⁵ However, Semmel did not make the proper identification of what was fundamental in Wesley's political thought and practice when he maintained that Wesley consistently held to a belief in the divine right of hereditary succession as an indefeasible right. Instead, Weber argued that Wesley was an *organic constitutionalist*. As a constitutionalist, Wesley believed in limited governmental power and the primacy of law. As one holding an organic view of English society, Weber further insisted that Wesley "believed that England was a unity of king (constitutional monarchy, which included Parliament), church, and people."⁹⁶ To illustrate his argument, Weber drew attention to Wesley's tract "A Word to a Freeholder" (1747), in which Wesley advised "his readers how to vote: for the man who loves God, the king, the country's interest, and the church."⁹⁷ In other words, Wesley's political affinity with the Enlightenment was not as an *emergent liberal*, but as an *organic constitutionalist*.⁹⁸

After clarifying that Wesley was not an *emergent liberal*, Weber reiterated that there was still a political affinity between Wesley and the Enlightenment. However, because Wesley

⁹⁵ Theodore R. Weber, *Politics in the Order of Salvation: New Directions in Wesleyan Political Ethics* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 29.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 29-30.

believed political authority came from God and not from the people, he was antidemocratic and anti-republican in his view of governing authority. Therefore, the political affinity between Wesley and the Enlightenment could not be political authority.⁹⁹ Instead, Weber claimed that natural rights and liberty were their common political denominators. According to Weber, those who argued correctly for the concept of natural rights in Wesley's thought and the advocacy of liberties in Wesley's actions pointed "to Wesley's vigorous arguments for religious liberty and against slavery; to his passionate concern for civil liberties of various kinds—security of life, person, and property, and freedom to speak and to publish; and to his refusal to accept the claim that racial differences correspond to differences in moral qualities and intellectual capabilities."¹⁰⁰ Although Wesley's advocacy at times reflected the political theory of his age, Weber emphasized that the concept of rights in the Enlightenment had a limited influence on Wesley. Ultimately, Weber qualified Wesley's political affinities with the Enlightenment by declaring "Wesley does owe something to the rationalistic tradition of natural rights that emerged in and with the Enlightenment, but he owes more to an older English tradition of historical and organic thinking."¹⁰¹ In the end, Weber's nuanced argument for Wesley as an *organic constitutionalist* allowed Wesley to be plausibly considered as having an affinity with the liberal political thought of the Enlightenment without being or becoming politically liberal.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 157.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 303.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 346.

Epistemology

In the mid-1980s, historians of Wesley studies began a long-standing debate centered on the source of Wesley's epistemology as a link to better understanding Wesley's relationship to the Enlightenment. Almost a decade earlier, Cragg and Wood (as discussed in Chapter two) had highlighted allusions to Locke's epistemology in Wesley's published works. However, after Porter grafted Locke into the Enlightenment as more than a pre-Enlightenment figure with his introduction to an English Enlightenment in 1981, Wesley scholars began to consider Wesley's relationship to the Enlightenment through the link of epistemology. Although Wesley did not explicitly declare that he had a particular epistemology, some historians believed that the language of Wesley's works implicitly revealed not only that Wesley was a man of the Enlightenment, but also that Wesley as a thinker had been influenced by the psychology of his age. The debate among historians then ensued as scholars wrestled over who had the greatest influence over Wesley's epistemology, Locke or someone else.¹⁰²

Historian Frederick Dreyer, in his 1983 article, "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley," argued that Wesley was not only a skilled logician, but also an empiricist (one who gained knowledge by what he experienced through his senses). Dreyer claimed that the greatest theological controversies Wesley faced in his life all turned on points of psychology. As a result, Dreyer concluded that "Wesley's intellectual outlook [was] formed not by the

¹⁰² According to Maddox, "Discussions of epistemology, which inquire[d] into the sources of human knowledge, had divided into two major camps in the Western intellectual traditions by Wesley's time. The rationalist camp (hailing back to Plato) stressed the role of reason in providing the most important knowledge, particularly through innate ideas—ideas resident in our minds prior to any experience. By contrast, empiricists (championing Aristotle) denied that there were innate ideas, arguing that experience was the source of all foundational human knowledge." Randy L. Maddox, *Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 1994), 27.

Reformation but by the Enlightenment. In all of his controversies, he assumed the same principle: nothing is known that cannot be felt.”¹⁰³ In addition to associating Wesley with the Enlightenment over the Reformation, he also acknowledged Semmel’s contribution to Wesley studies. Significantly, Dreyer pointed out that “Semmel made an original and important argument for Wesley’s membership in the Enlightenment. His Wesley, however, is an Arminian in an Enlightenment that stresses free will and not a Lockean in an Enlightenment that stresses experience.”¹⁰⁴ Thus, by arguing that Wesley had a Lockean epistemology, Dreyer established the original thesis for the dialectical exchange that would take place in Wesley studies over the next twenty years.

Dreyer continued to focus on Wesley’s epistemology as a link to the Enlightenment in his 1987 article, “Evangelical Thought: John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards,” when he delineated that the primary difference between the two important evangelical thinkers, Wesley and Jonathan Edwards was metaphysical.”¹⁰⁵ In contrast to Enlightenment scholars, such as Henry May (discussed in Chapter two), who considered Wesley and Edwards to be synonymous in what they believed and how they viewed the Enlightenment because they were both revivalists, Dreyer insisted that “Once evangelicals are considered as thinkers, trying to understand in their minds what they feel in their hearts, the unity of the revival [as perceived by such Enlightenment

¹⁰³ Frederick Dreyer, “Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley,” in *The American Historical Review*, vol. 88, no. 1 (Feb., 1983): 29, 12-30.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁰⁵ Frederick Dreyer, “Evangelical Thought: John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards,” in *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2 (Summer, 1987): 177-192. May, xiv.

scholars] dissolves.”¹⁰⁶ Therefore, based on his comparison of Wesley’s and Edwards’ basic metaphysical assumptions, Dreyer concluded that Wesley was an empiricist and Edwards was a rationalist.¹⁰⁷ Yet, Dreyer made a greater point in his challenge to any historians who would consider Wesley’s relation to the Enlightenment: “Religious thought cannot be adequately analyzed if it is regarded as nothing more than a manifestation of faith.”¹⁰⁸ By comparison, Dreyer believed that: “As a thinker struggling to see things clearly and coherently, Edwards has more in common with Spinoza than he does with Wesley, and Wesley more in common with David Hume. Each has more in common with his infidel than with his Christian counterpart. This is not to say that Spinoza influenced Edwards or that Hume influenced Wesley. But neither pair of thinkers can be understood if they are divorced from their intellectual context.”¹⁰⁹ However, Dreyer’s consideration of Wesley’s epistemology did not end with this article.

In his 1989 article, “Edmund Burke and John Wesley: the Legacy of Locke,” Dreyer identified not only similarities between Burke as a man of the state and Wesley as a man of the church, but also parallels in the ways Locke influenced their thought. According to Dreyer, “it is in the thought of Burke and Wesley that the individualistic, indeed, the Lockean character of eighteenth-century thought finds its most pronounced and decisive expression. Locke’s theory of knowledge [epistemology] constitutes his main contribution to the thought of the eighteenth

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 191.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 192.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

century.”¹¹⁰ Although Wesley did not compose a treatise that fully explained his views on Locke’s epistemology, which Locke expounded in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Dreyer insisted that Wesley was committed to empiricism because he endorsed Locke’s *Essay* on many levels throughout his life: reading Locke’s *Essay* in his youth, teaching an abridgement of Locke’s *Essay* at Lincoln College, recommending Locke’s *Essay* to Methodists and publishing monthly extracts from Locke’s *Essay* along with some qualifying remarks for the readers of his *Arminian Magazine* (1782-1784).¹¹¹

For no less than twenty years Dreyer argued directly or indirectly in several articles and a book that Wesley was an empiricist. As a result, Enlightenment historian Alan Charles Kors included Dreyer’s entry, “John Wesley,” in the *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment* (2003).¹¹² On the one hand, Dreyer acknowledged the following about Wesley: “A born-again zealot who denounced David Hume, Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu, Francis Hutcheson, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, and Henry Home, Lord Kames, it is not difficult to represent Wesley as an enemy of the Enlightenment.”¹¹³ On the other hand, Dreyer demanded a new consideration of Wesley by claiming: “Important elements in his [Wesley’s] thought, however, were derived from John Locke. He espoused Locke’s empiricism and drew on it in appealing to

¹¹⁰ Frederick Dreyer, “Edmund Burke and John Wesley: the Legacy of Locke,” in *Religion, Secularization and Political Thought: Thomas Hobbes to J.S. Mill*, ed., James E. Crimmins (London, UK: Routledge, 1989), 112, 111-129. In Dreyer’s chapter of Crimmins’ edited essays, “Lockeian” was spelled differently than Dreyer’s earlier 1983 article, “Lockean.”

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹¹² Frederick A. Dreyer, “John Wesley,” in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed., Alan Charles Kors, vol. 4 (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 251-252.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 252.

experience as the test of Christian conversion.”¹¹⁴ Therefore, Dreyer’s final sentence proclaimed emphatically, “In epistemology . . . , Wesley belonged to the Enlightenment.”¹¹⁵ In the end, Dreyer’s plausible argument for Wesley’s relationship to the Enlightenment was consistent. Wesley’s primary link to the Enlightenment was Locke’s epistemology.

With less impact, literary critic and English professor Richard E. Brantley also claimed, beginning in 1984, that Wesley was committed to Lockean empiricism.¹¹⁶ However, his pioneering effort in *Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism* to highlight both the significance of Locke’s influence on Wesley and Wesley’s Methodism as well as the influence of Wesley’s language on the literature and history of English Romanticism in the eighteenth century proved to be a sequestered thesis in the historiography of Wesley studies.¹¹⁷ According to Brantley, his thesis was twofold: “First, Locke’s theory of knowledge grounds the intellectual method of Wesley’s Methodism. And second, Wesley’s Lockean thought (i.e., his reciprocating notions that religious truth is concerned with experiential presuppositions, and that experience itself need not be non-religious) provides a ready means of understanding the ‘religious’

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Dreyer, “Evangelical Thought,” 181n12.

¹¹⁷ Richard E. Brantley, *Locke, Wesley, and the Method of English Romanticism* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1984). Although some historians of Wesley studies initially acknowledged Brantley’s contribution, most eventually found the unintentional results of his efforts to be unsatisfactory because they ultimately served to misrepresent Wesley and his influence in eighteenth-century England. Like Semmel, Brantley overemphasized Locke’s influence on Wesley. However, unlike Semmel who overstressed the influence of Locke’s liberalism on Wesley’s socio-political thought, Brantley pressed too far the influence of Locke’s epistemology on Wesley’s language and message. Ultimately Brantley was unable to substantiate his bold claims. Richard P. Heitzenrater, “Richard Brantley, *Locke, Wesley and the Method of English Romanticism*,” *Church History*, vol. 56 (March, 1987): 135-136. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 387.

empiricism and the English ‘transcendentalism’ of British Romantic poetry.”¹¹⁸ Brantley’s assessment of the historiography of Enlightenment studies before 1980 regarding Wesley was fair: “Students of the Enlightenment don’t read Wesley. Taking little or no notice of Wesleyan scholarship, they regard him as an unenlightened anachronism at worst and, at best, as a nonintellectual contrast to, and impediment of, Enlightenment thinkers.”¹¹⁹ However, Brantley overstated how Wesley’s appropriation of Locke’s *Essay* gave him influence in the Enlightenment: “Insofar as Wesley mastered the *Essay*, followed its principles, spread its message, reconciled it with his faith, and incorporated it into his philosophical theology, he not only participated as such an enlightened man in that Enlightenment but also contributed to it.”¹²⁰ In the end, Brantley unintentionally skewed Wesley’s complex relationship with the Enlightenment, not because he focused too intensely on the link of Locke’s epistemology, but because he imposed on Wesley not only a literary prominence that Deconstructionists could not imagine, but also a philosophical theology that Wesleyan scholars could not believe.¹²¹

Also, important to this study, historian John Cammel English wrote what may have been the first article that wrestled directly with understanding Wesley more specifically through his relation to the English Enlightenment. In his article, “John Wesley and the English Enlightenment: An ‘Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,’” English argued that “John

¹¹⁸ Brantley, 2.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 48-102, 201-213.

Wesley was a man of the Enlightenment.”¹²² According to English, “‘enlightenment’ took many forms, which varied from one social class, geographical region, and period of time to another. The word as used here refers to the mainstream of the English Enlightenment. The leading figures in this movement were the distinguished Protestant laymen, John Locke and Sir Isaac Newton.”¹²³ Like Dreyer, English believed that Wesley was an empiricist who used Locke’s epistemology as the basis of his own epistemology. Unlike Dreyer, English analyzed not only Wesley’s praise and criticism of Locke’s *Essay*, but also his response to Newton. Although Wesley was more cautious in his response to Newton than Locke, he did recommend Newton’s *Opticks* to Methodist readers and acknowledged Newton’s genius and reputation.¹²⁴ In the end, Wesley was a man of the Enlightenment because his epistemology was shaped by Locke and his scientific views were informed to some degree by Newton.¹²⁵ Although a number of Wesley

¹²² John C. English, “John Wesley and the English Enlightenment: An ‘Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,’” *Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, vol. 263 (1989): 400.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 400-402.

¹²⁵ In 1994, Maddox summarized the results of more than two decades of scholarship that had focused on the issue of Wesley’s epistemological commitments. According to Maddox, “What has become clear through this study is that Wesley self-consciously sided with the empiricist denial of innate ideas. He frequently quoted the slogan [of Aristotle] *nihil est in intellectu quod non fuit prius in sensu*, ‘nothing is in the mind that is not first in the senses.’ He embraced the Aristotelian logical tradition at Oxford. He commented favorably on John Locke’s *Essay on Human Understanding*. . . . This is not to say that Wesley agreed totally with (then current) Lockean empiricism. He dissented from this tradition in two significant ways. In the first place, Wesley was epistemologically more optimistic than Locke. He considered Locke much too prone to believe that our senses could mislead us, or that the abstractions which our minds form based on our experience might not correspond to the way things really are. Wesley’s second divergence from contemporary empiricists dealt specifically with the issue of knowledge of God. Most contemporary empiricists assumed that knowledge of God was available only by inference from our experience of the world or by assent to the external testimony of Scripture. While Wesley allowed a role for such indirect knowledge of God, he desired more direct knowledge as well. Yet, since he agreed with empiricists that direct knowledge must come

scholars published articles that analyzed Locke's influence on Wesley's epistemology, only Dreyer, Brantley and English argued explicitly that Locke's epistemology was a link between Wesley and the Enlightenment.¹²⁶

Pietism¹²⁷

In addition to the historians who believed that Locke provided the socio-political or epistemological link between Wesley and the Enlightenment, some historians argued that pietism helped explain Wesley's complex relationship to the Enlightenment.¹²⁸ These historians did not

through the senses, he postulated (in conscious contrast with Locke . . .) that God provided humans with spiritual senses to sense spiritual realities, just as our physical senses sense physical realities." Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 27.

¹²⁶ For a more recent summary, in 2003, historian Mark T. Mealey claimed, "I take it that most scholars of Wesley now reject the proposal that Locke was the source of Wesley's epistemology." Mealey stated his intention and conclusion: "I hope that by making a careful textual study of Wesley's Remarks, in their controversial context, I have successfully buried the possibility that he is in any significant sense Lockean. . . . Locke is not in any sense Wesley's authority in epistemological questions." Mark T. Mealey, "Tilting at windmills: John Wesley's reading of John Locke's epistemology," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 85, no. 2 (2003): 332, 345, 331-346.

¹²⁷ The inconsistency in the capitalization of terms, such as "Pietism" or "pietism," in this section and throughout this dissertation reflects the effort of this study to maintain the dynamic preference of the scholars it reviews in the narrative surrounding the discussion of their individual writings.

¹²⁸ As an expert on Continental Pietism, F.E. Stoeffler has defined Pietism as "a clearly discernible religious movement which has left few aspects of world Protestantism untouched." He has also defined in general terms the Lutheran Pietism that arose in Germany, which Wesley encountered: in his readings of Johann Arndt (1555-1621), Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), August Hermann Francke (1663-1727) and Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752); in his travels between London, Georgia and Herrnhut; and in his encounters with Pietists, such as Count Nikolaus Ludwig Graf von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) and other members of the distinct branch of Pietism that Zinzendorf led, the Moravians. According to Stoeffler: "Pietism represents a reaction against the lack of religious fervor, the moral laxity, the tendency toward cultural accommodation and the interconfessional bickering of the representatives of orthodoxy within the established Protestant communions. It laid stress on the religious renewal of the individual

disregard the ways Wesley and pietism resisted or opposed the Enlightenment. However, they did refute the facile conclusions that Wesley's Methodism and pietism were either anti-intellectual or exclusively counter-Enlightenment movements. In the following examples, this study will analyze the contribution of three historians in the historiography of Wesley studies who attempted to illustrate how Wesley exemplified the shared response of both pietism and the Enlightenment to tradition in Eighteenth Century England.

In 1979, historian W. R. Ward, in his article, "The Relations of Enlightenment and Religious Revival in Central Europe and in the English-speaking World," analyzed the relationship that pietists and revivalists had with the Enlightenment.¹²⁹ After highlighting how complex the concepts of both enlightenment and pietism had become by the end of the 1970s, he presented three types of relationships that various German Pietists had had with the Enlightenment: passing through pietism to the enlightenment, making the passage to enlightenment and back, and favoring enlightenment, but drawing the line when enlightenment encroached on revelation.¹³⁰ Although Ward did not implicate Wesley directly in any of the three possibilities, Wesley's own engagement of the Enlightenment seemed to fit best with the

(New Birth) as evidenced through a life of piety. Pietists were given to a more or less literal interpretation of Scripture, guided by common sense, as well as a deep sense of Christian fellowship which minimized confessional, national and ethnic boundaries. As a result they were prone to hold conventicles, members of which were addressed as 'brother' or 'sister,' irrespective of social class or church affiliation. . . . On the whole Pietism is a broader movement than evangelicalism—Pietism being inward-directed and not necessarily expansionistic as is evangelicalism." F.E. Stoeffler, "Pietism," in *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, Coordinating Editor, Daniel G. Reid, Consulting Editors, Robert D. Linder, Bruce L. Shelley, and Harry S. Stout (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 902-904.

¹²⁹ W. R. Ward, "The Relations of Enlightenment and Religious Revival in Central Europe and in the English-speaking World," *Studies in Church History, Subsidia*, vol. 2 (Jan., 1979), 281-305.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 282.

third type of relationship. In 1981, Ward further clarified in his article, *Orthodoxy, Enlightenment and Religious Revival*, why Wesley favored the Enlightenment. According to Ward, political and religious “circumstances [in England and America] would not let Wesley evolve into a neo-protestant shellback; the empiricism required to create and sustain a religious community kept him within reach of enlightenment.”¹³¹ In addition to the exigencies of Methodism, Wesley had affinities with the Enlightenment.

Therefore, Ward highlighted the affinities that existed not only between Methodist societies and pietism as well as Methodist field preaching and religious revival, but also Wesley and the Enlightenment, particularly, the Enlightenment’s challenge to confessional orthodoxies. Thus, in an effort to identify a common denominator for his three comparisons, Ward suggested that “Pietism, religious revival and enlightenment are perhaps best discussed in terms of the practical problems they were designed to solve; many of these were connected with confessional absolutism which was . . . surrendered as a practical aspiration in England by the Toleration Act (1689).”¹³² However, the kinship these three movements ultimately shared was in opposition to

¹³¹ W. R. Ward, “Orthodoxy, Enlightenment and Religious Revival,” *Studies in Church History*, vol. 17 (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 296, 275-296. *Religion and humanism: papers read at the eighteenth and nineteenth meetings of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 275-296.

¹³² Ward, “Relations of Enlightenment and Religious Revival,” 283. For Ward, the difference between pietism and religious revival was easier to feel than to describe. *Ibid.*, 285. However, Ward did clarify that “The urgency of the situation was what distinguished revivalism [Methodist field preaching] from pietism [Methodist societies], and the setting in which revival had to be achieved left a permanent mark upon it, a propensity to offer not so much an alternative church, as an alternative to the church.” *Ibid.*, 286. The Toleration Act (1689) was an attempt to unite the Protestant subjects of their Majesties, William and Mary. According to historian Linda Colley, the act “permitted dissenters [from the Church of England] who accepted the doctrine of the Holy Trinity the right to worship freely. They could vote providing they met the relevant property qualifications, they could build their own churches, they could set up their own academies to educate their children, and they could carry arms. By law they still had to conform at least occasionally to Anglican worship in order to be eligible for state or local

confessional orthodoxies.¹³³ According to Ward, “Wesley has never qualified for a place in the enlightenment gallery of honor, but his movement gave the *coup de grâce* to the old orthodoxies as effectually as any, he was himself welcomed in Irish Presbyterian congregations which in the next generation became non-subscribing, Methodism had done the work of enlightenment as much as resisted it.”¹³⁴ Although Ward could not imagine Wesley being honored as an Enlightenment figure in 1979, another historian gave Wesley a more honored place in his narrative a decade later, because he also believed Pietism served as a link between Wesley and the Enlightenment.

In 1989, historian Albert C. Outler, in his chapter, “Pietism and Enlightenment: Alternatives to Tradition,” identified Wesley at the intersection of Pietism and Enlightenment as the embodiment of “enlightened pietism.”¹³⁵ According to Outler, Wesley “saw no incoherence in his loyalties to both orthodox Christianity and pietism and enlightenment. He lived in the Anglican Church with no great attachment to its ‘establishment;’ he maintained a lively interest in the excitements of the Enlightenment on into his old age—always rejecting its secularized

office.” Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging The Nation 1707-1837*, rev. ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2012), 19.

¹³³ Ward, “Relations of Enlightenment and Religious Revival,” 285.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 299-300. Ward went on to claim that “the evangelical experience itself was prized by many of the [Methodist] flock (in Scholder’s formula for the German enlightenment) ‘as the means and way to a better life.’” *Ibid.*, 300. According to Ward, ecclesiastical historian Klaus Scholder believed “the idea of ‘religion as the means and way to a better life’ was the core of the German enlightenment.” *Ibid.*, 288.

¹³⁵ Albert Cook Outler, “Pietism and Enlightenment: Alternatives to Tradition” in *Christian Spirituality III: Post Reformation and Modern*, Louis Dupré and Don Saliers, eds. (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1989), 240-256. Outler evidently borrowed the description, “enlightened pietism,” from Ward, who used it in his article, “Orthodoxy, Enlightenment and Religious Revival” (1981). Ward, however, did not apply the description to Wesley as Outler does here. Ward, “Orthodoxy, Enlightenment and Religious Revival,” 296.

reductions.”¹³⁶ First, Outler emphasized that Wesley was a pietist beyond question. He also highlighted the fact that Wesley published extracts he selected from the works of no less than twelve pietists in his *Christian Library*. In addition, Outler insisted that Wesley “freely imitated Spener’s ‘program’ of Christian renewal and Francke’s patterns of Christian philanthropy. But if separatism is a characterizing tendency of pietism, Wesley sought to avoid that and nearly succeeded as long as he lived.”¹³⁷ Second, Outler argued that Wesley attempted to integrate many of the dissonant perspectives of the Enlightenment with his pietism. According to Outler, Wesley’s “stress on *free* grace was a sort of orthodox prototype of many of the Enlightenment notions of liberty.”¹³⁸ Still, Wesley carefully filtered out the autonomous emphases of many Enlightenment perspectives he found fascinating because he believed the spiritual growth of Wesleyan Methodists took place most effectively in the community of Methodist societies. Finally, Outler claimed that “Pietism, with its stress on personal participation in God’s encompassing grace, and the Enlightenment, with its stress on human liberation from ignominies of all sorts, had actually a common core and need not have come to stand in such stark opposition as actually they did.”¹³⁹ In the end, Wesley’s enlightened pietism was the proof.

In 1999, historian Frederick A. Dreyer, in *The Genesis of Methodism* offered his own portrayal of how Wesley integrated pietism and the Enlightenment in Methodism. Like Ward,

¹³⁶ Outler, “Pietism and Enlightenment,” 252.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 253.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 253. Wesley, in his polemical sermon, “Free Grace” (1739), confronted Calvinistic Methodists, such as George Whitefield, and their doctrine of election with the message: “The grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is free in all, and free for all.” Sermon 110, “Free Grace,” §2, *Works*, 3:544.

¹³⁹ Outler, “Pietism and Enlightenment,” 255.

Dreyer located the origins of Wesley's Methodism in Pietism. Similar to Outler's common core, Dreyer also argued that the content of two events, Revival and Enlightenment, overlapped in the eighteenth century in two specific ways, the rejection of metaphysical rationalism (empiricism) and the embrace of natural jurisprudence (ecclesiology).¹⁴⁰ After acknowledging that Ward was an erudite in the German literature of the Moravians, Dreyer stated that "Ward place[d] the origins of Methodism in the context of a general evangelical revival starting in Germany in the eighteenth century and spreading to England and North America."¹⁴¹ After affirming Ward's conclusion, Dreyer moved beyond the scope of Ward's study to consider the influence of Pietism and the Moravians on Wesley's thought. In part, he found that Wesley in England and Zinzendorf in Saxony shared not only a similar aversion to speculative theology, but also and more importantly a common ecclesiology based on consent that reflected the ideology of the Enlightenment in both locations.¹⁴²

Strikingly, Wesley as an Anglican priest was not committed to the ecclesiology of the Church of England but to the ecclesiology of Pietism, which he learned from Zinzendorf and the Moravians.¹⁴³ According to Dreyer, "Wesley and Zinzendorf both supposed that associations derived their authority from consent. In their ecclesiology, both were contractualists."¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁰ Frederick Dreyer, *The Genesis of Methodism* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 1999), 78, 79, 93.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 81, 84. See also Ward's argument for Zinzendorf's relationship to the German enlightenment as well as German Pietism's influence on Wesley. Ward, "The Relations of Enlightenment and Religious Revival," 289-292.

¹⁴³ Dreyer, *Genesis of Methodism*, 77.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

Therefore, those who attended either Zinzendorf's Moravian societies or Wesley's Methodist societies were considered to have the natural right to association not because they agreed in doctrine, but because they voluntarily consented to uphold the religious purpose of the society. In this way Moravian and Methodist societies practiced a form of social contract in the first half of the eighteenth century that anticipated the political philosophy Enlightenment figures introduced in the second half of the century, including Rousseau's *Social Contract* (1762) and Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1791-1792).¹⁴⁵ In the end, Dreyer claimed that "Methodists and Moravians both appeal[ed] to the authority of contract in justifying their collective existence."¹⁴⁶ Thus, Wesley's ecclesiology held much in common with the jurisprudence of the Enlightenment.

By aligning Wesley with both Pietism and the Enlightenment, Dreyer challenged the arguments of Methodist historian Frank Baker and British historian Jonathan Clark. In *John Wesley and the Church of England* (1970), Baker gave his full attention to portraying Wesley as an Anglican who lived and died cloistered in his Mother Church. As a result, Baker made no effort to place Wesley in the context of the Enlightenment.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, in *English Society 1688-1832: Ideology, Social Structure, and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime* (1985), Clark stressed Wesley's undying commitment as an Anglican priest to England's Church. However, unlike Baker or any other historian, he unprecedentedly argued that Wesley was also consistently committed to upholding England's status as a confessional state in the eighteenth century because England did not experience the Enlightenment until early in the nineteenth

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 94.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 104-105.

¹⁴⁷ Frank Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England* (London, UK: Epworth Press, 1970), 1-6. Dreyer pointed out that not only Frank Baker, but also Bernard Semmel and John Walsh disputed Wesley's debt to pietism. Frederick Dreyer, "John Wesley: Ein Englisher Pietist," *Methodist History*, vol. 40, no. 2 (Jan., 2002): 74, 71-84.

century. Because religion and politics were enmeshed in Eighteenth Century England, Wesley was obligated as an Anglican priest to defend and serve both the English church and state.¹⁴⁸ Thus, in their respective books, Baker excluded any discussion of the Enlightenment and Clark made no mention of Pietism.

By contrast, Dreyer argued that “John Wesley was a man of the eighteenth century, and the movement he led and defined reflects the influence of his age.”¹⁴⁹ According to Dreyer, he wrote his book, *The Genesis of Methodism*, as “a reply to Baker, arguing for the importance of Methodism’s eighteenth-century background, particularly its background in the Enlightenment.”¹⁵⁰ Wesley’s Methodism, like the Enlightenment, was more innovative than tradition required.¹⁵¹ Unlike Baker and Clark, Dreyer did not believe that Wesley, despite being an Anglican priest, was confined to upholding the ecclesiology of England’s Church. Therefore, Dreyer claimed that Wesley, “Whether he acted as an Anglican or as a Methodist, he acted on the same basis of association, that is, consent. Both as an Anglican and as a Methodist he thought of the church as a voluntary association that derived all the legitimacy it possessed from the agreement of its members. As conceptions of ecclesiastical authority neither the church nor

¹⁴⁸ J. C. D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology and Politics during the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 9-10, 20, 23, 26, 28, 31, 34. Clark changed the title of this book when he published the second edition. Originally, the title was *English Society 1688-1832: Ideology, Social Structure, and Political Practice during the Ancien Regime* (1985).

¹⁴⁹ Frederick Dreyer, “A ‘Religious Society under Heaven’: John Wesley and the Identity of Methodism,” *The Journal of British Studies*, vol. 25, no. 1 (Jan., 1986): 79.

¹⁵⁰ Dreyer, “John Wesley,” in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, 252.

¹⁵¹ Dreyer, *The Genesis of Methodism*, 113.

the sect played any part in Wesley's thought."¹⁵² Therefore, in ecclesiology Dreyer believed that Wesley was not only a Pietist, but also a man of the Enlightenment.¹⁵³ Together, Ward, Outler and Dreyer demonstrated not only that Pietism provided a plausible link between Wesley and the Enlightenment, but also that Pietism had plausible affinities with the Enlightenment.

The Reconciliation of Enlightenment and Enthusiasm

In 1984, historian David Hempton, in *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850*, identified a new link between Wesley and the Enlightenment, which he described as the reconciliation of enlightenment and enthusiasm. "Whereas historians in the 1960s and 1970s," Hempton argued, "still seemed dazzled by Halévy's thesis and Thompson's polemical brilliance, the focus has now shifted [in the 1980s] from Methodism and revolution to Methodism and the Enlightenment."¹⁵⁴ Based on this observation and others, Hempton concluded that "Methodism, as the major religious catalyst of eighteenth-century England is now at the centre of ingenious attempts to reconcile enthusiasm and enlightenment."¹⁵⁵ In response, Hempton voiced concern not only about using the slippery term of enlightenment for more than ideology, but also extending the concept of enlightenment from a coterie of intellectual elites to a mass movement of religious populists like Methodism.¹⁵⁶ Still, Hempton acknowledged that "the writings of

¹⁵² Dreyer, "Religious Society under Heaven," 79.

¹⁵³ Dreyer, *The Genesis of Methodism*, 77, 93, 109. Dreyer, "John Wesley," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, 252.

¹⁵⁴ David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984), 21.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 23, 30.

Semmel and Ward have been the most stimulating attempts to enlighten eighteenth-century enthusiasm.”¹⁵⁷ Although Hempton’s opinion reflected the reaction of some Enlightenment historians in the 1980s who believed that the intellectual history and philosophical definition of the Enlightenment needed to be preserved in order to prevent further fracturing of a single comprehensive Enlightenment into the ambiguity of countless enlightenments, the link he identified served as the framework for each of the works that will be analyzed in the remainder of this section. Over the next thirty years, those historians argued that Wesley’s complex relationship to the Enlightenment was best understood as: a paradox (1989), a creative tension (2005) or a merger with varying degrees of emphasis that was slightly either left or right of center on a spectrum between the extreme forms of two polar opposites, enlightenment and enthusiasm (2006, 2009, 2013).

In 1989, Henry D. Rack wrote what most historians still consider to be the best biography of Wesley, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism*. In the introduction to his third edition, Rack reiterated in 2001 that he still stood by his characterization of Wesley “as a ‘reasonable enthusiast,’ an untypical evangelical still partly conditioned by the more ‘Catholic’ side of his inheritance, who clothed his faith in some of the values of what some of us still dare to call the ‘English Enlightenment.’”¹⁵⁸ Therefore, as implied by his title, Rack

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 24. In this instance, Hempton was referring to Semmel’s book, *Methodist Revolution*, and Ward’s works on Continental Protestantism, which he cited as including two articles, W. R. Ward, “The relations of enlightenment and religious revival in central Europe and in the English-speaking world,” *Studies in Church History*, Subsidia, vol. 2 (1979): 281-305 and W. R. Ward, “Power and Piety: the origins of religious revival in the early eighteenth century,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, vol. 63, no. 1 (1980): 231-252. Hempton, *Methodism and Politics*, 50n11.

¹⁵⁸ Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, xvi-xvii.

portrayed the enigmatic personality of Wesley as a paradox, a complex character who did not fit into the simple dichotomy of a man of reason or a man of enthusiasm.¹⁵⁹

Using an evenhanded approach in his biography, Rack presented both the anti-Enlightenment features of Wesley's Methodism as well as Wesley's personal affinities with the Enlightenment. On the one hand, Rack argued that the anti-Enlightenment aspects of the English Evangelical Revival Wesley helped to lead were clear: "Scripture against mere reason; grace against 'works'; original sin against benevolent views of the nature of man; and at the popular level supernatural against naturalistic interpretations of the world."¹⁶⁰ However, Wesley, like some of the other evangelical leaders, was not anti-intellectual or anti-rational in his response to the Revival. Instead, Rack claimed that Wesley was able to share the outlook of many who experienced the Revival without abandoning the rationality of his education.¹⁶¹

On the other hand, what Wesley shared in general with the Enlightenment was the language of reason, the simplification of doctrine, the belief in a benevolent God that appealed to enlightened thinking and the optimism of the age.¹⁶² In addition, Rack pointed out that Wesley "was genuinely and passionately opposed to physical persecution. This he owed more than he realized to the benevolent spirit of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment."¹⁶³ Still, more specifically, Rack believed that if Dreyer's philosophical appraisal of Wesley's empiricism and

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., iv.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 383.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 167.

¹⁶² Ibid., 383-384, 401.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 313.

epistemology was true it provided useful insight into Wesley's intellectual outlook.¹⁶⁴

Responding to Dreyer's arguments (discussed earlier in this chapter), Rack insisted that Wesley was "rational in form but enthusiast in substance. He supported supernaturalist beliefs with empiricist arguments well beyond what Locke would have allowed in his more limited form of 'rational supernaturalism,' which avoided Deism by allowing for truths 'beyond' but not 'contrary' to reason: such as a biblical revelation supported by miracles and prophecy, safely confined to the past."¹⁶⁵ In less than a decade, however, Rack would contribute more than just his commentary to the developing consideration among historians about Wesley's relationship to the Enlightenment (which will be discussed later in this section).

In 2005, Hempton, in his book, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit*, provided his own nuanced interpretation or reconciliation of the apparent antithesis between the Enlightenment and enthusiasm by arguing that Wesley brought these two extremes into a creative or dialectical tension in Methodism.¹⁶⁶ In his research, Hempton found that "The contents of Methodist archives throughout the world display the trace elements of Methodism's origins in enthusiasm and enlightenment as children carry the genetic codes of their parents."¹⁶⁷ He argued that Wesley's reasonableness acted as a bulwark against the irrational enthusiasm that surfaced on occasion in Wesley's Methodism, but failed to persist. Thus, Hempton claimed that Methodism under Wesley's leadership "thrived on the raw edge of religious excitement without, in the main,

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 384.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 388.

¹⁶⁶ David Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 7, 43, 49, 52.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 7.

capitulating to some of the more extreme manifestations of popular religion.”¹⁶⁸ However, Hempton acknowledged that recent studies such as those by Dreyer, Brantley and Semmel (discussed earlier in this chapter) have now made it possible to consider Wesley as a complex product of the Enlightenment, instead of a simple reaction against it.¹⁶⁹ From this vantage point, Hempton emphasized that “Wesley was deeply influenced by the structure of eighteenth-century thought, which he consumed voraciously in his horseback reading and edited remorselessly for popular consumption.”¹⁷⁰ In addition, Wesley was a well-read classicist who encouraged learning and engaged the thought of his age.

Predictably, Wesley, in his enthusiasm, disliked the religious skepticism of Scottish and French Enlightenment figures as well as the religious heterodoxy of English Deists.¹⁷¹ Unexpectedly, however, Wesley, in his comments about his dislike for Calvinism, was “in a profound sense,” according to Hempton, “a product of the impact of enlightenment thought on his theological and moral sensibilities. The idea that an angry God could condemn vast numbers of human beings to eternal punishment without so much as an offer of salvation was as morally

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 41.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, deism was “a system of natural religion which was developed in England in the late 17th and 18th centuries. At first there were various classes of Deists, from those who held that God was the Creator, with no further interest in the world, to those who accepted all the truths of natural religion, including belief in a world to come, but rejected revelation. Gradually all belief in Divine Providence and in rewards and punishments was abandoned, and the chief mark of later Deism was belief in a Creator God whose further intervention in His creation was rejected as derogatory to His omnipotence and unchangeableness. Never widely accepted in England, Deism exercised great influence in France and Germany.” E. A. Livingstone, ed., *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013), 158.

offensive to Wesley as it was to the most advanced of the philosophes.”¹⁷² Yet, in the end, Hempton believed not only that Wesley was undoubtedly an enthusiast, but also that Wesley’s Methodism “was a movement of religious enthusiasts coming of age in the era of the Enlightenment.”¹⁷³

In 2009, Rack introduced an intellectual spectrum for assessing where historians stood in their ongoing efforts to understand Wesley through a reconciliation of enlightenment and enthusiasm. In his article, “A Man of Reason and Religion? John Wesley and the Enlightenment,” Rack not only directly provided what was in essence an annotated bibliography for further research on how Wesley responded positively to ‘The Enlightenment,’ but also indirectly gave some specificity to the English Enlightenment he had dared to believe in 2001.¹⁷⁴ According to Rack, “The relationship between ‘enlightenment’ and religion and the churches involved compromise and collaboration as well as confrontation. This was especially true of England. There were, indeed, minorities of outright sceptics and deists at one end of the intellectual spectrum, and anti-intellectual ‘enthusiasts’ at the other.”¹⁷⁵ However, Rack, like other Wesley scholars, was content to only hint at an English Enlightenment, not explain it.

In addition, Rack echoed Hempton’s sentiments about Wesley’s relationship to the Enlightenment. Therefore, Rack concurred that “On Wesley himself Hempton concludes . . .

¹⁷² Ibid., 42. Hempton was referencing, “Wesley’s famous, but scarcely original, summary of Calvinism . . . , ‘One in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will: The reprobate shall be damned, do what they can.’” Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 54.

¹⁷⁴ Henry D. Rack, “A Man of Reason and Religion: John Wesley and the Enlightenment,” *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, vol. 1 (2009): 6, 2-17.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 4.

that Wesley was, ‘in a particular sense, a reasonable enthusiast, but an enthusiast for all that.’ That is one way of evaluating the complicated balance between rationality and credulity in Wesley’s mind, and I am inclined to agree.”¹⁷⁶ However, at the end of his article, Rack seemed more concerned about leaving the reader with his spectrum than his view. Thus, Rack asked and answered: “Did he [Wesley] really conceal enthusiasm in garments of reasonableness? Others, while recognizing his enthusiasm, will prefer to stress his reasonableness.”¹⁷⁷ Although Rack argued that Wesley should be placed on the enthusiast side of center on the spectrum between the two polar extremes of reason (enlightenment) and enthusiasm, he also acknowledged two authors, historian Jane Shaw and historical theologian Robert Webster who located Wesley on the other side of middle on the spectrum, the reasonable or Enlightenment side.

In *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (2006), Shaw claimed that religious belief and practice were constantly made anew in the early stages of the English Enlightenment (1650 to 1750).¹⁷⁸ Therefore, in her effort to reconcile enthusiasm and enlightenment, Shaw argued that Wesley exemplified one of the three ways Protestants responded to questions about miracles as well as religious experience, reason and the nature of God in Eighteenth Century England. According to Shaw, Wesley not only believed in miracles, but also attempted “to negotiate a middle way between an excessive rationalism or a too-ready ‘enthusiasm,’ by using the experimental method to investigate the evidence for contemporary miracle claims, and appealing

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 17.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 16-20.

to probability rather than certainty.”¹⁷⁹ Although Shaw set the stage for how the lived religion of ordinary people such as Baptists and Quakers in England in the seventeenth century prompted the investigation and set the terms for philosophical debates in the eighteenth century because they claimed to have either experienced or worked miracles, Webster, her student, was left to demonstrate the ongoing contribution of early Methodism to Shaw’s narrative.¹⁸⁰

Webster began his book, *Methodism and the Miraculous* (2013), by offering his own reconciliation of the enthusiasm of Wesley’s Methodism and the Enlightenment. First, Webster claimed that his book posed “an objection to the proposition that John Wesley and his Methodist followers were out of step with the intellectual climate of their day.”¹⁸¹ Second, Webster argued that “Wesley was familiar with various wide-ranging debates about miracles, . . . which were occurring in the period and became a contributor in ways that not only asserted a fundamental belief in miraculous and supernatural occurrences but crafted his ideas in a manner that both promoted and inculcated a self-identity for Methodists.”¹⁸² In the end, the enthusiasm and religious practice of ordinary people, such as Wesley’s Methodists, played a crucial role in the development of Wesley’s Enlightenment thought.¹⁸³

Although Rack offered a new way to compare what historians had emphasized in their interpretations of Wesley’s relation to the Enlightenment, his spectrum, like his earlier paradox

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 178-179.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 33-64.

¹⁸¹ Robert Webster, *Methodism and the Miraculous: John Wesley’s Idea of the Supernatural and the Identification of Methodists in the Eighteenth Century* (Lexington, KY: Emeth Press, 2013), ix, 10-11, 133-135.

¹⁸² Ibid., ix.

¹⁸³ Shaw, 1-2, 9-11.

and Hempton's creative tension, offered little insight into the nature of Wesley's relationship because their use always presupposed a dichotomy. In other words, despite the fact that Rack decided Wesley was a reasonable enthusiast and not an enthusiastic man of reason, the limitations of Rack's approach had already determined for him that Wesley was ultimately either a man of the Enlightenment or enthusiasm, not both. Although the spectrum was necessary for comparison, the historiography of Wesley studies still lacked the specificity needed to understand in a more nuanced way the complexity of Wesley's relationship to the Enlightenment.

The Amalgamation of Reason and Religion

In 1986, historical theologian Rex Matthews composed the dissertation that most closely reflects the focus of this study, which he entitled "'Religion and Reason Joined': A Study in the Theology of John Wesley."¹⁸⁴ Based on his analysis of Wesley's theology and its relationship to the religious thought of the Enlightenment, Matthews argued that "the point of connection between Wesley and his fellow-citizens of the eighteenth century commonwealth of ideas appears in his deep commitment to the role of reason in the religious life, combined with his

¹⁸⁴ Rex Dale Matthews, "'Religion and Reason Joined': A Study in the Theology of John Wesley" (ThD diss., Harvard University, 1986). Matthews' intuition, motivation and encounter of the historiographical challenges involved in writing his dissertation thirty years ago mirrors in many ways my own experience. In 1986, Matthews testified that "Several years ago as a student at Harvard Divinity School, I was stricken with the conviction that John Wesley shared rather more than the air and soil of Britain with such predecessors and contemporaries as John Locke, Joseph Butler, and even David Hume. This study is in no small measure the result of my attempts over the last decade to test out that conviction, and to determine the nature and extent of Wesley's connection with some of the major intellectual currents of the 18th century. It eventually proved to be the case that there are two enormous bodies of literature involved which have had relatively little to do with each other; one is devoted to the analysis and exposition of early Enlightenment thought in England, the other to a discussion of the life and work of John Wesley and the history of the Methodist movement." *Ibid.*, x.

careful assessment of the nature, powers, functions, and limits of reason."¹⁸⁵ In addition to determining Wesley's connection to the intellectual currents of his day, Matthews highlighted Wesley's contribution to the great debate in Eighteenth Century England over the proper relationship between reason and religion (or faith).

Although some of the secondary sources Matthews relied upon for his dissertation have become dated, the evidence he provided from primary sources demonstrated convincingly Wesley's consistent amalgamation of reason and religion from the 1740s through the 1780s. In the 1740s, Matthews highlighted how Wesley responded publicly to charges of enthusiasm against early Methodism, primarily, in two published controversial treatises, "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion" (1743) and "A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion" (1745).¹⁸⁶ In the 1760s, Wesley reacted not only privately in his correspondence to the reality that one of his lay preachers exuded the tendencies of an "enthusiast" in his ministry to Wesley's societies, but also publicly to the charge that the students of his Kingswood School were required to "renounce their reason" in order to attend. Concerning the former, Wesley wrote an unsuccessful letter on 2 November 1762 in order to constrain the detrimental behavior of his lay preacher, Thomas Maxfield, stating firmly, "I dislike something that has the appearance of enthusiasm: overvaluing feelings and inward impressions; mistaking the mere work of imagination for the voice of the Spirit; expecting the end without the means, and underrating

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Cragg, *The Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion*, 43-94 ("An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion") and 103-325 ("A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion").

reason, knowledge, and wisdom in general.”¹⁸⁷ Concerning the latter, Wesley responded sharply in a private letter on 28 March 1768 to Thomas Rutherforth, the former Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge: “Sir, are you awake? Unless you are talking in your sleep, how can you utter so gross an untruth? It is a fundamental principle with us that to renounce reason is to renounce religion, that religion and reason go hand in hand, and that all irrational religion is false religion.”¹⁸⁸

However, Wesley was not only intent on preventing the threat of enthusiasm in Methodism and the perception of Methodists as being enthusiasts, but he was also committed to counteracting the misuse of reason in his eighteenth-century world. To this end, Matthews illustrated how Wesley pursued this latter course most intensely in the last two decades of his life. First, Wesley indirectly tutored his audience as an editor to be more reasonable through his periodical, the *Arminian Magazine*, which he edited from 1778 until his death in 1791. For example, he published extracts from Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1782-1784) along with some of his own editorial remarks to illustrate how Locke reconciled faith and reason. Second, Wesley directly advised his Methodists as a pastor or spiritual director through his correspondence. In a letter to Joseph Benson on 5 October 1770, Wesley stated that “Passion and prejudice govern the world, only under the name of reason. It is our part [as Wesleyan Methodists], by religion and reason joined, to counteract them all we can.”¹⁸⁹ Based on his

¹⁸⁷ John Wesley’s letter to Thomas Maxfield (November 2, 1762), *Letters* (Telford), 4:193. Ted A. Campbell, *The Works of John Wesley: Letters III* (1756-1765), Bicentennial ed., vol. 27 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015), 306-309.

¹⁸⁸ John Wesley’s letter to Thomas Rutherforth (March 28, 1768), *Letters* (Telford), 5:364.

¹⁸⁹ John Wesley’s letter to Joseph Benson (October 5, 1770), *Letters* (Telford), 5:203. An early indication of what Samuel Wesley, John Wesley’s father, perceived about his son’s

analysis of these examples, Matthews presented Wesley as consistently committed in his practical theology to wedding reason and religion properly from the rise of early Methodism to the end of his life.

In addition, Matthews emphasized that Wesley, before Methodism, was groomed from the beginning of his life to be predisposed to reason. For example, Matthews emphasized that "As the offspring of an Oxford-educated father and an extraordinarily intelligent and theologically acute mother, the product of Christ Church and Lincoln Colleges, Fellow of Lincoln and Lecturer there in Greek and Logic, voracious reader and, when necessary tenacious controversialist, John Wesley was very much a child of the 'Age of Reason.'"¹⁹⁰ However, Wesley was not like the seventeenth-century thinkers he read, such as Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, Leibniz, Cambridge Platonists and Oxford Platonist, John Norris, who viewed reason from the vantage point of metaphysical systems, because Wesley did not locate reason in the realm of eternal truths that were shared by both the human and the divine mind. Instead, Wesley was like the eighteenth-century thinkers, beginning with Locke, who considered reason to be an intellectual activity. As a result, Matthews determined that "Wesley [was], at least in this regard, distinctly a man of the 18th century, and a thorough-going empiricist."¹⁹¹

disposition to disputation was evident earlier in the same letter when John recalled the wisdom of his father: "'Child,' said my father to me when I was young, 'you think to carry everything by dint of argument. But you will find by-and-by how very little is ever done in the world by clear reason.' Very little indeed! It is true of almost all men, except so far as we are taught of God, -- Against experience we believe, We argue against demonstration; Pleased while our reason we deceive, And set our judgement by our passion." Wesley goes on to prescribe what Benson should do later in the same letter: "It is yours in particular to do all that in you lies to soften the prejudices of those that are round about you and to calm the passions from which they spring. Blessed are the peace-makers!" Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 5.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 303.

Building on Matthews' work, historical theologian Rebekah L. Miles, in her chapter, "The Instrumental Role of Reason," argued that Wesley's commitment to reason was not only evident in his responses to charges of enthusiasm, but also in the way he lived his life.¹⁹² Thus, like Matthews, Miles included the development of Wesley's reason in his upbringing and formal education in her argument. First, she highlighted how Wesley's parents recognized and nurtured Wesley's trait of reason in his upbringing. Next, she pointed out that Wesley's formal training in logic and rhetoric was evident throughout his writings. Finally, Miles concluded that "Reason played a crucial role not only in Wesley's theology, but also in his style, his character, and his education. John Wesley not only lived in the age of reason and valued reason, he was himself a man of reason."¹⁹³ For Miles, Wesley was a man of his age because the reason of his age permeated the way Wesley lived.

However, Wesley more than reflected the reason of his age, he used reason as a tool in the Enlightenment not only to defend Methodism, but also to improve the effectiveness of Methodism. Thus, Miles emphasized that "Wesley's rational, logical structure fit right into the Enlightenment era. . . . But there is another crucial piece to this puzzle. Wesley argued not only with 'undervaluers' of reason, but also with its 'overvaluers.'" Though Wesley went part of the way with the Enlightenment's confidence in reason, he could never go all the way. Reason's extreme admirers carried their praise of reason further than Wesley could bear."¹⁹⁴ As a

¹⁹² Rebekah L. Miles, "The Instrumental Role of Reason," in *Wesley and the Quadrilateral: Renewing the Conversation*, W. Stephen Gunter, et al. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1997), 83, 77-106. According to Miles, "The best full-length study of Wesley's understanding and use of reason is Rex D. Matthews, "'Religion and Reason Joined': A Study in the Theology of John Wesley." *Ibid.*, 154n1.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 81-82.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 83.

solution, Miles claimed that Wesley attempted to find a “happy medium” between the two extremes by defining reason and determining the extent and limits of the use of reason for Methodism.¹⁹⁵ Although Miles’ further discussion of Wesley’s definitions and instrumental role for reason go beyond the limitations of this point and the scope of this study, Wesley’s use of reason as a tool linked him to the Enlightenment because the practical theology Wesley developed to prevent the overvalue and undervalue of reason in Methodism was ultimately shaped by the context of the Enlightenment that Wesley engaged.¹⁹⁶

Thought Forms of the Enlightenment

In 1989, nineteenth-century British historian David W. Bebbington argued that enlightenment thought forms or processes of the eighteenth century linked Wesley to the Enlightenment.¹⁹⁷ Moreover, in his classic work, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*, Bebbington claimed not only that Wesley as a thinker was aligned with the Enlightenment, but also that Evangelicalism as both an adaptation of the Protestant tradition and a new phenomenon of the eighteenth century was allied with the Enlightenment.¹⁹⁸ Because he believed Locke’s philosophy and epistemology, in large part, created a new idiom as

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 83-84.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 100, 84-106.

¹⁹⁷ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, UK: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 50.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 1, 19, 50, 53. Bebbington defined Evangelicalism by identifying its main characteristics. According to Bebbington, there are “four qualities that have been the special marks of Evangelical religion: *conversionism*, the belief that lives need to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Together they form a quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis of Evangelicalism.” Ibid., 3.

well as a new atmosphere in the intellectual world of the eighteenth century, Bebbington insisted “It is hardly surprising that men immersed in the learning of the age such as [Jonathan] Edwards and Wesley should recast Protestant thought in the new style and set about persuading others to do the same. The timing of their remoulding of the doctrine of assurance according to empiricist canons has to be understood as a result of the spread of a new cultural mood.”¹⁹⁹ For Bebbington, the reason why Wesley’s message that a person could experience the certainty of having their sins forgiven in this life at any moment was such a novelty in eighteenth-century Britain was simple, maybe too simple: “The Methodist teaching about assurance was new because it was part and parcel of the rising Enlightenment. It was a consequence of Wesley’s application of an empiricist philosophy to religious experience.”²⁰⁰ Because Bebbington’s narrative emphasized how the Enlightenment influenced the early development of Evangelicalism, he found Wesley’s alignment with the Enlightenment to be a useful example among others to illustrate his argument.

Therefore, based on his analysis of early Evangelicalism, Bebbington concluded that Wesley was an Enlightenment thinker.²⁰¹ More specifically, he believed that Wesley’s thought reflected at least four Enlightenment thought forms or processes in the eighteenth century: empiricism, optimism, pragmatism and activism. First, Wesley, like other Evangelical leaders,

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 54. According to Bebbington, “Because philosophical discourse in his day was shaped so largely by Locke, Edwards inevitably speaks as his disciple. . . . Edwards derived his confidence about salvation from the atmosphere of the English Enlightenment. The case of Wesley is similar.” Ibid., 48.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 50.

²⁰¹ In 1989, Bebbington claimed that “increasingly, Wesley is being recognized as an Enlightenment thinker in his own right.” Ibid., 52. Bebbington cited two individuals as examples, Dreyer and Brantley (who were discussed earlier in this chapter). Ibid., 293n283.

was in harmony with the spirit of the age because he implemented the empiricism that the eighteenth century had learned from Locke and incorporated the experimental method in his practical divinity.²⁰² Second, Wesley exemplified the optimistic temper of the Enlightenment by insisting on the perfectibility of the regenerate man.²⁰³ Third, Wesley demonstrated the pragmatism of the Enlightenment by engaging in field preaching, flouting parish boundaries, recruiting lay preachers, justifying women preaching and even ordaining presbyters in 1784 to assist Methodism in America.²⁰⁴ Finally, Wesley participated in the activism of the Enlightenment by promoting reading and education for all, encouraging the visitation of the sick, practicing benevolent philanthropy, opposing slavery and bigotry, championing liberty of conscience and favoring religious tolerance for all English Protestants.²⁰⁵ As a result, Wesley played a cooperative role in the Evangelical version of eighteenth-century Protestantism that Bebbington claimed was created by the Enlightenment.²⁰⁶

Like Bebbington who asserted that Wesley recast Protestant thought in the style of the Enlightenment, European historian Jeremy Black argued that Wesley adapted his theology and combined his practice with the thought forms of the Enlightenment to accomplish his mission, the saving of souls. According to Black, in his 2001 survey entitled *Eighteenth-Century Britain 1688-1783*, Wesley “offered an eclectic theology that was adapted to a powerful mission addressing itself to popular anxieties. Wesley combined traditional religion with Enlightenment

²⁰² Ibid., 57-58, 66.

²⁰³ Ibid., 60.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 65-66.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 67-74.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 74.

thought processes.”²⁰⁷ Although Black acknowledged that the quality of religious experience was difficult to determine, he was able to offer insight into the extensive range of religious practice in eighteenth-century Britain. For example, Black insisted that “There were very few professed atheists, and . . . there was no necessary dichotomy of enlightenment and faith, the secular and the religious, scientific and mystical.”²⁰⁸ In addition, Black pointed out that many historians had failed to recognize an English Enlightenment. As a result, their understanding of the Enlightenment has been undermined because they have not taken into account the view of Continental intellectuals who considered not only Locke and Newton to have been heroes, but also England or more specifically London to have been a cradle of enlightenment.²⁰⁹ As a corrective for the omission, Black clarified that the Enlightenment in general “could better be described as a tendency towards critical enquiry and the application of reason in which British intellectuals played a major role.”²¹⁰ In addition, Black believed that “Reason was a goal as well as a method of Enlightenment thinkers. They believed it necessary to use reason in order to . . . improve human circumstances, an objective in which utilitarianism, religious faith, and the search for human happiness could combine.”²¹¹ In the end, Black’s argument for a better understanding of the Enlightenment that incorporated the English Enlightenment strengthened

²⁰⁷ Jeremy Black, *Eighteenth-Century Britain 1688-1783* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2001), 136-137.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 125, 132-133.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 145.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

his earlier claim that enlightenment thought forms provided a link between Wesley and the Enlightenment.

In 2003, one of the most important historians of Christianity, Mark Noll, argued that John Wesley and other evangelicals, such as Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield and Charles Wesley, exploited some of the thought forms of the Enlightenment in order to promote and maintain evangelicalism in England and America.²¹² In his book, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys*, Noll set the stage for his argument by pointing out that evangelical Christianity as a movement coexisted with the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century.²¹³ Moreover, by drawing on Bebbington's early work (1989), Noll affirmed that "the place where evangelicalism revealed its closest affinities to the Enlightenment was in a dramatically heightened concern for the assurance of salvation."²¹⁴ In addition, Noll insisted that despite opposing certain expressions of the Enlightenment such as skepticism, atheism, doubts about the Bible and egoism, evangelicalism shared the Enlightenment's trust in the affections, desire for practical results, and preference for experiential knowledge. In the end, Noll revised Bebbington's earlier claim by stating that "it is inappropriate to view the Enlightenment as

²¹² Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InverVarsity Press, 2003), 150-152. Noll briefly summarized what he meant by evangelicalism: "In the simplest sort of summary, evangelicalism grew out of earlier forms of heartfelt British Protestantism and was stimulated by contact with heartfelt Continental Pietism. It was promoted and maintained by the effective exertions of capable spiritual leaders. It offered a compelling picture of direct fellowship with God for believers as individuals and in groups. It represented a shift in religiosity away from the inherited established churches toward spiritual communities constructed by believers themselves. It featured a form of conversion as much focused on personal experience, as much convinced of the plasticity of human nature and as much preoccupied with the claims of certainty as any manifestation of the Enlightenment." *Ibid.*, 154.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 150.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 151.

‘creating’ evangelicalism in any simple sense. Yet failing to pay full attention to the early evangelicals’ exploitation of the Enlightenment thought forms would short-circuit explanations for the rise of evangelicalism as much as failing to recognize how deftly evangelicalism spoke to the shifting social landscape of the period.”²¹⁵ However, Noll was not finished. He would comment further in 2015 (which will be discussed later in this section) on Bebbington’s claims about the affinities between evangelicalism and the Enlightenment.

Another historian who built on the scholarship of Bebbington (as well as the input of Jane Shaw, John Walsh and Margaret Jacob each discussed earlier) was Women’s Studies historian Phyllis Mack. In 2008, she claimed that Wesley was not only a man with an Augustinian view of human nature and a Pietist concept of heart religion, but also a man or citizen of the Enlightenment who adapted Locke’s psychology as well as Enlightenment ideals of education and progress in order to help Methodists improve their rational capacities and achieve holy and happy lives.²¹⁶ According to Mack, Wesley’s “insistence on the importance of reason and common sense, his acceptance of the limits of reason in understanding religious truths, and his conviction of the malleability of human nature were as much the product of Enlightenment values as they were of Pauline Christianity.”²¹⁷ However, what Mack believed these combined thought processes of human depravity (or original sin) and human potential (or perfectibility) ultimately created for the mind of Methodists was a series of conundrums, an ongoing paradox of

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Phyllis Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 13, 37, 41, 45, 190, 202, 223-224, 226.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 13-14.

passivity and agency that could be difficult to apply to one's life.²¹⁸ Consequently, in *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism*, Mack argued that "as individuals confronted issues of self-definition, sexuality, physical illness, and human love, their Enlightenment ideals and Protestant theology both contradicted and reinforced each other, and this combustion of ideas and values heightened the tension inherent in Christian thought between . . . self-abnegation on the one hand, and . . . self-transformation and world-transformation, on the other."²¹⁹ Therefore, she highlighted the challenging personal experiences of ordinary people, particularly of women and the difference between the experiences of Methodist men and women, who attempted to practice the heart religion that Wesley tailored for Methodism by combining the thought forms, values and discourse of the Enlightenment with his own eclectic practical theology.

In 2015, a roundtable of religious historians, including Mark A. Noll, reexamined Bebbington's enduring thesis, the "Quadrilateral Thesis" that was first introduced by Bebbington more than twenty-five years earlier in his classic work, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (1989).²²⁰ In his review, "Noun or Adjective? The Ravings of a Fanatical Nominalist," Noll described his initial reaction to two key sentences from Bebbington's book: "There can be no doubt that Edwards was the chief architect of the theological structures erected by Evangelicals

²¹⁸ Ibid., 14-15, 26-28, 178-182, 195, 210-211, 241-242.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 14-15.

²²⁰ See the summarization of Bebbington's thesis, the quadrilateral of priorities (conversionism, activism, biblicism and crucicentrism) that Bebbington claimed was the basis of evangelicalism, in the footnote at the beginning of this section. Historian Charlie Phillips, a former student of Bebbington helped to organize two events in 2014 where the papers for the roundtable were presented along with Bebbington's response, they included the American Society of Church History conference (January) in Washington, D. C. and the Conference on Faith and History (September) meeting at Pepperdine University. *Fides et Historia*, vol. 47, no. 1 (Winter/Spring, 2015): 44.

in the Reformed tradition. (yes!) That was sufficient to ensure that they were built on Enlightenment foundations.’ (no!) [emphasis is Noll’s]”²²¹ For Noll, what Bebbington made possible through a careful specification of the traits or thought forms that evangelicals, such as Wesley and Edwards, shared with Enlightenment figures, he undercut by nominalizing evangelicalism and “Enlightenment” as if they each had their own identity. Instead, Noll suggested that historians stood to gain more in specificity by using the adjectival form of each concept to compare the traits that evangelicals held in common with the Enlightenment spirit of the age.²²²

In response to Noll’s review or ravings as a fanatical nominalist, Bebbington offered his own confession as an unrepentant realist. First, Bebbington insisted that “There is a parallel between evangelicalism and the Enlightenment.”²²³ Second, Bebbington not only acknowledged Noll’s grammatical concerns, but also conceded that Noll’s historiographical preference would have been beneficial to his study. Thus, Bebbington commented: “Noll holds that people in the eighteenth century showed features of an age of reason, but he dislikes the idea of *an* Enlightenment. There is surely some truth here. Historians tend now to stress the variety of expressions of Enlightenment and so speak of *Enlightenments*. More concessions to that mode of understanding could usefully have been made in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*.”²²⁴ However, after twenty-five years, Bebbington still stood beside his earlier claims. Given the last word at the roundtable, he argued that “there was a cluster of assumptions emerging in the

²²¹ Ibid., 81.

²²² Ibid., 73-82.

²²³ Ibid., 94.

²²⁴ Ibid.

eighteenth century that provided the spectacles behind the eyes of the early evangelicals. Their ideas were molded by reason, empiricism, optimism, and pragmatism. This combination formed something like a worldview, a real cultural atmosphere. So evangelicalism was deeply affected by an eighteenth-century body of ideas that can justifiably be labeled the Enlightenment.”²²⁵ Ironically, this debate in 2015 between historians of Wesley studies, Bebbington and Noll, brings this chapter full circle back to where the integration of Wesley and Enlightenment studies truly began with the possibilities created by an enlightenment or enlightenments approach introduced in the late 1970s by historians of Enlightenment studies, including Porter and Jacob.

Obstacle and Omission

In conclusion, this chapter has demonstrated that scholars since the 1980s have increasingly interwoven not only Wesley into their narratives of the Enlightenment, but also the Enlightenment into their storylines of Wesley. Despite this evolving integration of Wesley and Enlightenment studies, historians have gained little specificity into the complex relationship between Wesley and the Enlightenment. In the following two chapters, this study will address the two primary reasons for these limited results.

First, historians of Enlightenment studies failed to consider the plausibility of Wesley’s relation to the Enlightenment because of one major obstacle, the exclusive use of philosophy at the center of their definitions of enlightenment. Second, historians and theologians of Wesley studies failed to understand the significance of the Enlightenment in their study of Wesley, apart

²²⁵ Ibid.

from the influence of Locke, because of one important omission, the English Enlightenment.²²⁶ Moreover, every Wesley scholar, reviewed in this chapter, who has attempted to understand the relationship between Wesley and the Enlightenment has only used a definition of enlightenment with philosophy at its center. Together, the obstacle of a philosophical definition of enlightenment in Enlightenment studies and the omission of any consideration of the English Enlightenment in Wesley studies have not only circumscribed the results of efforts to integrate the study of Wesley and the Enlightenment, but also hindered further study of the complex relationship between Wesley and the Enlightenment.

Therefore, this study, in the next two chapters, will address the obstacle and omission identified in this review of the integration of Wesley and Enlightenment studies. In Chapter four, this study will not only contextualize, but also introduce new alternatives to the traditional philosophical definition of enlightenment. Based on the contributions of recent Enlightenment historians, this study will analyze the usefulness of four new lenses for viewing the English Enlightenment that replace philosophy with a plausible alternative at the center of their definitions of enlightenment.

In Chapter five, this study will demonstrate some of the insights that are gained by considering the uniqueness of the English Enlightenment in Wesley Studies. As Noll argued earlier in 2015, even Bebbington's classic work on evangelicalism, which in large part featured Wesley in the eighteenth century, would have benefitted from using an Enlightenment approach instead of a single Enlightenment approach. Therefore, in Chapter five, this study will argue that the Wesleyan Enlightenment is best revealed not only by considering Wesley in the context of

²²⁶ One important exception reviewed earlier in Chapter three was John C. English's article (1989), "John Wesley and the English Enlightenment: an 'appeal to men of reason and religion.'"

the English Enlightenment, but also by viewing Wesley and Wesleyan Methodism through the four new lenses that will be introduced in Chapter four, to which this study now turns.

Chapter 4

The English Enlightenment

The evidence for the enlightenment of John Wesley is best revealed in his relation to the English Enlightenment, not to a single, unified Enlightenment that some historians continue to present. Wesley's responses to the emphases of other Enlightenments in various national contexts have been inferred in the historiography provided in the previous two chapters. Without compromise, Wesley harshly criticized Voltaire and Rousseau while significantly downplaying the work of Montesquieu in the French Enlightenment. With impatience, he refused the skepticism of Hume and the moralism of Thomas Reid in the Scottish Enlightenment. Apparently unaware, he never affirmed Kant's contribution to the German Enlightenment. Acutely aware, he always rejected the rationalism of English Deists and Rational Dissenters in the British Enlightenment. By contrast, Wesley selectively embraced many of the ideas and values of the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century English Enlightenment.

However, the English Enlightenment has not been without its critics. Some scholars have challenged the conceptual idea of whether an English Enlightenment ever existed. Moreover, others have pointed out that the English Enlightenment has for the most part remained invisible to historians, with the possible exception of historian Edward Gibbon (1737-1794). As an explanation, some have suggested that this oversight has been caused by the absence of a group of thinkers in England who functioned like the *philosophes* in France who were hostile to Christianity and composed writings that were critical of social, political and religious practices and beliefs. However, the narrow definition of Enlightenment in this argument inherited from Gay has not only placed too much importance on the role of the French *philosophes* but has also

emphasized too exclusively the part of the Enlightenment that was hostile toward Christianity. As a result, this presupposition has blinded some historians from considering the possibility of a unique Enlightenment in England.

In addition, scholars have increasingly questioned the usefulness of what have come to be considered false dichotomies for classifying the nature of the English Enlightenment. For example, when the Enlightenment in England is compared with the Enlightenment in France, the question has been raised whether it was helpful to clarify one position by continuing to use such contrasting terms as conservative or moderate versus radical. This reasoning has been challenged particularly when the categories were only being used to delineate whether or not the proponents of the Enlightenment in that particular European state were hostile toward Christianity.

Finally, scholars have continued to wrestle with questions about the origins of the Enlightenment, including not only what caused the Enlightenment, but also who was responsible for its creation. As a result, some recent scholars have identified the Church of England as the predominant cause of the Enlightenment. Logically, they concluded that if the Anglican Church practiced conservative politics after the Glorious Revolution in order to maintain its restored relationship to the state and if English Rational Dissenters helped to maintain the state's momentum toward greater religious tolerance, then the church *in* England, instead of radicals or freethinkers who opposed the Church *of* England, may have led the way in bringing the Enlightenment to France and the rest of western Europe.

Contextualizing the English Enlightenment

In the historiography of Enlightenment studies, the miscues of important historians have established that any serious attempt to interpret accurately the English Enlightenment must maintain at least four important delineations. First, the English Enlightenment was unique and not simply the reproduction in England of a unified European Enlightenment. Moreover, as this study has argued earlier in Chapter two, when a comprehensive definition of the Enlightenment has been presupposed, the possibility of an English Enlightenment has been eliminated or its presentation skewed.

Second, England's Enlightenment was not the same as the Scottish Enlightenment. Through her example, historian Linda Colley has demonstrated that even a distinguished scholar can misinterpret Wesley as a moralist by simply overemphasizing the similarities between the Scottish Enlightenment and the English Enlightenment.¹ On the other hand, historical psychologist Thomas Dixon has provided a better example of the insights that can be attained by keeping the two Enlightenments clearly delineated.² For example, Dixon presented Wesley as a revivalist, like the English dissenting revivalist Isaac Watts (1674-1748), who not only ministered in the context of the English Enlightenment, but also stood in contrast to moralists, like natural and moral philosopher Thomas Reid (1710-1796), who represented the Scottish Enlightenment. As a result, Dixon argued that the English revivalists psychologically viewed a person's affections as positive, believing that they were not only compatible, but also worked hand in hand with reason. By contrast, Dixon claimed that the Scottish moralists viewed the

¹ Colley, *Britons*, 69.

² Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

affections negatively as lumped in with the emotions and constantly requiring the constraint of reason.³

Third, the English Enlightenment did not become the British Enlightenment, despite the many obvious affinities between the two classifications of enlightenment. On the one hand, Porter homogenized his earlier seminal presentation of the English Enlightenment (1981) by lumping it together with the British Enlightenment in order to emphasize their collective contribution to the creation of the modern world (2000).⁴ Although he was careful about being rigid in his delineation between the English and Scottish Enlightenments, Porter still blurred his earlier portrayal of the English Enlightenment by combining it with his new bravado for the British Enlightenment.⁵ On the other hand, Himmelfarb demonstrated that an intellectual historian who locates Wesley and Wesleyan Methodism in a British Enlightenment instead of an English Enlightenment can easily misinterpret the same as championing the social moralism of the Scottish Enlightenment. Her claims about the British Enlightenment were bold and provocative, but her interpretation of Methodism was skewed because she failed to delineate adequately between the British, English and Scottish Enlightenments.⁶ In both cases, Porter and Himmelfarb compromised their representations of Wesley and Wesleyan Methodism because

³ Ibid., 75, 72-76.

⁴ Porter, *Enlightenment*, xviii-xix. According to Porter, “I often employ . . . the terms ‘English’ and ‘Britain’ somewhat interchangeably when referring to ideas and developments broadly shared by elites living in the British Isles, since practically all enlightened thinking was then actually coming out of English heads, especially during the first third of the eighteenth century. By contrast to this ‘lumping’ habit, ‘English’ and ‘Scottish’ will be distinguished when I am specifically addressing regional traditions and themes.” Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 242-244, 481-482.

⁶ Himmelfarb, 116-130.

they were so intent on telling the story of modernity, which they passionately believed had its origins in the British Enlightenment.

Finally, the English Enlightenment was not like the French Enlightenment that has typically been portrayed as hostile to Christianity. Furthermore, the French *philosophes* did not drive the ideas and values embraced or experienced in the English Enlightenment. Yet, even when the distinction of the English Enlightenment has been carefully maintained, historians have still disagreed over how it should be defined.

New Lenses for Defining the English Enlightenment

In the historiography of Enlightenment studies, the two foremost historians of the English Enlightenment have been Roy Porter (1946-2002) and John Pocock (b. 1924). Since Porter's death, Pocock has remained unchallenged as the leading light in the twenty-first century. As a result, he has accumulatively contributed more to the historiography of the English Enlightenment than any other scholar. Although Pocock has offered many penetrating insights into the politics, economics, ecclesiology and history writing of the English Enlightenment over the span of three decades, two considerably younger early modern historians, Jonathan Sheehan and William Bulman have recently emerged with innovative approaches to studying the Enlightenment that hold promise for better insights into England's Enlightenment. Useful for this study, Porter (2000), Pocock (1999-2015), Sheehan (2005) and Bulman (2016) have each introduced a new definition of enlightenment that provides a different lens for viewing the English Enlightenment. At the center of their new definitions of enlightenment, these historians have replaced philosophy with: a social history of ideas (Porter), erudition (Pocock), media (Sheehan) and religion (Bulman). Therefore, this study now turns to analyze the usefulness of

these new lenses for viewing the English Enlightenment with an eye toward better understanding Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment.

Social History of Ideas at the Center: Roy Porter

Porter, more than anyone else, was responsible for initially bringing the English Enlightenment onto the stage of the historiography of Enlightenment studies in 1981.⁷ Although Porter's seminal argument for the uniqueness of the English Enlightenment persisted, his allegiance to maintaining the distinctiveness of England's Enlightenment did not. Despite the fact that Porter's book, *English Society in the Eighteenth Century* (1982, 1990), was a social history of England and not an intellectual history, Porter surprisingly refrained from making any mention of the English Enlightenment, relegating his brief descriptions of the social activity of enlightenment or the Enlightenment to only three separate single-sentence references.⁸

Although Porter had argued in 1981 for the uniqueness of an Enlightenment in England that developed *within* piety, his original claim was based in part on the argument of historian Owen Chadwick who believed that the secularization of Europe did not take place until the nineteenth century.⁹ In 2002, Porter wrote an entry for "England" in Kors, *Encyclopedia of the*

⁷ Porter, "The Enlightenment in England," 1-18. Even Porter's treatment of Edward Gibbon in the context of Enlightenment history writing predated, by more than a decade, John Pocock's six-volume monumental work on Edward Gibbon entitled *Barbarism and Religion* (1999-2015), which featured some of Pocock's work on the English Enlightenment (that is reviewed in the next section of this chapter). Roy Porter, *Edward Gibbon: Making History* (London, UK: Weidenfeld, 1988).

⁸ Porter, *English Society*, 256, 310, 351.

⁹ Porter, "The Enlightenment in England," 6.

Enlightenment, which appears to have been his swan song on the English Enlightenment.¹⁰ In that entry, Porter argued that secularism was one of the primary legacies of England's Enlightenment.¹¹ This was a radical departure from his earliest claims about the English Enlightenment. Between the two publications, Porter had come to believe by 1990 that in Eighteenth Century England "secularizing views were certainly supplanting Christian in many spheres."¹² Thus, he claimed that "Secular and Classical practices edged in where Christianity once had a monopoly. Plenty of Christians still saw the grave as the gateway to salvation, but others faced dying in new ways."¹³ Porter changed his mind as he became an expert on the medical history of Britain's Enlightenment most likely because he believed the accounts of people who claimed to discard their religious superstitions about their personal health for the solutions promised by eighteenth-century science and medicine to be the consensus in Britain.

In 2000, Porter argued not only that the British Enlightenment, but also the English Enlightenment was a blind spot for historians of the Enlightenment, with the distinguished exceptions of John Pocock and Margaret Jacob.¹⁴ Although Porter had begun his teaching career at Cambridge in 1974 with what he claimed were eyebrow raising lectures on the English Enlightenment, he ended his brilliant career as a social, intellectual and medical historian of the Enlightenment with a blind spot in his own academic vision that would not allow him to consider

¹⁰ Roy S. Porter, "England," in *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*, ed., Alan Charles Kors (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 409-415.

¹¹ Porter, "*England*," 415.

¹² Porter, *English Society*, 279.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Porter, *Enlightenment*, 5-6.

the possibility that religion could be enlightened without becoming rationalized.¹⁵ From Porter's perspective, "Methodist and Evangelicals [were] convinced that rational religion in a mechanical universe was the slippery slope towards unbelief and anarchy."¹⁶ Unfortunately, Porter did not leave Wesley and his Methodists with a middle way. As a result, Porter, like his mentor, J.H. Plumb, was unsympathetic to Wesley.¹⁷

Still, Porter's oversight of Wesley, as well as others who did not succumb to the rationalization of religion, had much more to do with his historical focus in recounting the English Enlightenment than any religious bias. According to Porter, his book, *Enlightenment* (2000), "strives to make sense of what moved progressive intellectuals by laying bare their thinking, in the light of Locke's dictum that we must understand a thinker's terms, 'in the sense he uses them, and not as they are appropriated, by each man's particular philosophy, to conceptions that never entered the mind' of that author."¹⁸ As a result, Wesley, as a selective editor and publisher of books written by other thinkers for the practical purposes of his renewal movement, does not make Porter's list of progressive intellectual candidates to tell the story of Enlightenment in England. Still, in spite of his academic cataracts and criteria, Porter's scholarship has provided historians of Wesley and Enlightenment studies a new lens for viewing

¹⁵ Ibid., xi. See also Porter's chapter, "Rationalizing Religion." Ibid., 96-129.

¹⁶ Ibid., 33.

¹⁷ See the earlier discussion of J. H. Plumb in Chapter two. According to Porter, "the 'potent magic of religion' came under scrutiny as mainstream observance became divested of supernatural and spiritual elements—hence the violent antipathy among rational Christians and Deists alike to John Wesley, who upheld the reality of witchcraft and Satan's power in the world: Methodism was 'wild and pernicious Enthusiasm,' according to the bishop of Exeter. Enlightened thought approved religion so long as its basis was rational rather than numinal." Ibid., 128.

¹⁸ Porter, *Enlightenment*, xxii.

the English Enlightenment, because he replaced philosophy with the social history of ideas at the center of his new definition of enlightenment.

Although Porter did not explicitly state that he had replaced philosophy at the center of his definition of enlightenment, he described the reality of this change in his approach. In other words, Porter provided a new approach or lens for seeing the English Enlightenment, the academic blind spot of his fellow historians, by showcasing the social and cultural ideas he had discovered not only in the work of historians, but also in the expertise of literary scholars. According to Porter, “In what follows I highlight the part played by poets, critics and novelists in debates over identity, individuality and subjectivity, and the role of the imagination in the politics of the gendered self, in the belief that the eighteenth century was truly, as Johnson thought, an ‘age of authors.’”¹⁹ The history of ideas that Porter believed best defined the English Enlightenment were the ideas that gained social acceptance. Porter had acquired this standard for defining the English Enlightenment from the social theory of his mentor, Plumb who had argued: “Ideas acquire dynamism when they become social attitudes and this was happening in England.”²⁰ As a result, Porter set a precedent for defining the English Enlightenment that opened the door to conclusions other than his own based not on philosophy, but on the social history of ideas in England.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid., xxiii.

²⁰ Ibid., 12. See also J. H. Plumb, *In the Light of History*, (London, UK: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1972), 24.

²¹ From a similar perspective, social historian, Mark Knights has stressed the importance of social history for studying the practice of religion in the English Enlightenment. According to Knights, “the early [English] ‘Enlightenment,’ far from being simply a movement of ideas sparked by ‘great thinkers’, was shaped and advanced by local and personal struggles. It was the conflict and tensions within families and small communities, as much as at Westminster or Whitehall, which changed the national culture.” Mark Knights, *The Devil in Disguise:*

Porter's primary window into the social history of ideas in the English Enlightenment was author and lexicographer Samuel Johnson (1709-1784). Johnson's writings attested to the popularity of reading and writing in the English society. Because he was impressed with the tremendous output of England's expanding print culture, Johnson concluded in 1753 that the era he was witnessing was an "Age of Authors."²² However, because Johnson was regularly disappointed with what he read, he complained that the quality of the increasing number of books was in decline.

For example, in 1757, Johnson argued in his published work, "A Review of Soame Jenyns" that "many of the books which now crowd the world, may be justly suspected to be written for the sake of some invisible order of beings, for surely they are of no use to any of the corporeal inhabitants of the world."²³ In addition, Johnson, a master of literary wit, criticized not only the authors who wrote for unimaginable audiences, but also those who had a delusional

Deception, Delusion, and Fanaticism in the Early English Enlightenment (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.

²² In his collection of essays, *The Adventurer*, No. 115, Tuesday, 11 December 1753, Samuel Johnson observed: "The present age, if we consider chiefly the state of our own country, may be stiled with great propriety The Age of Authors; for, perhaps, there never was a time, in which men of all degrees of ability, of every kind of education, of every profession and employment, were posting with ardour so general to the press. The province of writing was formerly left to those, who by study, or appearance of study, were supposed to have gained knowledge unattainable by the busy part of mankind; but **in these enlightened days** [emphasis mine], every man is qualified to instruct every other man; and he that beats the anvil, or guides the plough, not contented with supplying corporal necessities, amuses himself in the hours of leisure with providing intellectual pleasures for his countrymen." Samuel Johnson, *The Idler and The Adventurer*, eds., W. J. Bate, John M. Bullitt and L. F. Powell (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963), 456-457.

²³ Porter, *Enlightenment*, xiii. Soame Jenyns (1704-1787) was an English writer and politician whom Samuel Johnson ridiculed for his incompetent attempt to explain the problem of evil in the world in a book entitled *A Free Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil* (1757). James Boswell, *The Life Of Samuel Johnson*, ed., David Womersley (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1791, 2008), 1186.

overestimation of the public's need for their books. Therefore, Johnson insisted that "No expectation is more fallacious than that which authors form of the reception which their labours will find among mankind. Scarcely any man publishes a book, whatever it be, without believing that he has caught the moment when the publick attention is vacant to his call, and the world is disposed in a particular manner to learn the art which he undertakes to teach."²⁴ However, not every author that Johnson met or every book that Johnson read was below average in Eighteenth Century England. Therefore, Porter, in his study of the English Enlightenment not only researched the analysis of historians, but also the insights of literary scholars because he, like Johnson, believed that the eighteenth century in England was an "Age of Authors."²⁵

Erudition at the Center: John Pocock

From the early 1980s, Porter's scholarship on the English Enlightenment digressed as Pocock's expertise on the uniqueness of England's Enlightenment developed. In 2000, Porter drew attention to Pocock's evolution by highlighting the difference between what Pocock had originally said about using the term "English Enlightenment" and what Pocock was actually doing by the beginning of the twenty-first century: "In John Pocock's opinion, the phrase "'the' (or 'an') 'English Enlightenment' does not ring quite true.' Maybe; but, following his own example, I shall be using it all the same. It is admittedly an anachronistic term, but it captures, I believe, the thinking and temper of a movement."²⁶ Thus, Porter reiterated in the introduction to

²⁴ Ibid., xiv.

²⁵ Ibid., xxiii.

²⁶ Porter, *Enlightenment*, xvii. Pocock, "Post-Puritan England and the Problem of the Enlightenment," 91, 109.

his important treatise, *Enlightenment* (2000) that he still agreed with two important developments in the early stages of Pocock's scholarship, Pocock's use of the term "English Enlightenment" and Pocock's early claim (1989) that the political temper of England's Enlightenment was conservative.

However, Pocock and Porter viewed the nature and definition of the English Enlightenment differently. First, Pocock, unlike Porter, came to believe more specifically that the nature of England's Enlightenment was not only conservative, but also ecclesiastical (1999).²⁷ The Church of England as well as Parliament worked together in post-Restoration England to provide and ensure civil stability, peace and order. Although Pocock was a self-professing liberal agnostic, the reconciliation of his political history with the Church of England had been shaped in part by his professor at Cambridge, Herbert Butterfield.²⁸ Butterfield was not only a historian who was sympathetic to Wesley, but also a lay minister in the Methodist church.²⁹ Although Pocock apparently did not become a convert to Butterfield's personal faith,

²⁷ J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion: The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), i.

²⁸ Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 1, 9. Reflecting Butterfield's influence in his diagnosis of the typical practice of Enlightenment historians, Pocock claimed that "Since we are all liberal agnostics, we write whig histories of liberal agnosticism; Gibbon however, did not write history like that." Whig history was a Protestant view of English history that presupposed England's course of history was one of progress. Ibid. Herbert Butterfield, discussed earlier in Chapter two, contributed significantly to the historiography of British history with two important works in the mid-twentieth century, Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton and Company, 1931, 1965) and Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity and History* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949, 1950).

²⁹ According to McIntyre, "From a young age, Butterfield entertained thoughts of becoming a minister himself, and in fact eventually became a lay minister in the Methodist church, preaching in his native Yorkshire and at Cambridge." Kenneth B. McIntyre, *Herbert Butterfield: History, Providence, and Skeptical Politics* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2011), x.

he does appear to have been a disciple of Butterfield's teachings on the role of authority within the Anglican Church and the art of interpreting ecclesiastical history.³⁰

Second, Pocock, unlike both Porter and Butterfield, did not believe eighteenth-century England experienced a "Great Secularization."³¹ Instead, Pocock claimed that "tensions within the established Church, between establishment and dissent, and within dissent itself, provide the context in which the English Enlightenment must be seen. Because these tensions were widely and diversely experienced, they did not polarize the various confessions into simply opposite groups, and as a result elements of what we term Enlightenment are broadly distributed."³²

Thus, Pocock, unlike Porter, believed that members of either dissenting groups or the established Church, including Methodists or other Evangelicals, could experience the English Enlightenment in a variety of ways without necessarily becoming rationalized Christians.

Pocock's primary window into the world of the English Enlightenment was the English historian Edward Gibbon (1737-1794). As an enlightened historian, Gibbon provided two important insights into eighteenth-century England. On the one hand, Gibbon, in his landmark work, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, published in six volumes (1776-1788), was perhaps the first, if not the only person in Eighteenth Century England who used the

³⁰ According to McIntyre, Butterfield profoundly influenced Pocock. *Ibid.*, viii. See also Butterfield's comments on the proper interpretation of ecclesiastical history in Butterfield, *Christianity and History*, 130-137.

³¹ Butterfield, "England in the Eighteenth Century," 6. According to Butterfield three factors contributed to the mighty flood of the "Great Secularization": "the development of deism amongst the intelligentsia, . . . the glorification of natural religion, and . . . those attempts to reduce Christianity to a rationalistic form which were so common in the decades before and after Wesley's birth [1703]." *Ibid.*

³² Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 1, 297.

label “English Enlightenment” in his writings to describe his age.³³ Gibbon’s insight was original, according to historian B. W. Young, because people in England during the eighteenth century did not use the term “Enlightenment” to label the times in which they lived. Instead, they simply referred to their era as “an enlightened age.”³⁴ On the other hand, Gibbon viewed the religion of his day through the lens of his historical research. In other words, Gibbon came to believe that Christianity was not only to blame for the fall of the Roman Empire in fifth-century Western Europe, but also for many of the ills that he experienced or observed in Eighteenth Century England.

Pocock excavated Gibbon’s classic work, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in his own six-volume series (1999-2015) entitled, *Barbarism and Religion*.³⁵ For the majority of two decades, Pocock worked relentlessly to uncover: Gibbon’s experience of various regional Enlightenments, including the French Enlightenment, the Protestant Enlightenment among the Calvinists in Lausanne, Switzerland, as well as an English Enlightenment and Scottish Enlightenment; Gibbon’s much debated personal position on

³³ F.L. van Holthoon, “Review of J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion, Vol. 1: The Enlightenments of Edward Gibbon, 1737-1764*,” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, vol. 8, no. 4 (Spring, 2002): 665.

³⁴ J. G. A. Pocock, “Enthusiasm: The Antiself of Enlightenment,” *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 60, no. 1 / 2 (1997): 8.

³⁵ Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 1. J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion: Narratives of Civil Government*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999). J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion: The First Decline and Fall*, vol. 3 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003). J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion: The Barbarians, Savages and Empires*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005). J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion: Religion: The First Triumph*, vol. 5 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010). J. G. A. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion: Barbarism: Triumph in the West*, vol. 6 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Christianity; and most importantly, the uniqueness of Gibbon's enlightened history writing.³⁶ Pocock used the title, *Barbarism and Religion*, a turn of phrase from Gibbon's landmark study, to emphasize not only the nature of Gibbon's assessment of Christianity in Europe's past, but also the hostility of Gibbon's attitude toward Christianity in Europe's present. Although Gibbon, considered by some of his contemporaries to be an English Voltaire, opposed what he perceived to be enthusiasm, fanaticism and superstition of the Christian faith and practices of the church in his own age, his efforts ironically proved to be viewed as useful by some in the church after his death. For example, in the nineteenth century, the former Anglican priest, John Henry Newman, who became a Cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church, acknowledged with reluctance that Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was the best written history of the church in the eighteenth century.³⁷

Third, Pocock, unlike Porter, eventually replaced philosophy with erudition at the center of his definition of the English Enlightenment. Historian Jonathan Sheehan (who will be discussed in the next section) reviewed Pocock's second volume of *Barbarism and Religion*, and highlighted the importance of Pocock's innovative consideration of erudition in the English Enlightenment. "By stressing erudition," Sheehan argued, "Pocock demotes philosophy to a mere component of the Enlightenment, other components of which might include religion and religious scholarship. And this demotion is clearly crucial for Pocock's own disaggregating project: once the essential link between philosophy and the Enlightenment is broken,

³⁶ According to Pocock, the religious tensions of England sent Gibbon on a spiritual journey that: brought Gibbon to Catholic conversion, restored Gibbon to the Protestant faith through the help of Swiss Calvinists, led Gibbon to experience an Enlightenment, which Pocock described as a Protestant Enlightenment, and finally turned Gibbon to skepticism. Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 1, 50.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

enlightenments are free to multiply."³⁸ Also important for this study, Pocock's new definition of enlightenment came from the example of Gibbon's life. Thus, according to his observations about Gibbon's enlightenment during his twenties, Pocock argued: "The factor present at all points of his activity is erudition, and while this functioned as an important instrument of what we call Enlightenment, there is little reason to doubt Gibbon's repeated assurances that it functioned independently as the dominant interest of his young and his mature life."³⁹ Because erudition was instrumental in Gibbon's enlightenment, the role of erudition in the enlightenment of other figures in eighteenth-century England such as Wesley could be considered.

Media at the Center: Jonathan Sheehan

Although the framework for Sheehan's study was a European Enlightenment, not the English Enlightenment, his purpose for developing a new approach to understanding the Enlightenment was similar to the goal of this study. Like this study's focus on discovering a better way to understand the complex relationship between Wesley and the Enlightenment, Sheehan was intent on finding a solution to the lack of new research on the relationship between religion and the Enlightenment. Like Pocock, Sheehan insisted that if historians "move away from the Enlightenment as a set of doctrinal or philosophical precepts, the research program will become much more capacious. The language of rationalism, materialism, determinism, indeed, the entire philosophical definition of the Enlightenment, has tended (with some exceptions) to

³⁸ Jonathan Sheehan, "Enlightenment, Religion, and the Enigma of Secularization," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 108, no. 4 (Oct. 2003): 1070-1071, accessed August 15, 2016, JSTOR.

³⁹ Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 1, 93.

constrain rather than promote new research.”⁴⁰ Moreover, Sheehan believed that historians have stymied innovation for further study by becoming overly fixated on championing either a single-Enlightenment or a multiple-Enlightenments approach. Therefore, Sheehan developed a treatment of the Enlightenment that he hoped would make research on religion’s relation to the Enlightenment more productive.

In 2003, Sheehan introduced his new media-driven concept of the Enlightenment. Having removed philosophy from the center of his definition for enlightenment, Sheehan suggested that researchers view the Enlightenment instead “as a new constellation of formal and technical practices and institutions, ‘media.’”⁴¹ Moreover, Sheehan insisted that “Such practices and institutions might include philosophical argument, but would encompass such diverse elements as salons, reading circles, erudition, scholarship and scholarly techniques, translations, book reviews, academies, new communication tools including journals and newspapers, new or revived techniques of data organization and storage.”⁴² From this vantage point, researchers would be able to see that the means for transporting the ideas of the eighteenth century had not only an additional impact, but also an even greater influence on the Enlightenment than the content of those same ideas.⁴³ More specifically, Sheehan believed that the study of the

⁴⁰ Sheehan, “Enlightenment, Religion and the Enigma of Secularization,” 1075.

⁴¹ Ibid., 1075-76. Sheehan borrowed the term “media” from literary scholar Friedrich Kittler’s work on *Discourse Networks* (1990).

⁴² Ibid. This important article appears to have launched Sheehan’s book, *The Enlightenment Bible* (2005), which will be considered more fully in the next chapter of this study.

⁴³ Dror Wharman, “Introduction, God and the Enlightenment,” 1059. Before criticizing too quickly the possibility of presentism in the language of Sheehan’s “media” approach, consider first the timeless correlation between the nature and quality of the books, which Samuel

relationship between religion and the Enlightenment would benefit from his approach because “the media-driven concept of the Enlightenment allows us [to] concentrate on precisely those places where the social, cultural, and intellectual horizons of religion and the Enlightenment fused. Scholarly media, academies, universities, reading societies, salons, journals, newspapers, translations: these were all places where various entities called religion were investigated and invigorated.”⁴⁴ Although his approach held great promise, Sheehan was careful to acknowledge its limitations as well.

Therefore, Sheehan offered three important qualifications for what could be ascertained through his approach. First, Sheehan emphasized that “Religion and the Enlightenment were wedded together, not because of any intrinsic intellectual affinity between rationalism and mystery but because the media of the Enlightenment were fundamental structures through which new religious cultures and practices were created.”⁴⁵ Second, he clarified that the creators of these new cultures and practices could be either devout or impious. Finally, he acknowledged that while some religious domains, such as private prayer or devotion as well as church law or liturgical practice, would remain for the most part external to media, others would shape and be shaped by media.⁴⁶

In the end, however, Sheehan was optimistic that his media-driven approach was a much needed corrective for the enigma of secularization as an interpretive lens for the Enlightenment.

Johnson ridiculed in his “Age of Authors,” and the content and questionable expertise of the informational and instructional “how to” videos posted currently on social media.

⁴⁴ Sheehan, “Enlightenment, Religion, and the Enigma of Secularization,” 1076.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Therefore, Sheehan was confident that if his approach was used to understand better religion's relationship to the Enlightenment, then "secularization would no longer be shorthand for the inevitable (intentional or not, serious or ironic) slide of the pre-modern religious past into the modern secular future."⁴⁷ Although Sheehan's contribution to the recent downturn of secularization theory cannot be determined, his approach does support the conclusion that there was a correlation between religion entering the arena of research on the Enlightenment and secularism making an exit. Therefore, this study will also explore, later in Chapter five, the usefulness of Sheehan's media-driven concept for interpreting Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment without the clutter of secularization.

Religion at the Center: William Bulman

Building on the work of Sheehan and others, historian William Bulman has recently made a convincing argument for religion at the center of his definition of the Enlightenment. In the preface to his first book, *Anglican Enlightenment*, Bulman offered some important insights into the Enlightenment that have had significant bearing on this study.⁴⁸ According to Bulman, "the basic concepts, norms, concerns, and practices that we typically associate with the Enlightenment were never even remotely confined to the domain of philosophy, and they never consistently led to the promotion of either secularism or liberation."⁴⁹ Like Sheehan, Bulman did not believe secularism was the inevitable destiny of Protestant England in the eighteenth century.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Bulman, *Anglican Enlightenment*.

⁴⁹ Ibid., xi.

In addition, Bulman argued that “the most compelling way of registering this fact is to admit that the Enlightenment was ideologically open-ended, socially embedded, and disciplinarily diverse.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, new insights into the English Enlightenment can be ascertained by using Bulman’s definition of the term Enlightenment with religion at the center. For Bulman, the Enlightenment was “the articulation, defense, dissemination, and implementation of ideas under a specific set of historical conditions.”⁵¹ In Europe, the most important historical conditions were the products of religious wars during the seventeenth century, which created the need for providing and maintaining peace, security, civil order and stability, and religious toleration. As a result, the response of European elites over a long period of time created what Bulman has described as the condition of elite secularity. According to Bulman, these elites “became more acutely aware than ever before that their own religious commitments (or lack thereof) constituted a choice among many available forms of religion (and irreligion), all of which could be embraced by sane and intelligent (if erring) people.”⁵² In other words, elites in Europe increasingly developed new solutions to the riddle of public religion and the need for civil peace without sharing common assumptions about faith in God or even the need for belief in God.⁵³ Therefore, Bulman, in his depiction of the Anglican Enlightenment, claimed that “like all species of Enlightenment, it was only indirectly an intellectual phenomenon: it extended from erudition and polemic to political practice and pastoral care. Its

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, xii.

⁵² *Ibid.*, xviii.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

history is as much a history of culture, religion, and politics as it is a history of ideas.”⁵⁴ In this final sentence Bulman appears to have brought together all four of the approaches analyzed in this chapter: the cultural history of Sheehan, the religious history of Bulman himself, the politico-ecclesiastical history of Pocock and the social history of Porter.⁵⁵

Also important for this study, Bulman highlighted the reality that not everyone who was a vehicle for the Enlightenment was fully enlightened. According to Bulman: “The fact that specific people, institutions, ideas, and practices were vehicles for Enlightenment does not imply that they were Enlightened in *toto*. This is why we can speak of many people and institutions as Enlightened even when they retained traditional theological and doctrinal commitments and engaged in behavior that did not lead to peace [emphasis is Bulman’s].”⁵⁶ In England that meant that Anglicans as well as Dissenters did not have to jettison their faith to be enlightened or contribute to the Enlightenment. Located in the early English Enlightenment, Bulman depicted an Anglican Enlightenment that “simply denotes the participation of conforming members of the Church of England in the Enlightenment, under a variant of the Enlightenment’s characteristic historical conditions.”⁵⁷ Specific to England, Bulman listed those conditions as “the aftermath of

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, xiv. Bulman further reiterated that “This history of Anglican Enlightenment is not a history of ideas, a history of religion, a history of politics, or a history of empire. But it is a history that has implications for all four areas of inquiry. It encompasses them and explores their interrelationships, making it possible to appreciate how they mutually constituted one another.” *Ibid.*, 11-13.

⁵⁵ According to legal historian Julia Rudolph, the recent “focus on Anglican Enlightenment has provided new insight into what John Pocock long ago termed a ‘conservative English Enlightenment’ – an Enlightenment that aimed to conserve the constitutional principles, religious toleration and civil peace newly, and precariously, achieved in 1689.” Julia Rudolph, *Common Law and Enlightenment, 1689-1750* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2013), 5.

⁵⁶ Bulman, *Anglican Enlightenment*, xiv.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

the English Civil Wars and Revolution, the fragmentation of English Christianity, the rise of English freethinking, the emergence of an imperial state, and the transformation of the pastoral and political activities of the established church.”⁵⁸ In addition, Bulman also described “the other major condition for Enlightenment in England—Europe’s many realms of scholarly and literary practice.”⁵⁹ Thus, having established the historical context for both the Anglican and English Enlightenment in his first book, Bulman turned in his sequel to demonstrate that religion was at the center of the Enlightenment, not only in England, but also in Europe and around the world.

As early as 2003, historian Dror Wahrman drew attention to the fact that a new group of European historians were attempting not only to revise, but also reverse the traditional view that religion was antithetical to modernity. More than restoring religion to the historiography of a European Enlightenment, Wharman emphasized that the essays of the trend he identified were arguing collectively “that the resurrection of eighteenth-century religion is not simply a shift of scholarly emphasis to the *limits* of European modernity but rather the belated identification of religion at the heart of the project of modernity itself, a constitutive element of its very shaping [emphasis is Wharman’s].”⁶⁰ Very recently, Bulman and the impressive supporting cast he

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Dror Wharman, “Introduction: God and the Enlightenment: Review Essays,” *The American Historical Review*, vol. 108, no. 4 (Oct., 2003): 1057-1060, accessed March 11, 2017, JSTOR.

recruited to contribute essays to his book, *God in the Enlightenment*, represented a more mature and established continuation of the trend that Wharman had identified earlier in its infancy.⁶¹

Unlike, Porter, Pocock and Sheehan, Bulman replaced philosophy with religion at the center of his definition of the Enlightenment by arguing not only from the perspective of change, but also of continuity. Thus, in *God in the Enlightenment*, each contributor entertained Bulman's hypothesis, which he summarized in the following question: "What if the movement from Renaissance and Reformation to the Enlightenment could best be described not in terms of departure, subtraction, rejection, or supersession but in terms of the perpetuation of well-worn historical phenomena to the point of transformation under unprecedented conditions?"⁶² In other words, Bulman asked, "Did the very persistence of Renaissance and Reformation practices result in structural change?"⁶³ Although the scholars who wrote chapters for the book each considered new figures as well as new canons for the Enlightenment, they ultimately could not overcome the traditional view that the Enlightenment was a departure from what had come before it without a new presupposition. Thus, Bulman asked an even more basic question: "What if the Enlightenment, that herald of modernity, was never secularist, rationalist, or even liberal in the first place?"⁶⁴ The form of the question may have been new for the contributors, but their

⁶¹ Bulman and Ingram, eds., *God in the Enlightenment*. Other scholars who contributed chapters this book in addition to Bulman's "Introduction" included: Justin Champion, Anton Matytsin, Claudia Brosseder, Joan-Pau Rubies, Paul C. H. Lim, Jetze Touber, Jonathan Sheehan, Brad S. Gregory, J. C. D. Clark, H. C. Erik Midelfort, Sarah Ellenzweig and Dale K. Van Kley. Ibid., ix-xi.

⁶² Ibid., 15.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 3.

answers were the products of years of research and reflection on the role of religion and its relation to the Enlightenment.⁶⁵

In addition to arguing from the view of continuity that religion not only belonged at the center of the Enlightenment, but also provided the theological origins for modernity, Bulman and his cast also offered some new possibilities for further study. With more consideration of the historical conditions that initiated England's Enlightenment, more attention can be placed on the contribution of Thomas Hobbes to the early English Enlightenment and his influence on the religion and Enlightenment that followed.⁶⁶ With new considerations of the relationship between theology and modernity, the role of theology in the English Enlightenment can better be discerned. For example, Bulman argued not only that theology was a primary terrain of the Enlightenment, but also that "in the eighteenth century, theology was no longer the province of theologians. Theological discourse could no longer be controlled by churches or confessional states but instead spilled out into a vast array of intellectual and cultural venues. . . . In this sense, the realm and structuring of God-talk did not contract or shift; it expanded."⁶⁷ Based on the

⁶⁵ Two other important books that were reviewed for this study have also emphasized, like Bulman, that the origins of modernity were theological and not philosophical. First, historian Brad S. Gregory has argued that the religious pluralism and secularism prevalent in today's society was the unintended result of the Protestant Reformation. Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012). Second, philosopher Michael Allen Gillespie, like Gregory, has also claimed that modernity had theological origins. However, Gillespie (2008) emphasized more than Gregory (2012) the figures and events that predated Martin Luther's launching of the Reformation. According to Gillespie, "The origins of modernity therefore lie not in human self-assertion or in reason but in the great metaphysical and theological struggle that marked the end of the medieval world." Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2008), 12. Ironically, Gregory, a historian, joined Gillespie, a philosopher, to argue that theology, not philosophy was at the center of the Enlightenment that shaped the modern world.

⁶⁶ Bulman and Ingram, *God in the Enlightenment*, 22.

plausibility of such an expansion of dialogue about theology, Wesley's impetus for providing published Christian doctrine through his published sermons can be understood not only as spiritual guidance for Methodists, but also as theological fodder for an enlightened age.⁶⁸

In the end, Bulman argued convincingly: "It appears that God, and indeed the Christian God, did far more than survive the Enlightenment: God was all over the Enlightenment, in a multitude of new ways."⁶⁹ Furthermore, Bulman insisted that even "The interpretation of the early Enlightenment as a radical Enlightenment falls apart once we take philosophical rationalism away from the center of the picture, as anyone who thinks the Bible had something [to] do with the Enlightenment—even solely as an object of attack—should."⁷⁰ With religion at the center of one's definition for the Enlightenment, the plausibility of a Wesleyan Enlightenment can emerge.

In conclusion, none of the historians, in this chapter, who provided a new lens for viewing either the Enlightenment or the English Enlightenment, used John Wesley as either a possible or a positive example to illustrate their arguments. However, each of the innovative approaches that Porter, Pocock, Sheehan and Bulman introduced hold potential for new insights into Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment, particularly the English Enlightenment. Although the argument for Wesley as an important figure in England's Enlightenment cannot be made

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶⁸ According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, fodder, in extended use, is "something which or someone who is consumed or used for a particular purpose or by a particular process, agent, etc. In later use sometimes implying something of low quality or which is available in large quantities." *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "fodder," accessed March 19, 2017, OED Online.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 27-28.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 28.

adequately by using just a single lens, the evidence for such a claim can be substantiated by what these four views of the English Enlightenment reveal collectively. Therefore, in the next chapter, this study will examine the enlightenment of Wesley and Wesleyan Methodism not only from the vantage point of each of these lenses that historians of Enlightenment studies have provided, but also from the lens that a historical theologian of Wesley studies has recently introduced, which offers a fresh approach to understanding better the relationship between Wesley's theological reflection and the natural philosophy of the Enlightenment.

Chapter 5

The Wesleyan Enlightenment

Ecclesiastical historian Jeremy Gregory has highlighted the recent trend toward a greater consideration of Wesley in the historical contexts of the Enlightenment and the British Enlightenment.¹ However, the historiography of Chapter three has shown that even though Wesley scholars have recently identified more links between Wesley and the Enlightenment, their scholarship has yielded few insights and very little specificity. One reason for these limited results, unbeknownst to many historians and theologians, has been the restriction of the philosophical definitions they have used in their search for the historical Wesley. In addition, even the recent attempts by historians to consider Wesley in the context of the British Enlightenment, such as Porter (2000) and Himmelfarb (2004), have produced representations of Wesley or Methodism that have been less than satisfactory to Wesley scholars.² Although many of the details about the complexity of Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment remain hidden, a shared belief that Wesley was in some ways a product and a participant in the Enlightenment has continued to develop among many important Wesley scholars.³

¹ Jeremy Gregory, "The Long Eighteenth Century," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, eds. Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 37-39.

² Porter, *Enlightenment*. Himmelfarb, *The Roads to Modernity*.

³ For a different view, see British historian John Kent's *Wesley and the Wesleyans* (2002). In his recent book, Kent not only significantly downplayed the role of early Methodism in eighteenth-century Britain, but also denied that the Enlightenment had any role in the shaping of Wesley's thought. Critical of Wesley's thought, Kent argued that "the style of argument, the reliance on what had so long possessed authority, the habitual disregard for the growing practice of historical criticism, vividly illustrated his intellectual limitations as a leader, his lack of

Despite the philosophical center of their definitions for Enlightenment, Wesley scholars have recently moved toward an understanding of Wesley's enlightenment through new considerations of the relationship between the theology of Wesley and the philosophy of the Enlightenment. First, in this chapter, this study will introduce a new lens that Randy L. Maddox has suggested for the consideration of Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment. Second, this study will argue for the enlightenment of Wesley by using not only Maddox's lens, but also the lenses introduced by historians of Enlightenment studies in the previous chapter. Third, this study will illustrate how Wesley facilitated the enlightenment of Wesleyan Methodists by disseminating the ideas, values and examples of figures of the English Enlightenment in his *Works*.

Until recently, Wesley scholars have not found the study of philosophy particularly useful in their study of Wesley. In addition, what philosophers have generally presupposed about the Enlightenment has only obstructed the possibility of considering Wesley's relationship to the Enlightenment. Although some philosophers, such as Jonathan Israel, have recently acknowledged Wesley in the context of the Enlightenment, they still continue to maintain their belief that Wesley was a counter-Enlightenment figure and not compatible with the philosophy of his age. The contrast between philosophers who have been sympathetic to Wesley and those who have not has been striking even within the same collection of essays.

sympathy for anything which he had not been taught when he was young, the difficulties confronting any attempt to present him as influenced by the Enlightenment.” John Kent, *Wesley and the Wesleyans: Religion in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 15. Although Heitzenrater disagreed with Kent's conclusion, he argued that Kent's quantitative evidence deserved serious consideration. Richard P. Heitzenrater, “Reviewed Work: *Wesley and the Wesleyans: Religion in Eighteenth-Century Britain* by John Kent,” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, vol. 35, no. 4 (Winter, 2003): 660-662. Accessed March 13, 2017, JSTOR.

For example, although philosopher Knud Haakonssen excluded Wesley entirely from his monumental two-volume work, *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy* (2006), he did make room for a few brief comments about Wesley in his earlier collection of essays, *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in eighteenth-century Britain*.⁴ However, while Haakonssen, in his introduction, acknowledged the need for more research on evangelical piety that had successfully been combined with the ways of the Enlightenment, fellow Alan Saunders, in his chapter, “The state as highwayman: from candour to rights,” depicted Wesley as out of step with his enlightened age.⁵ Saunders, who was not a historian, but wrote a doctoral dissertation on Joseph Priestley, portrayed Wesley as an anti-intellectual in three ways: by arguing that Joseph Priestley, a Rational Dissenter and contemporary of Wesley, thought Wesley to be an “irrationalist”; by suggesting that Wesley attempted to solve the challenges created by reason in his age by emphasizing what Saunders called “direct divine illumination”; and finally, by stating parenthetically in a footnote that Wesley was “not the most philosophically acute of religious thinkers.”⁶ Still, despite what Haakonssen has contributed to the study of what he has

⁴ Knud Haakonssen, ed., *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy*, Vols. 1 & 2 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Knud Haakonssen, ed., *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in eighteenth-century Britain* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 10, 252. Haakonssen’s observation, in his introduction, was based for the most part on Bebbington’s classic work, *Evangelicalism In Modern Britain*. *Ibid.*, 10n23.

⁶ Alan Saunders, “The state as highwayman: from candour to rights” in *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in eighteenth-century Britain*, ed., Knud Haakonssen (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996), x, 252, 252n26.

called Enlightened Dissent, the study of philosophy in the twenty-first century has left little or no room for a serious consideration of Wesley in the Enlightenment.⁷

Wesley Studies: A New Lens

Although the Wesley scholars discussed in this chapter have made no mention of using a common approach in their investigations into the intersection between Wesley and the Enlightenment, a new lens for this recent trend in Wesley studies has perhaps been encapsulated best by the term, engagement. In addition to the four lenses that historians of Enlightenment studies have developed for viewing the English Enlightenment, historical theologian Randy L. Maddox has provided a new lens for observing Wesley's engagement with the Enlightenment. He has described this new concept or lens in his recent article, "Honoring Conference."⁸

American Methodist historian Russell E. Ritchey encouraged Maddox to stay close to the language of early Methodism by using the terminology of "conferencing." Therefore, the language for Maddox's metaphor was associated not only with the conversations that occurred in Methodist societies, but also with the conferring that took place between Wesley and his itinerant preachers in the earliest Methodist Conferences. According to Maddox, "'Honoring conference' echoes strongly the focus of the annual conferences that Wesley held with his preachers, the first of which (in 1744) set the agenda of items typically considered: '1. What to teach; 2. How to

⁷ Haakonssen's conclusion to his introduction is worth noting. He believed, "It was the evangelical fervor of an earlier age that had emboldened the individual spirit to pursue truth for itself and thus tempted it to seek rational criteria for its progress; but when the progress of reason was projected to its completion, it could only be sustained through enthusiasm. Just as the religious mind was tempted into Enlightenment, so the enlightened mind exceeded itself and the excess was religious." Haakonssen, "Introduction," in *Enlightenment and Religion*, 11.

⁸ Maddox, "Honoring Conference," 77-116

teach; and 3. What to do; that is, how to regular our doctrine, discipline, and practice.”⁹ Still, for Maddox, the most fundamental embodiment of conferencing in early Methodism took place in Methodist societies: “That foundation was the class and band meetings, which focused on spiritual support and accountability.”¹⁰ In other words, the development of readers and practical theologians within Wesleyan Methodism was best understood as directly tied to the practice of spiritual disciplines in early Methodism.¹¹

Another term that gets to the essence of Maddox’s concept of “conferencing” was the language of dialoguing, which Outler had used to describe Wesley’s interaction with Classical sources that appeared in Wesley’s sermons.¹² Outler, as the editor of Wesley’s *Sermons* in the Bicentennial edition of *The Works of John Wesley*, spent over twenty years identifying, with the help of others, not only the Scripture passages and theological writings Wesley quoted or paraphrased, but also the non-biblical sources to which Wesley alluded. In the end, Outler admitted he had only started, in his search for the sources of allusions to non-biblical sources in Wesley’s sermons, what others would have to complete. Although, Outler was unable to finish

⁹ Ibid., 99.

¹⁰ Ibid. According to Rack, “Each [Methodist] society contained smaller groups. All full members were placed in ‘classes’ of about a dozen members under a leader which met weekly for spiritual conversation and guidance. . . . The more spiritually advanced members were also placed in ‘bands’ to pursue the gift of perfection. Those who appeared to have achieved it were placed in ‘select societies’ or ‘select bands.’ Finally, for a time there were also groups of ‘penitents,’ apparently of those who had fallen back from the bands and there were also experiments in classes for children. The class meeting persisted as the core of the Methodist system, but the more select groups were always more difficult to maintain.” Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 238-239.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Albert C. Outler, “Introduction” to *The Works of John Wesley: Sermons I*, Bicentennial edn., vol. 1, ed., Albert C. Outler (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), 71-73.

his task, the precedent he set has been adapted and used in this study, namely the attempt to identify and analyze in Wesley's *Works* not only his allusions, but also his dialogue with the ideas and values of the Enlightenment.¹³ However, after reviewing the alternative options for terminology to express Maddox's concept of "conference," for an audience outside Methodist circles and the realm of Wesley studies, the preferred language that will be used for the remainder of this study centers around the terminology of "engagement." This terminology for the metaphor of "conference" has been chosen primarily because it was the language Maddox used in two recent articles that analyzed how Wesley engaged the natural sciences of the Enlightenment, which included natural philosophy.¹⁴

In addition to defining the concept of his new lens, Maddox also provided perhaps the best example for why historians of Enlightenment studies as well as theologians of Wesley studies should use his lens to analyze the relationship between Wesley's theological reflection and the natural philosophy of the Enlightenment. First, Maddox highlighted Wesley's Anglican upbringing, which helped to predispose Wesley to studying God's revelation not only through Scripture, but also through the "book of nature."¹⁵ As a result, Wesley typically approached his study of the natural world with the intention of strengthening his faith. However, according to Maddox, Wesley's "reading of current studies of the natural world also helped him test and reshape inherited interpretations of Scripture."¹⁶ Second, Maddox gave an example of a change

¹³ Albert C. Outler, "Preface" to *The Works of John Wesley, Sermons I*, Bicentennial edn., vol. 1, ed., Albert C. Outler (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1984), xii-xiii.

¹⁴ Maddox, "John Wesley's Precedent," 23-54. Maddox, "Wesley's Engagement with the Natural Sciences," 160-175.

¹⁵ Maddox, "Honoring Conference," 90.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

that took place in Wesley's eschatology, his belief about the end times. Although the difference that Maddox highlighted in Wesley's theology about the final state of man and creation is significant, the explanation is beyond the scope of this study. However, what is most important for this study is why Wesley, in the final decade of his life changed his position on the end times. Why would Wesley change what he had consistently believed and taught for most of his life? For Maddox, "A major factor was his study, in his sixties, of some current works in natural philosophy (the closest term for "science" at the time) that utilized the model of the 'chain of beings.' Central to this model is the assumption that the loss of any type of 'being' in creation would call into question the perfection of the Creator. Prodded by this emphasis, Wesley began to take more seriously the biblical insistence that God desires to redeem the whole creation."¹⁷ In other words, Wesley's theological reflection on the end times changed because he engaged in the study of the natural philosophy of the Enlightenment.

By conferring with the books of experts in the natural sciences, he gained new insight into the one book, the Bible, which he comparatively held as above all other books as the revealed Word of God. Wesley became better in his theology as a man of one book in part through his reading or conferring with the books of others whom he did not completely agree with in his enlightened age. More specifically, Maddox explained how Wesley engaged natural philosophy: "Confronted by an apparent conflict between current 'scientific' accounts of the natural world and his current understanding of Scripture, Wesley did not simply debate which was more authoritative. He reconsidered his interpretations of each, seeking an understanding that honored both. In this way he upheld the authority of Scripture, while embracing the

¹⁷ Ibid., 91.

contribution of broad conferencing to understanding Scripture.”¹⁸ With this striking example, Maddox has made a convincing argument for the usefulness of his new lens for Wesley studies.

Juxtaposed against the traditional perception of Wesley that most philosophers have endorsed and many theologians have believed, Maddox portrayed Wesley as a stark contrast, in his recent article, “John Wesley’s Precedent for Theological Engagement with the Natural Sciences.”¹⁹ From Maddox’s perspective, there was no careful separation between Wesley’s theology and his natural philosophy. By the eighteenth century, natural philosophy or the study of the natural world was one of the four subdivisions that composed the study of philosophy along with logic, metaphysics and moral philosophy.²⁰ Although his compilation of natural philosophy expanded from two to five volumes, Wesley’s theology continued to work together without conflict in each volume that he added, edited and published for Methodists, entitled collectively, *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation: Or A Compendium of Natural Philosophy*.²¹ According to Maddox, Wesley’s “main goal in publishing *Survey* (and related

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Maddox, “John Wesley’s Precedent,” 23-54.

²⁰ According to *Oxford English Dictionary*, logic is “the branch of philosophy that treats of the forms of thinking in general . . . The definition formerly most commonly accepted is ‘the art of reasoning,’”; metaphysics is “the branch of philosophy that deals with the first principles of things or reality, including questions about being, substance, time and space, causation, change, and identity,”; and moral philosophy is “the branch of philosophy that deals with right and wrong conduct and with duty and responsibility.” *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “logic,” accessed March 19, 2017, OED Online. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “metaphysics,” accessed March 19, 2017, OED Online. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “moral philosophy,” accessed March 19, 2017, OED Online.

²¹ John Wesley, *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation: Or, A Compendium of Natural Philosophy: In Two Volumes* (Bristol, England: William Pine, 1763). John Wesley, *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation: Or, A Compendium of Natural Philosophy: In Five Volumes*, 4th ed. (London, England: J. Paramore, 1784).

items) was to enable his readers to benefit from the ‘book of God’s works’ as well as the ‘book of God’s Word,’ by distilling and presenting – in accessible format – current studies of the natural world. In the judgment of some historians of science, the result was the best single survey treatment of natural philosophy in the eighteenth century for general readers.”²² Thus, Wesley not only engaged the natural philosophy of the Enlightenment, he also made it available to Wesleyan Methodists (see Appendix B).

In addition, historical theologian David Rainey has delineated that Wesley’s theology and natural philosophy were distinct, but not disassociated. Thus, in his article, *Beauty in Creation: John Wesley’s Natural Philosophy*, Rainey emphasized that within Wesley’s *Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation*, “the Bible was never used as an instrumental source over science. Scripture could be a model for interpreting the discoveries of science but never in opposition to the latest scientific work. Considering that Wesley called himself ‘a man of one book’ he, evidently, had read the other book of creation as though it could stand on its own.”²³ In the end, Rainey concluded his article by stating that “from scripture and creation God’s wisdom, power, and goodness is revealed. No fear of dialogue between natural philosophy or science, and revealed theology through scripture is recognized by Wesley.”²⁴ Unlike Saunders depiction of Wesley earlier in this chapter, Rainey emphasized that “the evidence suggests from his [Wesley’s] volumes on natural philosophy that he was not out of step with eighteenth-century

²² Maddox, “Wesley’s Engagement with the Natural Sciences,” 167.

²³ David Rainey, “Beauty in Creation: John Wesley’s Natural Philosophy,” *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2017): 20, 18-35. Accessed March 13, 2017, JSTOR.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

science.”²⁵ Therefore, with the precedent for Wesley’s engagement with the Enlightenment clearly established by Maddox and supported by Rainey, this study will now consider what each of the four lenses introduced by historians of Enlightenment studies reveal more fully about the enlightenment of Wesley.

The Enlightenment of John Wesley

Porter’s Lens: Wesley’s Enlightenment

Porter replaced philosophy with the social history of ideas at the center of his definition for the Enlightenment. These social ideas were made clear in the English Enlightenment through the development of social attitudes. Porter’s primary view of the social attitudes in eighteenth-century England came primarily from Samuel Johnson. Porter used Johnson to argue that the social attitude that best described the English Enlightenment was Johnson’s description of his enlightened age as an “Age of Authors.”²⁶ Regardless of whether authors in eighteenth-century England were qualified in their role as “how to” experts, they produced resources, such as instructional manuals for various practical purposes, that shaped the English society. By using Porter’s lens, Wesley emerges as a reflection of his enlightened age. In an “Age of Authors,” Wesley embraced not only the values, but also the ideas of the English Enlightenment. By collecting, sorting, selecting, editing and adapting the practical knowledge available to him in the

²⁵ Ibid., 20.

²⁶ According to historian Jeremy Black, Samuel Johnson was well qualified to assess the character of his enlightened age because he “both advised on the purchase of books for the Royal Family and was a beneficiary of George’s largesse.” Jeremy Black, “John Wesley and History,” *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, vol. 9, no. 1 (2017): 9.

eighteenth century, Wesley not only became enlightened personally, but also influenced the enlightenment of others.

As discussed earlier in Chapter four, Porter retreated from his original claim, which highlighted the unique role that piety played in the English Enlightenment. According to Porter, in 1981, “Enlightenment goals . . . thrive in England *within* piety.”²⁷ However, by 2000, Porter had replaced the piety of England’s Enlightenment with the rationalized religion of the British Enlightenment.²⁸

In addition, Porter’s depiction of Wesley also changed. In 1981, Porter explained, “The vocabulary of liberty, interest and consensus won many converts. It took men who were as marginal as Swift, Wesley and Blake to decode its hidden messages and debunk it.”²⁹ However, by 2000, Porter intensified his tone, “The Locke-Addison trinity of liberty, self-interest and polish gained a firm hold in polite society, being devalued and debunked only by dogged self-marginalizers like Swift, Wesley and Blake.”³⁰ Although the basic form of Porter’s comments remained the same, the earlier and seemingly more neutral consideration of Wesley as marginal had become a negative determination of Wesley as entrenched.

Moreover, Porter portrayed Wesley along with Methodism as having no compatibility with the English Enlightenment. On the one hand, Porter presented Wesley as a counter-Enlightenment figure. Ironically, Porter not only argued for the secularization of England, but

²⁷ See also Porter’s footnote for the sources that informed his claim, which began with Gerald C. Gragg’s, *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century*, reviewed earlier in Chapter two. Porter, “The Enlightenment in England,” 6, 220n46.

²⁸ Porter, *Enlightenment*, 96-129.

²⁹ Porter, “The Enlightenment in England,” 16.

³⁰ Porter, *Enlightenment*, 482.

also attempted to use Wesley's comments to support his claim. According to Porter, "Religion seemed a shadow of its former self. John Wesley in fact rated it a most profane age: 'Ungodliness is our universal, our constant, our peculiar character . . . a total ignorance of God is almost universal among us.'"³¹ However, Porter does not balance Wesley's concern for his age or his nation with Wesley's greater confidence in what God had done and was continuing to do through the people called Methodists. In addition, Porter attempted to remove any fading hint of Methodism as having any role in England's Enlightenment by suggesting that "the famous Halévy thesis perhaps needs modifying: perhaps it was not Methodism but rather the Enlightenment which inoculated the English against the French, indeed against all subsequent revolutions."³² Oddly, Porter's failure to mention the English Enlightenment in his final posthumous work may have indicated that even his original concept of an English Enlightenment had become incompatible with the modern secular world that his later British Enlightenment had created.³³ On the other hand, Porter believed Wesley was an anti-intellectual. Because Wesley refused not only to believe the rationalized religion of his age, but also to give up his belief in the

³¹ Porter, *English Society*, 279.

³² Porter, *Enlightenment*, 483. Porter, "England," 415. According to Porter, "In the long term, however, Enlightenment values had penetrated very deeply under the English skin. By providing secular legitimation for free-market capitalism, they continued to inform Victorian self-help liberalism. In proclaiming individual progress through reason, they conjured up meliorist images of the future which immunized radicals against ideologies of class war." Ibid.

³³ In his posthumous work, Porter never mentioned an English Enlightenment, however, he reiterated his enduring belief that in the age of reason there was a demise of the soul: "Against the backcloth of the Enlightenment's watchword, *sapere aude* ('dare to know') [Kant], individuals reformulated the problems of existence and made sense of the self, with a changing, and waning, reference to the soul. It is a story of the disenchantment of the world, a move from a time when everything was ensouled (animism) towards a present day in which the soul is no longer an object of scientific inquiry, though the mind may still just be." Roy Porter, *Flesh In The Age of Reason* (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2003), 27.

demons and witchcraft of the Bible, Wesley, in Porter's eyes, could not possibly have been the man of reason that he claimed he was.³⁴ In contrast to Wesley's enlightened age, Porter thought Wesley was simply the "old fashioned" leader of Methodism.³⁵

Yet, despite Porter's anti-intellectual and counter-Enlightenment portrayal of Wesley, he ultimately provided Wesley studies with the possibility of understanding better Wesley's relation to the English Enlightenment through his new lens. In other words, Wesley's relation to the Enlightenment can be seen more easily by using Porter's new definition for the Enlightenment. Thus, with the social history of ideas at the center of Porter's definition, scholars of Wesley studies have the opportunity to see Wesley's engagement with Samuel Johnson's "Age of Authors."

From the vantage point of Samuel Johnson, Wesley was not only a man with an enlightened mind, but also a person who reflected some of the social attitudes of his day. First, in his letter to Wesley on 6 February 1776, Johnson wrote: "I have thanks likewise to return you for the addition of your important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained such a mind as yours, may justly confirm me in my own opinion. What effect my paper has had upon the publick, I know not; but I have no reason to be discouraged. The Lecturer was surely in the right, who, though he saw his audience slinking away, refused to quit the Chair, while Plato staid."³⁶ In his letter, Johnson appreciated that Wesley had used not only his mind,

³⁴ Porter, *Enlightenment*, 128.

³⁵ Porter, *The Enlightenment*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 61.

³⁶ Samuel Johnson, "A Letter to John Wesley, 6 February 1776," in *The Letters of Samuel Johnson*, vol. 2, ed., R. W. Chapman (Oxford, UK: At The Clarendon Press, 1952), 451. Wesley used Johnson's ideas on the Revolutionary War in America in his late-1775 political treatise entitled, *A Calm Address To Our American Colonies*, which had anything, but a calming effect on his audience.

but also his platform in England and America to adapt and publish for a broader audience what Johnson believed were enlightened ideas regarding the American War of Independence.

Second, Wesley reflects Johnson's "Age of Authors" not because Wesley as an author or editor published original ideas, but because he disseminated many of the ideas and values of the Enlightenment. In other words, Wesley exemplified the social attitude of Johnson's "Age of Authors". For example, Wesley, like the increasing number of experts in his age, provided a number of instructional resources for Methodists that were designed to encourage not only the learned, but also the unlearned to think for themselves. In the preface to his *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament* (1765), Wesley explained "it is not my design to write a book which a man may read separate from the Bible, but barely to assist those who fear God in hearing and reading the Bible itself, by showing the natural sense of every part in as few and plain words as I can."³⁷ More importantly, Wesley made it clear that "it is no part of my design to save either learned or unlearned men from the trouble of thinking. If so, I might perhaps write folios too, which usually overlay rather than help the thought. On the contrary, my intention is to make them think, and assist them in thinking."³⁸ Like the authors of Samuel Johnson's age, Wesley provided instructions on how to study the Old Testament. However, on this occasion, Wesley not only adapted the works of other experts to compile his instruction manual, but also required Wesleyan Methodists and others who used his new resource, beginning in 1765, to learn how to think for themselves as they studied the Bible.

³⁷ John Wesley, "Preface" to *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*, vol. 14, ed., Thomas Jackson (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1765, 1831, reprinted 1978), 252.

³⁸ Ibid.

Pocock's Lens: Wesley's Enlightenment

Pocock replaced philosophy with erudition at the center of his definition for Enlightenment. Although Pocock was comfortable with the concept of Enlightenment, he was adamant that this concept could not be forced into various regional or national contexts, including England. Pocock used Gibbon's experience of the English Enlightenment, the French Enlightenment, the Scottish Enlightenment and even a Protestant Enlightenment in Switzerland to argue for a multiple-Enlightenments or a family of Enlightenments approach to the study of Enlightenment.³⁹ As a result, Pocock demonstrated, in each location of his historiography of Enlightenment, that Gibbon became enlightened through erudition, which served as the constant and common denominator during each of Gibbon's different experiences of Enlightenment.⁴⁰

Therefore, from the vantage point of Pocock's lens, Wesley, like Gibbon, became enlightened through a lifelong process of relentless erudition. Like Gibbon, Wesley studied the Greek philosophers and the Latin poets while a student at Oxford and beyond as a don at Lincoln College. However, erudition emerged earlier in Gibbon than Wesley. In 1752, Gibbon entered Oxford, according to Pocock, as "a prodigy of uncontrolled reading."⁴¹ In 1727, Wesley exited Oxford with a master's degree and a self-imposed scheme of reading that served him as a

³⁹ Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 1, 9.

⁴⁰ After 1753, Gibbon had several different experiences of Enlightenment. According to Pocock, "The religious tensions inherent in English culture had brought him to Catholic conversion and exile to the Pays de Vaud; those inherent in Swiss Calvinist culture were to restore him to Protestantism but in the end to skepticism, and to intensify his involvement in the clerical erudition that underlay all religious debate, taking him in directions which we can recognize as those of Enlightenment, but of a Protestant Enlightenment active in all the Calvinist or partly Calvinist cultures of western Europe. Of these, England, with its Puritan past and the revulsion against it, was or had been one, and Scotland, whose civil and historical philosophy was not yet of the importance to Gibbon it would assume later, was another." *Ibid.*, 50.

⁴¹ Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 1, 29.

spiritual rule of life. While Gibbon admitted he came to Oxford with an “indiscriminate appetite” for reading, Wesley acknowledged he completed his Oxford education with an insatiable curiosity as a reader that needed to be curbed at times with prudence (see Appendix E).⁴² After Oxford, Gibbon’s erudition became more antiquarian through the study of history, while Wesley’s erudition became more contemporary through his wide reading, which, particularly in the 1760s, included books on natural philosophy and other natural sciences. Still, both Wesley and Gibbon became enlightened constantly by erudition because they spent their entire lives reading voraciously and learning endlessly.

However, the affinities between the erudition of Wesley and Gibbon do not extend to their history writing. Pocock described the erudition of Gibbon’s particular branch of historiography as similar to antiquarianism and archaeology, which have a common etymology. Like an antiquarian and archaeologist, who share an interest in ancient things including cultural objects such as inscriptions, sculptures and artefacts, Gibbon’s erudition, according to Pocock, “also took the ancient as its subject-matter, but was associated in particular with ancient written

⁴² Pocock also pointed out that, “according to the recollections of his older self, then, the fifteen-year-old Gibbon ‘arrived at Oxford,’ in 1752, ‘with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a Doctor [of Divinity], and a degree of ignorance of which a school boy would have been ashamed.’” Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 1, 28-29. See Appendix E for Wesley’s “Scheme of Studies” (1726) or erudition that he composed on the eve of the completion of his master’s degree from Oxford. On January 24, 1727, in a letter to his mother, John Wesley responded to her advice with the following reply: “I am perfectly come over to your opinion that there are many truths it is not worthwhile to know. Curiosity indeed might be a sufficient plea for our laying out some time upon them, if we had half a dozen centuries of life to come, but methinks it is great ill-husbandry to spend a considerable part of the small pittance now allowed us in what makes us neither a quick nor a sure return.” John Wesley’s letter to his mother Susanna (January 24, 1727), *Works*, 25:208.

texts.”⁴³ Thus, like an archaeologist, Gibbon was bent on discovering what was ancient in order to write his enlightened history.

In a recent article, Jeremy Black has argued that Wesley was not like Gibbon in the way he wrote history. According to Black, “John Wesley’s *History of England* is best discussed not in terms of the writings of famous historians who were his contemporaries, notably Edward Gibbon, David Hume, and William Robertson; it is more fruitful to see it as an important instance of the more frequent and populist type of historical publication during the century.”⁴⁴ In other words, Wesley wrote history more in the style, not the quality, of Classical historians like Tacitus, who emphasized the virtues of his father-in-law, *Agricola*, and taught moral lessons based on the good example and success of his actions, juxtaposed against the bad example and failure of his counterparts. From Black’s perspective, Wesley’s “approach reflected the weight of Classical models in the writing of history, . . . although Wesley himself was not interested in Classical comparisons. The focus on individuals and, in particular, on the warnings offered by their faults, was one frequently seen in other historical writing.”⁴⁵ Like Samuel Johnson, Black discovered that for many of the histories produced in Johnson’s age, “indeed, much of the writing lacked intellectual subtlety and philosophical profundity.”⁴⁶ Therefore, Black concluded that “It is instructive to consider Wesley in this context.”⁴⁷ Although Wesley’s history writing did not have the flare of Gibbon’s style and his depiction of Mary Queen of Scots was not

⁴³ Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 2, 14.

⁴⁴ Black, “John Wesley and History,” 1, 1-17.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

consistent with the histories of his contemporaries, Wesley's focus on the interplay between the providence of God and the choices of English monarchs with their consequences for the nation was typical of the popular histories that attempted to provide a moral lesson for the socio-political instability of their time.⁴⁸

Sheehan's Lens: Wesley's Enlightenment

Sheehan replaced philosophy with the concept of media at the center of his definition of the Enlightenment. As a result, Sheehan not only highlighted the public places where enlightenment took place in England and Germany, but also how the enlightenment was disseminated through various technologies, particularly the rapidly expanding print culture. Thus, from the vantage point of Sheehan's media-driven culture, Wesley can be found engaging the English Enlightenment in the place of erudition through reading and conferring with Methodists at conferences and in societies. Moreover, Wesley can be seen not only dialoguing, but also disseminating the ideas and values of England's Enlightenment particularly through his published journals and his public disputations in several prominent newspapers. Despite Sheehan's effort, unlike Maddox, to present Wesley's theology as incompatible with the Enlightenment, Sheehan's media-driven concept of the Enlightenment turns a floodlight on the ways Wesley brought the Enlightenment to Wesleyan Methodists, which will be analyzed in the final section of this chapter.

In *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (2005), Sheehan argued that the Bible, for English and German scholars of textual criticism, became a link between

⁴⁸ Ibid., 2.

religion and the Enlightenment.⁴⁹ However, for Sheehan, Wesley and his Methodism were not connected to the Enlightenment through the Bible for two reasons. First, they rejected biblical scholarship as being a fruitless enterprise that was woefully insufficient for securing religious vitality or reform. Second, they replaced philological inquiry with their religion of feeling or experience. Thus, according to Sheehan, “Wesley and his brethren shunned scholarship as an affirmation of Methodism’s independence of the Georgian Church and its controversies, in which scholarship was wielded as a weapon by the faithful and iconoclastic alike. The Bible guaranteed divine presence in Wesley’s theology but was seldom seen in its full complexity.”⁵⁰ Although Sheehan acknowledged Wesley’s proficiency for apologetics, he made no concession concerning the possibility of Wesley’s enlightenment.

Moreover, from Sheehan’s perspective, Wesley’s own biblical scholarship did not stand up to his contemporaries. For Wesley, Sheehan explained, “the ‘substance of all the Bible’ could be boiled down, he [Wesley] commented, to just two words, ‘faith and salvation.’ The contrast was stark, then, between Wesley and his favorite biblical interpreter, Johann Albrecht Bengel, a man who, while devoutly Pietist, was also one of the great textual scholars of the early eighteenth century.”⁵¹ Demonstrating inconsistency in his judgment, Sheehan discounted Wesley’s scholarship because it could not be reconciled with the priorities of his evangelical faith, while praising Bengel for his brilliance in textual criticism despite the radical beliefs of his

⁴⁹ Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 94-95. Responding to theologian Robin Scroggs’s claim in 1960 that Wesley was a biblical scholar, Sheehan smirked, “Apologetics aside, then, the idea that Wesley was one of the ‘great religious scholars of the eighteenth century’ is simply absurd.” *Ibid.*, 94n8.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

millenarianism, which led Bengel, not Wesley, to predict that Christ would return in 1836.⁵² In the end, Sheehan concluded, “Where Methodists would continue to insist on the equivalence of God’s Word and the Scriptures, German scholars—many of them devout, most of them products of Pietist milieus—would take advantage of the freedom offered by a Bible loosened from its theological foundation.”⁵³ Ironically, the primary sources, Wesley’s journals and sermons, that Sheehan used to disqualify Wesley as an enlightened biblical scholar, were the same communication tools that Wesley used to bring not only spiritual enlightenment to Methodists, but also the ideas and values of the English Enlightenment that Wesley engaged both positively and negatively.⁵⁴

Still, Sheehan’s media-driven concept of the Enlightenment provides new opportunities for determining how the religious beliefs and practices of Wesley and Wesleyan Methodists fused with the English Enlightenment. By using Sheehan’s lens, Wesley can be seen attempting to meet not only the spiritual, but also the social, cultural and intellectual needs of Wesleyan Methodists by becoming fluent in the technologies of their media-driven English Enlightenment. In the locations of Methodist societies and Methodist Conference as well as through the media of

⁵² Discussed earlier in Chapter three, Margaret Jacob, because she believed incorrectly that Wesley had predicted the return of Christ in 1836, she indirectly criticized Bengel harshly for his radical millenarian beliefs. Jacob, *The Newtonians*, 129.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁵⁴ For example, Sheehan argued from Wesley’s first journal entry in 1751 that “in Wesley’s story, the Bible played an uneasy part.” *Ibid.*, 94. In contrast to one of Heitzenrater’s guidelines for interpreting *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, highlighted in the introduction of this study, Sheehan turned one of Wesley’s isolated encounters with the Bible into a normative experience not only for Wesley, but also for all Methodists. *Ibid.*

England's print culture, Wesley brought selectively and intentionally his own engagement with the English Enlightenment to Wesleyan Methodists (see Appendix H).⁵⁵

Bulman's Lens: Wesley's Enlightenment

By replacing philosophy with religion at the center of his definition for the Enlightenment, Bulman provided a lens for seeing Wesley's relation to the English Enlightenment through his continuity with the Anglican Enlightenment. In other words, Wesley's enlightenment took place in part because of the ideas and values he inherited from the Anglican Enlightenment. However, the Protestant Enlightenment that took place in the Anglican Church did not shape Wesley into a compliant Anglican priest who existed to serve the politico-ecclesiastical interests of the church and the state in England, which some historians believe could not be separated during the eighteenth century.⁵⁶ By contrast, Wesley defied the Bishop of

⁵⁵ Appendix H is a catalog of the books that Wesley designated to be held for his use and the use of his preachers in the libraries of the Methodist societies at London, Bristol and Newcastle during an early annual conference in 1745. According to Rack, "In the 1744 Minutes (§84), Wesley had set down for his Assistants' reading a brief list of books, beginning with the classics and ending with a handful of works on practical divinity. Here, in the following year, Wesley expands that list and sets it forth in a much more elaborate and detailed form, along with the stipulation that these works were to form the nucleus for three libraries, one in each of his three main centres. On this occasion they were stated to be for JW's own use, but it is clear that they were also intended to stimulate the studies of his preachers. Provisions were made for the further expansion of the list by the inclusion of numbered blank spaces in several classifications." Henry D. Rack, ed., *The Works of John Wesley: The Methodist Societies: The Minutes of Conference*, Bicentennial ed., vol. 10 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), 161n319.

⁵⁶ For another view see Jason E. Vickers, *Wesley: A Guide For The Perplexed* (London, UK: T & T Clark International, 2009). Vickers developed a new *Anglican stabilization thesis*, based, in part, on the combined scholarship of J. C. D. Clark and Jeremy Gregory in order to replace the problematic secularization thesis as an interpretive lens for Wesley. According to Vickers: "One way to read Gregory's criticism of Clark is to note that it is by no means an outright rejection of the confessional state thesis. Gregory is simply calling attention to the fact that the confessional state was never a *fait accompli*. On the contrary, the construction and

Bristol, Joseph Butler. According to Outler, “On many points of churchmanship and polity that seemed crucial to the Anglican establishment, Wesley was almost blithely irregular. One may see this in the smugness of his report of his defiance of Bishop Butler’s attempt to interdict him from irregular preaching in the diocese of Bristol.”⁵⁷ Thus, Outler appraised Wesley’s irregularities in the following way: “On the score of practical ecclesiology, Wesley was less Anglican than on any other; his self-justification here was strictly pragmatic. The Revival had not only outlasted all precedent and expectations; it had actually served the Christian cause in England and, therefore, the Church of England.”⁵⁸ Although the Anglican Enlightenment helped to enlighten Wesley, Wesley may have become more enlightened through his disputations with Anglican bishops, such as Butler, who charged Wesley and Methodism with enthusiasm, than through his Anglican compliance.⁵⁹ Still, before analyzing Wesley’s defense of Wesleyan Methodism in the next section, this study will exam the contribution of historical theologians

maintenance of the confessional state met with resistance and required a great deal of political savvy and some very hard work on the ground, most notably by high-ranking clergy. Thus Gregory’s own contribution to our understanding of eighteenth-century English church and society is a careful study of the work done by the clergy in the eighteenth century, including their response to and management of nonconformity and, more positively, their allowance and even encouragement of ‘new religious impulses.’ If we combine Clark’s revisionist thesis with Gregory’s analysis of the work being done on the ground, the picture that begins to emerge is one in which the Church of England played a leading role in the stabilization of English society as a confessional state throughout the long eighteenth century. On this picture, the clergy were neither idle nor secular. They were busy developing and deploying a political strategy for the reconstruction and maintenance of England as a confessional state. Let us call this the *Anglican stabilization thesis*.” Ibid., 44-45.

⁵⁷ Outler, “Introduction” to *Sermons*, vol. 1, 85-86.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 86.

⁵⁹ Outler, *Sermons*, vol. 2, 44-45. Anglican bishops, Edmund Gibson and George Lavington charged Wesley and Methodists with enthusiasm. In response, Wesley composed and published controversial treatises to defend Wesleyan Methodism.

Deborah Madden and Paul Avis who have recently provided a glimpse of Wesley's enlightenment through their consideration of the Anglican Enlightenment's influence on Wesley's orthopraxy and orthodoxy.

First, historical theologian Deborah Madden has highlighted the influence of Anglican philanthropy and charity on Wesley's interaction with natural science and medicine, which resulted in what she has labelled practical piety.⁶⁰ According to Madden, Wesley as an Anglican, "was keen to incorporate his medical researches into God's plan but did not attempt to subjugate those medical and scientific discoveries to theology. Instead, he scrutinized enlightened thinking with a theologian's eye and put it to useful, practical effect."⁶¹ Thus, Anglican philanthropy and charity built around the concept of duty helped to shape Wesley, like other clergymen, to be committed out of a sense of duty to God, to himself and to the benefit of humankind. In addition, Madden argued that "Wesley's Anglicanism not only served to bridge the differences between his theology and the Enlightenment, but that it was practical piety, or an active faith, which utilized Christian enlightened thinking to promote healing via moral and medical reform."⁶² Although the discoveries of Madden's social history of Wesley demonstrate closer affinities to the Enlightenment through his continuity with the Anglican Enlightenment,

⁶⁰ Deborah Madden, "Medicine and Moral Reform: The Place of Practical Piety in John Wesley's Art of Physic," *Church History*, vol. 73, no. 4 (Dec., 2004): 741-758, accessed March 4, 2015, JSTOR. Deborah Madden, "Wesley as Advisor on Health and Healing," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, eds., Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 176-189.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 754. According to Madden, "Key to this reformation was the concept of duty, an example of which can be seen, argues L. Haakonssen, in the fact that Enlightenment medical ethics grew out of this Christian precept." See also Lisbeth Haakonssen, *Medicine and Morals in the Enlightenment: John Gregory, Thomas Percival and Benjamin Rush* (Amsterdam: Clio Medica, 1997), 30. Madden, "Medicine and Moral Reform," 754-755.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 742.

Madden's research was still tethered to a Christianized form of enlightened thinking informed by a definition of enlightenment that had philosophy at its center.

As a medical historian of the Enlightenment, Porter, like his mentor Plumb, criticized Wesley for being unscientific in his efforts to provide care for the physical bodies of his Methodists. By contrast, however, Madden pointed out that "there has been a concerted effort in very recent years to see Wesley as a critical admirer of Enlightenment principles, as a deeply pious individual who could minister to the physical and spiritual welfare of the poor, applying remedies for the body or prayer for the soul when appropriate."⁶³ In addition, Madden claimed that although the Anglican Enlightenment shaped Wesley's sense of duty, "it was a heartfelt compassion for those in urgent need of medical treatment that led Wesley to make 'some attempt, towards a plan and easy way of curing most diseases.'"⁶⁴ The end result of Wesley's research and experimental method was the publication of one of his most popular non-theological works, *Primitive Physic*, which went through several editions before Wesley's death in 1791.⁶⁵

⁶³ Madden, "Wesley as advisor on health and healing," 178. See Madden's extensive list of historiography on the compatibility of Wesley's approach to health and healing with the English Enlightenment. *Ibid.*, 178n8.

⁶⁴ Madden, "Medicine and Moral Reform," 758.

⁶⁵ John Wesley's *Primitive Physic* was first published in 1747. See Frank Baker's list of the more than twenty editions of this work that were published before Wesley's death. Baker, *A Union Catalogue*, 76- 78. According to Madden, "*Primitive Physic* not only reveals Wesley's unique holistic theological approach to healing the *dis-ease* of our fallen state, but underscores the typicality of his empirical medical practice in Georgian England. Wesley's unified conception of humanity and nature in *Primitive Physic* reconciled all contradictory forces to find a median point. It was this median point that would ensure health, happiness, holiness, and ultimately Christian Perfection." Madden, "Wesley as advisor on health and healing," 189.

More recently, theologian Paul Avis has argued that Anglican theology influenced Wesley's enlightenment. In other words, he claimed that Wesley should be understood as an intellectual in the Enlightenment who was not only interested in contemporary ideas, but also trained as a scholar at Oxford. Thus, Avis claimed that Wesley should be considered as a "figure of the Anglican Enlightenment."⁶⁶ In his description of Wesley's enlightened age, Avis argued that "Christian and Anglican writers adopted the pervasive vernacular imagery of the enlightened mind and enlightened society. They also learnt to appeal to reason rather than to received authority. They believed in progress, even if, as in the case of Wesley, it was progress in the spread of the gospel, renovated lives and a purified nation."⁶⁷ However, Avis reached too far with his presupposition of a Christian Enlightenment when he argued, yes, "the Enlightenment was many-faceted, but it was, to a significant extent, a Christian cultural movement."⁶⁸ To maintain the paradox or compatibility of a Christian Enlightenment in England has merit. However, to flatten either Christianity or the Enlightenment into the other by making the two movements synonymous would be untenable. Still, Avis does well to bring the attention of

⁶⁶ Paul Avis, *In Search of Authority: Anglican Theological Method from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2014), xiv, 294. Unfortunately, Avis admittedly under the influence of J. H. Plumb, despite his best intentions, completely misrepresented Wesley in one instance. *Ibid.*, 297n31. According to Avis, "In spite of his passion for self-improvement and edifying reading among Methodists, Wesley colluded with the anti-intellectual, philistine elements among his uneducated or semi-educated followers; he was not interested in helping them to think for themselves, but only to think as he himself thought." *Ibid.*, 297. Although Avis highlighted, later in his book, Wesley's preface to his *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament* (1755), he failed to consider Wesley's preface to his *Explanatory Notes on the Old Testament* (1765), which was analyzed earlier in this chapter. *Ibid.*, 300.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

theologians to consider more carefully the possible continuities between Wesley and the Anglican Enlightenment.⁶⁹

The Enlightenment of Wesleyan Methodists

John Wesley engaged the social attitude, erudition, media and religion of the English Enlightenment. He encountered England's Enlightenment not only through what he read and studied, but also through how he lived. However, the enlightenment of John Wesley was most evident in how he took responsibility for what came to be delineated in the nineteenth century as Wesleyan Methodism. In his publications and correspondence, Wesley selectively embraced the English Enlightenment and disseminated some of its ideas and values to the Methodists he lead in ways that can appear inconsistent or contradictory when divorced from their practical purposes. However, Wesley's overarching purpose was consistent. He continually attempted throughout his life as the leader of Wesleyan Methodists to close the gap between their heart religion and reason. As a result, Wesley's pastoral care and advice through published materials and private letters facilitated the enlightenment of Wesleyan Methodists not only spiritually, but also intellectually. In other words, what Locke, Hobbes and other figures of England's Enlightenment exemplified, wrote, and published to influence political people of power, Wesley analyzed, adapted, and printed to guide plain people of piety.

⁶⁹ See Avis's fuller discussion of Wesley as an intellectual as well as Wesley's relationship to the Anglican Enlightenment. According to Avis, "John Wesley has been the prisoner of Methodist hero worship, and of the myths that grew up around him and which he certainly helped to create. . . . One way of putting him back where he belongs historically is to reclaim his Anglican, Church of England identity. Another is to recognize his credentials as an intellectual of the British and Anglican Enlightenment." *Ibid.*, 295, 294-300.

English Enlightenment Figures in *The Works of John Wesley*

John Locke

Recently, Robert Webster claimed that “Wesley’s idea of reason found its fundamental starting point, . . . from his understanding of Aristotelian logic.”⁷⁰ Wesley learned disputations and developed his preference for Aristotle’s logic from his mentor at Oxford, Henry Aldrich, the Dean of Christ Church, and the author of *Artis Logicae Compendium*, the standard text on Aristotelian logic at Oxford.⁷¹ However, while Webster attested to Wesley’s disposition toward Aristotle, embrace of reason and prowess in disputations, another theologian, Mark T. Mealey, questioned Wesley’s ability to assess what others, like Locke, thought about Aristotle.⁷²

For example, Wesley criticized Locke in his *Remarks on Locke’s Essay Concerning Understanding* (1781) for what he perceived in Locke to be an aversion to Aristotelian logic. After he acknowledged his dislike for the new categories Locke used to explain his epistemology, Wesley seemed to correct Locke condescendingly by reiterating what Aristotle had already established: “The Operations of the Mind are three, *Simple Apprehension*,

⁷⁰ Webster, *Methodism and the Miraculous*, 28.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 26-32. According to Webster, “humanity has a thirst for knowledge that cannot be ignored or suppressed. Wesley himself epitomized this, being a man of almost boundless curiosity. In this regard, he was a man of his century, an exemplar of the desire for knowledge and the acquisition of information which permeated the Enlightenment.” *Ibid.*, 26.

⁷² Mealey, “Tilting at windmills,” 331-346. “In the pithy comments on Locke’s discussion of species and essence, Wesley notices Locke rejecting the basic elements of the Aristotelian metaphysics, physics and theory of cognition. That is, Wesley quite rightly sees that Locke has departed from Aristotle at all the most important places. But he assumes that this is a series of mistakes due to a defect in Locke’s education; it does not occur to Wesley that Locke has actually set out to replace the Aristotelian metaphysics and the Aristotelian theory of cognition, and probably understands it quite well. Wesley does catch, however, that Locke is intent on replacing the Aristotelian logic.” *Ibid.*, 343.

Judgment, Discourse.”⁷³ Whether Wesley believed that Locke had failed to understand Aristotle or simply refused to use Aristotle’s traditional framework was unclear. However, Wesley had already demonstrated his preference for Aristotle’s categories not only by translating Aldrich’s text, which featured Aristotle’s psychology, but also by publishing it for his Methodists (1750).⁷⁴

More significant than Wesley’s criticism of Locke was Wesley’s use of the ideas and values contained in Locke’s *Essay* to bring about the enlightenment of Wesleyan Methodists. Therefore, in this section, this study will attempt to answer the question, why did John Wesley publish so many extracts of Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in his *Arminian Magazine*? In the monthly edition, published in January 1782, Wesley introduced his abridgment of Locke’s *Essay* with the following remarks:

For some days I have employed myself on the road in reading Mr. Locke’s ‘Essay on Human Understanding:’ And I do not now wonder at its having gone through so many editions in so short a time. . . . A deep fear of God, and reverence for his word, are discernible throughout the whole: And though there are some mistakes, yet these are abundantly compensated by many curious and useful reflections. I think, therefore, a little time will be well employed in pointing out those little mistakes, and in extracting some of the most useful passages of that excellent treatise.⁷⁵

In these introductory comments regarding Locke’s *Essay*, Wesley inferred three things about Locke: he feared God, he revered God’s Word and some of his ideas were useful to Methodists.

⁷³ *Remarks upon Mr. Locke’s “Essay On Human Understanding,” Works* (Jackson), 13:456. Sermon 70, “The Case of Reason Impartially Considered,” I.2, *Works*, 2:590.

⁷⁴ John Wesley, *A Compendium of Logick* (Bristol, England: Felix Farley, 1750). According to Rack, Wesley “endorses Locke’s condemnation of innate ideas, but sees his views on logic as being inferior to Aristotle and the old Oxford logics like Dean Aldrich’s. This is very much what one would expect from an Oxford man of Wesley’s generation.” Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast*, 386.

⁷⁵ *Remarks upon Mr. Locke’s “Essay On Human Understanding,” Works* (Jackson), 13:455.

From January 1782 to June 1784, Wesley published an abridgement of Locke's *Essay* in the *Arminian Magazine*. For the first twenty-eight consecutive months Wesley selected extracts exclusively from Books One and Two of the *Essay*, including an addendum of his "Remarks" in only five of those monthly issues. For the May and June 1784 issues, he published twenty-four annotations, in groups of twelve per month, that highlighted some of the "little mistakes" from Books Three and Four of the *Essay*, while claiming that it would take him too long to correct everything in them. Despite his disappointment that the last two books were not written as well as the first two books, Wesley never discouraged Methodists from reading the entirety of the *Essay*, which he concluded was an "excellent treatise." In order to ascertain an answer for why Wesley published Locke's *Essay*, this study will provide a brief history of the scattered references to Locke found in *The Works of John Wesley* and an introduction to Wesley's use of Locke in the *Arminian Magazine*.

John Locke in *The Works of John Wesley*

Wesley first encountered Locke's *Essay* long before he reread and abridged it in 1781 for his *Arminian Magazine*. In fact, Wesley had already read Locke's *Essay* as a student at Oxford in 1725.⁷⁶ As a result, when Methodism began to rise in the 1740s, consolidate in the 1750s and 1760s, and expand across the Atlantic Ocean in the 1770s and 1780s, Wesley found Locke's *Essay* useful for helping Methodism in each of these three developmental stages.

First, Wesley used Locke's *Essay* in the 1740s not only to teach Methodists, but also to defend Methodism. Perhaps, a young Wesley penned his best adaptation and application of Locke's *Essay* simultaneously in the following excerpts from his 1744 apologetic treatise, "An

⁷⁶ Sermon 70, "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered," *Works*, 2:589n7.

Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion.” With exhortations that anticipated his purpose for the *Essay* nearly forty years later, Wesley called all “who seek after true religion, to use all the reason which God hath given them, in searching out the things of God.”⁷⁷ He then went on to explain what was needed to apprehend them:

And seeing our ideas are not innate, but must all originally come from our senses, it is certainly necessary that you have senses capable of discerning [the things of God] . . . not . . . ‘natural senses’ . . . but spiritual senses, exercised to discern spiritual good and evil [Hebrews 5:14]. It is necessary . . . that you have a new class of senses opened in your soul, not depending on organs of flesh and blood, to be ‘the evidence of things not seen’ [Hebrews 11:1], as your bodily senses are of visible things; [but] to be the avenues to the invisible world, to discern spiritual objects, and to furnish you with ideas of what the outward ‘eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard’ [1 Corinthians 2:9].⁷⁸

Because Locke’s ideas and language were common, Wesley found them useful to teach Methodists about spiritual truths.

However, an additional argument can be made that an understanding of Locke’s language and ideas in the *Essay* were more than just useful in the 1740s, they were necessary. According to Ward, Locke’s “impact upon eighteenth-century thought was so pervasive that all religious thinkers (including [Jonathan] Edwards and JW [Wesley]) had to take his psychology into account in their own discussion of religious experience.”⁷⁹ Wesley not only demonstrated that an understanding of Locke’s *Essay* was necessary to preach or communicate effectively with some in his audiences, but he also discovered that on at least one occasion he needed an insight from the *Essay* to make sense of his own personal experience.⁸⁰ While recalling a well written

⁷⁷ Cragg, *Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion*, 56-57.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ W. R. Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds., *The Works of John Wesley: Journal and Diaries III*, Bicentennial ed., vol. 20 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1991), 66n77.

⁸⁰ Sermon 70, “The Case of Reason Impartially Considered,” §1-6, *Works*, 2:587-89.

letter in his journal entry for 29 May 1745 that summarized a chapter from Locke's *Essay*, "Of the Association of Ideas [Book Two, Chapter XXXIII]," Wesley found encouragement and gained a new perspective on the impasse he was experiencing in an endless debate. With Locke's help, Wesley recognized that when a person believed his opinion to be right or infallible and thus, never considered any opinion other than his own, the result was a false association of ideas that came about by measuring all other ideas against only what a fallible person has always believed to be the right opinion.⁸¹ Perhaps because he found the ideas in Locke's chapter on the "Association of Ideas" personally useful, Wesley not only extracted a higher percentage from it than from any other chapter of Locke's *Essay* that he published in the *Arminian Magazine*, but also included all but one paragraph from it.

Second, as a former Oxford don who tutored at Lincoln College, Wesley used Locke's *Essay* in the 1750s and 1760s to educate Wesleyan Methodist circuit preachers. In his journal entry, 6 December 1756, Wesley wrote: "I began reading to our preachers the late Bishop of Cork's [Peter Browne's] excellent treatise on *Human Understanding*—in most points far clearer and more judicious than Mr. Locke's, as well as designed to advance a better cause."⁸² In this

⁸¹ *Journal* (May 29, 1745), *Works*, 20:66-67.

⁸² W. R. Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds., *The Works of John Wesley: Journal and Diaries IV*, Bicentennial ed., vol. 21 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 83. According to Ward, "Peter Browne (c. 1665-1735), became a fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, 1692; provost, 1699; and Bishop of Cork and Ross in 1710." *Ibid.*, 83n17. Wesley had a high regard for Browne's treatise entitled: *The Procedure (or Progress), Extent, and Limits of Human Understanding* (London, 1729). In fact, he made an abridgment of Browne's treatise, while a student at Oxford in 1730. Wesley's conviction that Locke despised and never understood Aristotle's logic was informed in part by Browne's treatise. According to Maddox, "Browne explicitly rejected [the] . . . idea of spiritual senses in *Limits of Human Understanding*, pp. 94-96, 111. Wesley edited these rejections out of his abridgement of Browne (cf. *Survey* 5:157-159)." Maddox, *Responsible Grace*, 262n8.

brief comment Wesley made a point to compare Peter Browne's treatise with Locke's famous *Essay*, the foundation upon which Browne's work had been constructed because Locke's *Essay* was still the standard by which other treatises were measured in the 1750s. However, unlike his preferred use of Browne's treatise, Wesley left no record of ever reading Locke's *Essay* to his itinerant preachers, even though he made every effort to provide them an education of reading requirements that extended beyond theology. As a tutor for Methodism, Wesley not only developed a curriculum for his preachers, but he also designed a four year method of academic learning for his Kingswood School, which included reading Locke's *Essay* in the final year. In 1768, Wesley published a detailed account of his school claiming that "whoever carefully goes through this course [of academic learning] will be a better scholar than nine in ten of the graduates at Oxford or Cambridge."⁸³ Moreover, in 1781, Wesley, once again printed an update about his Kingswood School, but this time he emphasized that the design of its Christian education was to produce "rational, scriptural Christians," a goal that important works, like Locke's *Essay*, helped students to achieve.⁸⁴

Third, Wesley used Locke's *Essay* from the 1760s to the 1780s to inform Methodists, as well as family members, who had an appetite for reading and knowledge. Although Wesley ultimately introduced the *Essay* to avid Methodist readers in his *Arminian Magazine*, he initially endorsed the *Essay* through his correspondence. On 8 September 1781, Wesley composed a letter to his niece prescribing a reading course to accommodate her "desire for knowledge" that was similar to one he had written earlier in June 1764 to Margaret Lewen, which included both

⁸³ *A Short Account of The School In Kingswood, Near Bristol*, §6, *Works* (Jackson), 13:287-289.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 293.

Locke's and Browne's book on human understanding. Expectedly, Wesley put knowing God at the top of the list followed immediately by these instructions: "All you want to know of Him is contained in one book, the Bible. And all you learn is to be referred to this, either directly or remotely (see Appendix G)."⁸⁵ Farther down the list, Wesley recommended Locke's *Essay* specifically for the study of "metaphysics" along with Nicholas Malebranche's *Search after Truth*, but unlike the letter he wrote to Lewen in 1764, Browne's book on human understanding was omitted from the list entirely, perhaps because it was either out of print or no longer Wesley's preference.⁸⁶ Thus, by the time Wesley, as the editor of the *Arminian Magazine*, decided to publish his abridgment of Locke's *Essay* in order to address a newly discerned need in Methodism, he had already used language and ideas from the *Essay* for years to establish Methodism and equip Methodist preachers.

John Locke in Wesley's *Arminian Magazine*

An understanding of Wesley's reason for including Locke's *Essay* in the *Arminian Magazine* begins by discerning Wesley's evolving general purpose for the periodical, which can be found in the prefaces of his first annual issues (1778-1781). In 1778, according to Wesley, there were many "Christian Magazines" swarming around the world prior to the 1770s. However, this trend was discontinued much to the displeasure of many "serious and sensible" people. Into this void, two magazines emerged, *The Spiritual Magazine* and *The Gospel Magazine*, each espousing a theology that Wesley claimed depicted God as "not loving to every

⁸⁵ John Wesley's letter to his niece (September 8, 1781), *Letters* (Telford), 7:81-82. See Appendix G for the entire content of the letter.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 82.

man, that his mercy is not over all his works: and consequently, that Christ did not die for all, but for one in ten, for the Elect only.”⁸⁷ Therefore, to offset the doctrine of this barrage of tracts, Wesley began publishing *The Arminian Magazine*, which he designed to present a different theological opinion and to maintain that “God willeth all men to be saved, by speaking the truth in love: by arguments and illustrations drawn, partly from Scripture, partly from Reason; proposed in as inoffensive a manner as the nature of the thing will permit.”⁸⁸

Two years later (Preface 1780), Wesley readdressed objections to the design of his *Arminian Magazine* and expanded the variety of the content making it possible for Locke’s *Essay* to fit within the purpose of the periodical: “I have again maturely considered the objection so frequently made from want of Variety. And in order to obviate this objection, I will submit to the advice of my Friends, and occasionally insert several little pieces, that are not immediately connected with my main design.”⁸⁹ In the following year (Preface 1781), Wesley’s magazine was still hampered with requests for more variety. Wesley responded: “But still want of variety is objected. Yea, and it ever will be objected. For I dare not fill up any Publication of mine with bits and scraps, to humour any one living. It is true, I am not fond of verbose writers. neither [sic] of very long treatises. I conceive, the size of a book is not always the measure of the writer’s understanding (see Appendix C).”⁹⁰ Yet, despite his preference, Wesley recognized the

⁸⁷ John Wesley, ed., *The Arminian Magazine*, vol. 1 (London, England: Printed by J. Fry & Co. in Queen-Street, 1778), iii.

⁸⁸ Wesley, *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 1, iv.

⁸⁹ John Wesley, ed., *The Arminian Magazine*, vol. 3 (London, England: Printed by J. Paramore, 1780), vii.

⁹⁰ John Wesley, ed., *The Arminian Magazine*, vol. 4 (London, England: Printed by J. Paramore, 1781), iv.

popularity of Locke's exceptionally long *Essay* and wisely took advantage of his readers' interest in Locke by providing a commentary for how Methodists should interpret Locke's ideas.

Besides his abridgment of Locke's *Essay* in the *Arminian Magazine*, Wesley introduced the importance of Locke to Methodists through three different mediums: a letter, a book review and an editorial reply. First, Wesley included a letter from his mother, Susanna Annesley Wesley [1669-1742], in the second monthly issue, February 1778, of the *Arminian Magazine*. In this correspondence, she borrowed from the wisdom of Locke to help answer some of her young son's questions about the relationship between faith and reason. Of the first eleven letters that Wesley published for the first two months of the magazine, the first three were letters to Wesley from his father, Rev. Mr. Samuel Wesley, and the following eight letters were written to Wesley by his mother. In response to those who criticized the early issues of the magazine for being too short and lacking variety, Wesley replied in a published letter dated 5 June 1778: "In the letters there is certainly as much variety as any reasonable man can expect. Indeed they are all serious. And they all relate to one thing, the work of God in the heart. But this also was what I promised at first, what I proposed from the beginning."⁹¹ Against this backdrop of Wesley's general purpose for the letters he selected for his periodical, Wesley foreshadowed what he wanted to bring eventually to Methodism through Locke's *Essay* by using his mother's spiritual advice.

On 14 February 1735, Susanna Wesley wrote:

Dear Son . . . Yet one thing I cannot forbear adding, which may carry some weight with his Admirers, and that is, the very wise and just reply, which Mr. Locke made to one that desired him to draw up a System of Morals: Did the world, says he, want a Rule, I confess, there could be no work so necessary, nor so commendable. But the Gospel

⁹¹ Wesley, *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 1, 3.

contains so perfect a body of Ethics, that Reason may be excused from that Enquiry, since she may find Man's Duty clearer, and easier in Revelation, than in herself.⁹²

What Wesley saw for Methodism in his mother's letter was not a moral philosophy like the one requested of Locke in 1696, but an understanding that Locke had of the relationship between reason and faith in which revelation transcended the limits of reason.

Second, in the April 1781 issue of his magazine, Wesley published a critical review entitled "Thoughts upon Baron Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws." Wesley read Montesquieu's seminal work with huge expectations because Montesquieu had received international admiration and his book, according to Wesley, was "everywhere spoken of as the highest effort of genius that ever was."⁹³ However, after he finished *The Spirit of Laws*, Wesley, unlike so many others, claimed that he did not admire Montesquieu for three reasons: because he found at least half of his book to be "dry, dull, unaffecting and unentertaining," because he did not believe many remarks in his book to be either "just" or "true," and most of all, because he could not admire someone who took "every opportunity [in his book] to depreciate the inspired writers; Moses, in particular."⁹⁴ As a result, in the closing comments of his review, Wesley argued that Montesquieu did not deserve the "violent encomiums" he had received, and that when compared to Blaise Pascal, Malebranche or Locke, Montesquieu was a "child," who "excelled in

⁹² Ibid., 81, 83. Here Susanna Wesley refers to Locke's letter on 5 April 1696 to William Molyneux, who was responding to requests from both Molyneux and Ezekiel Burridge [1661-1707] in a letter from Molyneux on 14 March 1696 for Locke to write a "Book of Offices or Moral philosophy." See both letters in E.D. De Beer, ed., *The Correspondence of John Locke*, vol. 5 (Oxford, UK: At The Clarendon Press, 1979), 569-570 (Letter 2038) and 593-596 (Letter 2059).

⁹³ Wesley, *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 4, 206.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 208.

imagination, but not in judgment, any more than in solid learning.”⁹⁵ Furthermore, Wesley not only compared the abilities of Locke and Montesquieu in the *Arminian Magazine*, but he also compared their landmark works. Thus, Wesley remarked, “For what comparison is there between this deep, solid, weighty treatise [Locke’s *Essay*], and the lively, glittering trifle [*The Spirit of Laws*] of Baron Montesquieu? As much as between tinsel and gold; between glass-beads and diamonds.”⁹⁶ In the end, what Wesley admired about Locke, in part, was indirectly revealed by way of contrast to Montesquieu.

Third, after two years of publishing monthly extracts from Locke’s *Essay*, Wesley responded in the preface of his January 1784 issue to the objections specifically directed toward his use of Locke’s *Essay* in his periodical: “Perhaps it may be said, ‘. . . the Extracts from and Remarks upon Mr. Locke, are not intelligible to common Readers.’ I know it well: but did I ever say this was intended for common Readers only? By no means. I publish it for the sake of the learned as well as the unlearned Readers (see Appendix D).”⁹⁷ Wesley then followed this clarification about his intentions with an evaluation of the suitability of Locke’s philosophical *Essay* for his readers: “But as the latter are the greater number, nine parts in ten of the Work are generally suited to their capacity. What they do not understand, let them leave to others, and endeavor to profit by what they do understand.”⁹⁸ In other words, Wesley firmly believed that his subscribers did not have to understand everything they read in Locke’s *Essay* to benefit by it.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 209.

⁹⁶ John Wesley, ed., *The Arminian Magazine*, vol. 5 (London, England: Printed by J. Paramore, 1782), 27.

⁹⁷ John Wesley, ed., *The Arminian Magazine*, vol. 7 (London, England: Printed by J. Paramore, 1784), v.

⁹⁸ Ibid., v-vi.

In his *Remarks*, Wesley was evenhanded in his critique of Locke's *Essay*. On the one hand, Wesley argued: "From a careful consideration of this whole work, I conclude that, together with several mistakes, (but none of them of any great importance,) it contains many excellent truths, proposed in a clear and strong manner, by a great master both of reasoning and language. It might . . . be of admirable use to young students, if read with a judicious Tutor, who could confirm and enlarge upon what is right, and guard them against what is wrong, in it."⁹⁹ On the other hand, Wesley not only accused Locke of having an aversion to Aristotle's logic, but he also criticized Locke for the ambiguity he found in many of the ideas and definitions of the last two books of the *Essay*: "The more I considered it, the more convinced I was, 1. That his grand design was, (vain design!) to drive Aristotle's Logic out of the world, which he hated cordially, but never understood 2. That he had not a clear apprehension. Hence he had few clear ideas; (though he talks of them so much;) and hence so many confused, inadequate definitions. I wonder none of his opponents hit this blot."¹⁰⁰ Moreover, from Outler's perspective, "Locke's empiricism was never more than partially satisfying to Wesley, as in the sections 'Of Reason' (IV, xvii) and 'Of Faith and Reason and Their Distinct Provinces' (IV, xviii)."¹⁰¹ Thus, as a responsible editor for Methodism, Wesley made careful selections and shrewd omissions not only to emphasize what he wanted Methodists' to learn from Locke's *Essay*, but also to curb any blind enthusiasm they may have had for Locke based on his reputation. In his final published comments regarding the *Essay* in June 1784, Wesley cautiously encouraged tutors to be judicious

⁹⁹ *Remarks from Mr. Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding," Works* (Jackson), 13:464.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 460.

¹⁰¹ Sermon 70, "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered," *Works*, 2:589n7.

when teaching Locke's *Essay* and "make their full use of all the just remarks made by this excellent writer [Locke], and yet without that immediate attachment to him which is so common among his readers."¹⁰² As a tutor of Methodists, Wesley had acted on his own advice.

Still, how was Locke's *Essay* potentially helpful to Methodism in the 1780s? Strategically Wesley prepared his readers for what he wanted them to gain from Locke's *Essay*, which most broadly can be described as learning how to integrate reason appropriately in their Christian faith. Wesley's most effective tool came in the form of an original sermon that he composed for the *Arminian Magazine*, completed on 6 July 1781 and published in two parts (November and December 1781) just prior to his first installment of Locke's *Essay* in January 1782. In this important sermon, "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered," Wesley revealed his concern for Methodism: "Is there then no medium between these extremes, undervaluing and overvaluing reason? Certainly there is. But who is there to point it out? To mark down the middle way? That great master of reason, Mr. Locke, has done something of the kind, something applicable to it, in one chapter of his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. But it is only remotely applicable to this: he does not come home to the point."¹⁰³ Here, most likely, Wesley was referring to the limited usefulness he found for Locke's chapter, entitled "Of Faith and Of Reason, and their distinct Provinces (Book Four, Chapter XVIII)," in which Locke argued for the necessity of boundaries between faith and reason that prevented "enthusiasm or extravagance in Religion."¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² *Remarks from Mr. Locke's "Essay on Human Understanding," Works* (Jackson), 13:464.

¹⁰³ Sermon 70, "The Case of Reason Impartially Considered," §5, *Works*, 2:588-589.

¹⁰⁴ Peter H. Nidditch, ed., *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford, UK: At The Clarendon Press, 1975), 688-696.

Wesley was concerned about two extreme responses in Wesleyan Methodism to the elevation of reason at the height of the English Enlightenment, an “under-valuing” or an “over-valuing” of reason. On the one hand, those who “under-valued” reason believed they had little or no use for reason in their Christian faith. They were vulnerable because of their pride and ignorance to antinomianism, which Wesley defined in this sermon as “making void the law (of God) through faith.”¹⁰⁵ As a result, the mission of Methodism was preempted because they could not be reasoned with or persuaded to pursue holiness, “without which no man shall see the Lord [Hebrews 12:14].” On the other hand, those who over-valued reason believed that reason was the highest gift of God. They were susceptible to deism or some form of unitarianism, because they disregarded the authority of the Bible and rejected its inspiration (“God breathed” meaning that it came from God). In order to persuade his readers, Wesley did not provide any labels in this sermon, he simply described deists as those “that are prejudiced against the Christian revelation, who do not receive the Scriptures as the oracles of God” and those who loosely fell under the category of unitarians as “all, by whatever name they are called, who deny the Godhead of Christ.”¹⁰⁶ Wesley’s solution for both of these concerns, which also indicated how Wesley believed Locke’s *Essay* could be helpful to Methodism, was made clear in the Biblical text he chose for this particular sermon: “Brethren, be not children in understanding: Howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men [1 Corinthians 14:20].”

¹⁰⁵ Wesley, *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 4, 574-575.

¹⁰⁶ Wesley, “The Case For Reason Impartially Considered,” 588.

Thomas Hobbes

Wesley also highlighted the brilliance of Hobbes in his sermon, “The Case of Reason Impartially Considered” (1781), in order to illustrate the ultimate inability of reason to produce faith that results in the salvation of the soul. According to Wesley, “It is the true remark of an eminent man, who had made many observations on human nature, ‘If reason be against a man, a man will always be against reason.’”¹⁰⁷ On the one hand, Wesley respected Hobbes as a thinker, even though he recognized the limits of his reason. On the other hand, Wesley never discredited the possible genuineness of Hobbes’s confession of faith in Christ, which either Hobbes, his editor or his translator was careful to highlight in the index of his *Ecclesiastical History* (1671).¹⁰⁸ Therefore, Wesley’s sermon was not critical of Hobbes’s spiritual journey. Instead, what Wesley presented as profoundly disturbing to Wesleyan Methodists was Hobbes’s complete lack of assurance concerning his salvation at the point of death. To make his point Wesley asked,

How was the case with that great admirer of reason, the author of the maxim above cited? I mean the famous Mr. Hobbes. None will deny that he had a strong understanding. But did it produce in him a full and satisfactory conviction of an invisible world? Did it open the eyes of his understanding to see

*Beyond the bounds of this diurnal sphere?*¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Sermon 70, “The Case of Reason Impartially Considered,” §1, *Works*, 2:587-600. According to Outler, Wesley’s source was “Thomas Hobbes; cf. *The Last Sayings, or Dying Legacy of Mr. Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, Who Departed This Life on Thursday, December 4, 1679*. Printed for the Author’s Executors (1680), p. 39: ‘In matters of right or interest, where reason is against a man, a man will be against reason.’” *Ibid.*, 587.

¹⁰⁸ Hobbes, *A True Ecclesiastical History*, 77, 109.

¹⁰⁹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, vi. 212.

Oh no! Far from it! His dying words ought never to be forgotten. ‘Where are you going, sir?’ said one of his friends. He answered, ‘I am taking a leap in the dark,’ and died. Just such an evidence of the invisible world can bare reason give to the wisest of men!¹¹⁰

Although the credibility of the source Wesley used to gather information about Hobbes’s deathbed experience should be questioned, the impression that the account of that source seems to have made on Wesley may better be understood by considering that Wesley could possibly have believed that Hobbes’s final words indicated that Hobbes had lost the salvation or saving faith he had once confessed (see Appendix F).

Other English Enlightenment Figures

Roy Porter claimed that John Locke was the “most influential philosopher of empiricism, freedom and toleration” in the English Enlightenment and that the rationalist philosopher John Toland (1670-1722) was its “most challenging deist.”¹¹¹ In addition to the writings of Locke and Toland, there were other important works that English figures wrote, which helped to shape England’s Enlightenment. These included the physical science of Isaac Newton who wrote *Principia*, the moral and political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes who penned *Leviathan*, and the contrasting leadership of two Anglican bishops: John Tillotson (1630-1694), the Archbishop of Canterbury, who attempted to bring aesthetic and liturgical elements of worship from the Roman Catholic Church back into the Anglican Church, and bishop Joseph Butler (1692-1752) who

¹¹⁰ Wesley, “The Case of Reason Impartially Considered,” 595. According to Outler, this quote from Hobbes’s deathbed was “a legend that had already appeared in Samuel Wesley, Jun., *Poems*, p. 84, and earlier in a ‘broadside’ sheet dated 1680, entitled *The Last Saying, or Dying Legacy of Mr Thomas Hobbes*.”

¹¹¹ Porter, *Enlightenment*, 485, n. 4.

upheld the orthodoxy of the Church of England through his apologetics and provided a theological bulwark that withstood the attack of deism.

Like Porter, Wesley viewed Locke as the most important philosopher in England's enlightened age because he found Locke's psychology and epistemology useful, not because he agreed with Locke's political philosophy or theology. Moreover, Wesley affirmed, in his sermon, that the memory of Hobbes was still very much alive at the end of the eighteenth century. As discussed earlier, Butler, the Bishop of Bristol, did not welcome Wesley in his parish churches. For 4 July 1739, Wesley recorded in his journal, "On Wednesday I preached at Newgate A message was delivered to me, when I had done, from the sheriffs, that I must preach there no more."¹¹² Although Butler may not have sent the sheriffs to remove Wesley from Newgate, Butler certainly ordered Wesley on 16 August 1739 to leave the area under his ecclesiastical jurisdiction as Wesley attested in his journal.¹¹³ According to Outler, Henry Moore, in his 1826 biography of Wesley, reported "a bitter exchange between Wesley and Joseph Butler (the ablest intellect in the Anglican hierarchy) on August 18, 1739, in which Butler had expressed his horror of what he regarded as Wesley's presumptions: 'Sir, the pretending to extraordinary revelations, and gifts of the Holy Ghost is a horrid thing—a very horrid thing.' Shortly, another bishop, Edmund Gibson of London, the Church's greatest canonist, would be

¹¹² *Journal* (July 4, 1739), *Works*, 19:78.

¹¹³ *Journal* (July 4, 1739), *Works*, 19:78n98. According to Ward, Nehemiah Curnock, the previous editor of *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley* (8 vols., 1909-1916), "conjectured that this prohibition was due to episcopal pressure; certainly opposition began to increase, and the bishop, Joseph Butler, concluded an interview with JW on August 16 [1739] with the advice, 'You have no business here. You are not commissioned to preach in this diocese. Therefore, I advise you to go hence' (John Whitehead, *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, 2 vols. [London, England: Couchman, 1793-96], II:120)." *Ibid.*

warning his people against Methodist ‘enthusiasm.’”¹¹⁴ As a result, Wesley published in his *Works* the controversial treatises that featured his defense of Wesleyan Methodism against charges, such as enthusiasm, which prominent bishops of the Anglican Enlightenment made during the rise of Methodism before 1760.

Wesley read from Butler’s sermons, but he did not publish any extracts of them. However, Wesley did publish extracts from two sermons by another important figure of the Anglican Enlightenment, John Tillotson. Because Wesley anticipated some of the Methodist subscribers to his *Christian Library* to criticize his decision, he explained his selection in the preface to Tillotson’s sermons: “I have rather inserted the following Extracts for the sake of two sorts of people,—those who are unreasonably prejudiced for, and those who are unreasonably prejudiced against, this great man. By this small specimen it will abundantly appear, to all who will at length give themselves leave to judge impartially, that the Archbishop was as far from being the worst, as from being the best, of the English writers.”¹¹⁵ In addition to Locke, Hobbes, Butler, and Tillotson, Wesley also read the works of two other important English Enlightenment figures, Edmund Burke and Isaac Newton.

Although there appears to be no record of Wesley reading the writings of English historian Edward Gibbon, Wesley not only read, but also cited some of the writings of Edmund Burke in his *Works*. For example, Wesley commented on a work that he mistakenly believed Edmund Burke had written. Instead, William Burke, a friend of Edmund with the same last

¹¹⁴ Outler, *Sermons*, vol. 2, 44.

¹¹⁵ Wesley, “Preface to an Extract from the Works of Archbishop Tillotson,” in *A Christian Library*, vol. xlv (Bristol, England: Farley, 1752), 295. The two abridged sermons Wesley included in volume 45 were “Sermon I: Of the ordinary Influence of the Holy Ghost on the Minds of Christians” and “Sermon II: Preached before the King and Queen at Whitehall, February 25, 1663-4.”

name but no blood connection, wrote the book and Edmund revised it.¹¹⁶ On 18 January 1773, Wesley wrote this entry in his journal: “In my scraps of time this week, I read over *An Account of the European Settlements in America*. But some part of it I cannot receive; I mean, touching the manners of the ‘native Americans’. If it be true that ‘they all nearly resemble each other’, then from the knowledge I have of not a few American nations, I must judge a great part of that account to be pure, absolute romance.”¹¹⁷ Moreover, in the final months of his life (22-23 December 1790), Wesley apparently read Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France; and on the Proceedings of certain Societies in London relative to that Event* (1790).¹¹⁸ Although he evidently had little to say publicly about Burke’s politics, Wesley appears to have engaged Burke through his writings.

Finally, Wesley read selectively from the works of Isaac Newton. In a letter to Samuel Furlong on 10 March 1763, Wesley emphasized, “I have not read Dr. Newton on the *Prophecies*. But the bare text of the Revelation from the time I first read it satisfied me as to the general doctrine of the millennium. But of the particulars I am willingly ignorant since they are not revealed.”¹¹⁹ Although Wesley would not endorse Newton’s book on *Prophecies*, he did

¹¹⁶ George C. McElroy, “Burke, William (1728x30-1793),” s.v. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed March 21, 2017, Oxford DNB online.

¹¹⁷ Edmund Burke, *An Account of the European Settlements in America*, 2 vols (London, England: Printed for R. & J. Dodsley, 1757). *Journal* (January 18, 1773), *Works* 22:358.

¹¹⁸ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France; and on the Proceedings of certain Societies in London relative to that Event* (London, England: Dodsley, 1790). *Diary* (22-23 Dec. 1790), *Works*, 24:341. Although Outler gives no indication of when Wesley read the book, Outler claimed that Wesley read Burke’s *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1756), which Wesley alluded to in his Sermon 78, “Spiritual Idolatry,” §I.11, *Works* 3:108, 108n23.

¹¹⁹ Isaac Newton, *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel, and the Apocalypse of St. John*, 2 vols. (Dublin, Ireland: S Powell, 1733). Margaret Jacob’s association of Wesley with

commend two of Newton's books in "An Address to the Clergy" (1756). In the personal inventory that Wesley challenged his audience of clergy to take, he posed the following questions for introspection regarding the natural sciences: "Am I a tolerable master of the sciences? Have I gone through the very gate of them, logic? . . . Do I understand natural philosophy? If I have not gone deep therein, have I digested the general grounds of it? Have I mastered Gravesande, Keill, Sir Isaac Newton's Principia, with his 'Theory of Light and Colours?'"¹²⁰ While it was not clear whether Wesley practiced what he preached, his encouragement to value and foster an understanding of the natural sciences, including Newton's scientific works was evident (see Appendix B).¹²¹ Therefore, having demonstrated, in this chapter, how Wesley engaged the Enlightenment through what he read and edited for Wesleyan Methodists, this study concludes by answering two important questions. Why did Wesley engage the Enlightenment and why should Wesley be considered a central figure of the English Enlightenment in the eighteenth century?

Newton's millenarianism does not correlate with Wesley's apparent aversion to reading Newton's efforts to understand what the Scripture does not explicitly reveal. Letter to Samuel Furlly (10 March 1763), *Works*, 27:322.

¹²⁰ Here Wesley referenced Issac Newton, *Opticks; or, A Treatise of the Reflexions, Refractions, Inflexions, and Colours of Light*, 2nd ed. (London, England: William Innys, 1717) and Isaac Newton, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (London, England: J. Streater for the Royal Society, 1687).

¹²¹ John Wesley, Preface to *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation or A Compendium of Natural Philosophy*, enlarged to five volumes by the fourth edition, (1784), 302. See Appendix B for Wesley's complete preface to the original two-volume first edition (1763).

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Like the Anglican Enlightenment, the Wesleyan Enlightenment was “only indirectly an intellectual phenomenon” that extended from Wesley’s erudition to Wesley’s pastoral care.¹ Under Wesley’s leadership, Wesleyan Methodists did not jettison their Christian beliefs and doctrine in order to rationalize their religion. For Wesley, the selective embrace of reason and experience in his enlightened age did not require him or his Methodists to compromise the authority of Scripture or discard the precedents of Christian tradition. Like Bulman’s description of the Anglican Enlightenment, the Wesleyan Enlightenment simply denotes, in addition to Wesley’s enlightenment, the engagement or participation of Wesleyan Methodists in the English Enlightenment under the guidance of Wesley’s care and resources. Unlike Bulman’s Anglican Enlightenment, the Wesleyan Enlightenment was not encumbered with politics or ecclesiastical concerns because Wesley served as a bulwark and buffer between Wesleyan Methodists and the Church of England.

John Wesley: The “Cure of Souls”

The Wesleyan Enlightenment took place not only because Wesley engaged the English Enlightenment, but also because Wesley addressed the spiritual needs and practical concerns that confronted Wesleyan Methodists in what Wesley referred to as an enlightened age (see

¹ Bulman, *Anglican Enlightenment*, xiv.

Appendix B).² In a letter to his brother Charles Wesley dated 25 March 1772, John Wesley acknowledged with intensity his renewed sense of call to provide Wesleyan Methodists with spiritual direction, also known as the cure (or care) of souls:

O what a thing it is to have *curam animarum* [the cure of souls]! You and I are called to this; to save souls from death, to watch over them as those that must give account! If our office implied no more than preaching a few times in a week, I could play with it; so might *you*. But how small a part of our duty (yours as well as mine) is this! God says to you as well as me, 'Do *all thou canst*, be it more or less, to save the souls for whom my Son has died.' Let this voice be ever sounding in our ears; then shall we give up our account with joy. *Eia, age; rumpe moras!* ["Come on, act; break off delay!" from Virgil's Aeneid] I am ashamed of my indolence and inactivity. The good Lord help us both! Adieu!³

Following this letter to Charles, John Wesley's correspondence grew exponentially. The following year Wesley turned seventy, however, the cure of souls in his letter writing was just now coming of age. According to Baker, "Over 2,000 letters are extant which he wrote after reaching the age of seventy – more than for all the preceding years added together. . . . The major factor governing this great increase during his later years, however, was surely the demands made upon Wesley's pastoral concern by a rapidly growing Methodist community, combined with his amazing vigour [*sic*]."⁴ Wesley's letters in general, including the examples of the two

² "Preface" to *Survey of the Wisdom of God*, §6.

³ John Wesley's Letter to his brother Charles Wesley (March 25, 1772), *Letters* (Telford), 5:314. See also his Letter to his brother Charles Wesley (April 26, 1772), *Letters* (Telford), 5:316.

⁴ In 1980, Frank Baker, the editor of the first two volumes of John Wesley's *Letters* for the Bicentennial edition, gave an overall account of how many letters in general were available for publishing: "For the first decade, 1721-30, . . . only 30 letters, for the second and third decades, taking us to 1750, about 200 each. By this time Methodism was completely developed as a system, though it was not yet fully launched upon its vast expansion. For the following decade, 1751-60, there are about 300 letters, a figure which expands during 1761-70 to 500. By this time Wesley was approaching seventy, but instead of a gradual diminution in his writing of letters there was a doubling during the following decade to 1,000, and between 1781 and 1790 this phenomenal increase continued, to reach 1,300. Over 2,000 letters are extant which he wrote

letters Wesley wrote to his niece and Margaret Lewen, discussed earlier in Chapter five, were permeated with the cure of souls. Although John's letter to Charles on 22 March 1772 marked a turning point for John in the quantity of his letter writing, the fact was, John Wesley had always attempted to serve as a spiritual director for Methodists.

John's experience as a spiritual director began at Oxford, where he inherited in October 1729 the leadership of the first "society" of "Methodists," a group of students that Charles Wesley organized and started in March 1729, while John was serving at Epworth as a curate for his father.⁵ This group came to be ridiculed and known as the Oxford Methodists. Heitzenrater argued that John became so accustomed to his role as the spiritual director of his friends in this group that he attempted to continue providing unsolicited advice or direction, which in one instance with George Whitefield, was not only rejected, but also resented.⁶

after reaching the age of seventy – more than for all the preceding years added together. Undoubtedly this was in part because a larger proportion of his later letters were preserved by eager devotees, and because improved postal services had led to a general increase in letter-writing." Baker, "Introduction" to *Letters, Works*, I:28-29.

⁵ Maddox and Vickers, *Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, xix.

⁶ According to Heitzenrater, "Wesley's ship sailed into Deal harbor just as George Whitefield's ship was about to set sail for Georgia--Charles had convinced him to assist with their work in the colony. John, by now long accustomed to exercising his role as spiritual director for his friends, cast lots on the matter of Whitefield's travels. The lot indicated that George should "return to London" rather than go to the colony and Wesley sent Whitefield a note to that effect before setting out for London himself. Whitefield, however (as his diary indicates), had begun to grow accustomed to his role as a leader of the Methodists in England in John's absence. He took notice of (and offence at) Wesley's note but proceeded to fulfill what he felt was his 'call to Georgia.' In the colony, Whitefield would discover and report in his journal (with typical effusiveness) that 'the good Mr. John Wesley has done in America, under God, is inexpressible.' Wesley, on the other hand, was about to discover that Whitefield (now ordained and an increasingly popular preacher) had been actively working among the religious societies, not only at Oxford and back home at Gloucester, but also at London." Heitzenrater, *John Wesley and 'The People Called Methodists'*, 2nd ed., 81.

In addition to Baker and Heitzenrater, Outler also attested to John Wesley's inclination for providing the cure of souls, namely Wesley's use of sermons to provide spiritual guidance in doctrine. Although his sermons were analogous to Anglican homilies appointed to be read in the Church of England, Wesley used them differently. Instead, according to Outler, he designed them "to be studied and discussed by the Methodists and their critics. This decision that a cluster of sermons might serve as doctrinal standards for a popular religious movement is a significant revelation of Wesley's self-understanding of his role as spiritual director of 'the people called Methodists.' Sermons, as a genre, do not lend themselves to legalistic interpretation."⁷ Furthermore, Outler highlighted, like Maddox and Madden, that Wesley engaged England's enlightened age in a way that served Wesleyan Methodists. Outler argued that "Wesley lived and worked in a plurality of cultural worlds with little self-consciousness about their pluralism and with next to no distraction from his chief business as the spiritual director of the Methodist Revival."⁸ To care for the souls of Methodists, Wesley drew from his developing proficiencies in non-theological cultures. From Outler's perspective, Wesley "had read enough English literature to use it freely and to form quite confident value-judgments about it that dissented from the fashions of his time. . . . Moreover, he was widely and well read in most aspects of the intellectual, cultural (and industrial and economic) transitions of his century, and was able to bring much of this to his task as tutor to the uninstructed folk in his societies."⁹ As a result, many of the ideas and values of these cultural worlds were interwoven as positive or negative

⁷ Outler, "Introduction" to *Sermons, Works*, I:40.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁹ *Ibid.*

sermon illustrations or life lessons in Wesley's sermons and letters, which served Wesley's ongoing commitment to the cure of souls for Wesleyan Methodists.

Like Wesley, Wesleyan Methodists changed. The young revival movement Wesley coddled in the late 1730s, organized and defended in the 1740s, and resourced in the 1750s and 1760s, became increasingly demanding of their leader in the 1770s and 1780s.¹⁰ On the one hand, many who desired to grow in holiness looked to Wesley for not only spiritual direction, but also Protestant casuistry, namely pastoral advice on how to apply the Scriptures to the practical areas of their lives that the Bible does not address explicitly. On the other hand, some who subscribed to the *Arminian Magazine* wrote to the editor, Wesley, hounding him with requests for greater variety and format changes in the popular periodical that aligned with their preferences (see Appendixes C and D).¹¹

With a greater number of Wesleyan Methodists becoming not only more learned, but also more affluent, Wesley's engagement of the English Enlightenment became more pronounced in Wesley's later sermon topics, which reflected his growing concern for what threatened the souls under his care. For example, Wesley, in his sermon, "The Case for Reason Impartially Considered (1781)" discussed earlier in Chapter five, addressed the dangerous extremes of both

¹⁰ For example, Wesley published the following general types of printed materials in each consecutive decade that addressed the issues most pertinent to the care of souls in Wesleyan Methodism: controversial treatises in the 1740s, such as *An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (1743), *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* (1745); practical divinity or devotional literature and other Biblical or theological resources in the 1750s and 1760s, an *Extract from the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly* (1753), *A Christian Library* (Fifty volumes) of extracts from the practical divinity of primarily Puritans (1749-1755), *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament* (1755) and *Explanatory Notes on the Old Testament* (1765); and in the 1770s and 1780s, Wesley's first complete collection of his *Works* (1771-1774) and periodical of popular readings, which Wesley edited, the *Arminian Magazine* (1778-1791).

¹¹ See Appendixes C and D for Wesley's acknowledgement of their requests and his response to some of their demands and preferences.

the over-use and under-use of reason in Christian faith.¹² Other sermons addressed what an informed Wesley perceived to be growing threats to the souls of Wesleyan Methodists, such as “The Danger of Riches” (1781), “On Redeeming the Time” (1782), “On the Education of Children” (1783), “On Dissipation [or ungodliness]” (1784), “The Imperfection of Human Knowledge” (1784), “On Friendship with the World” (1786), “On Dress” (1786), “On Pleasing All Men” (1787), “On Conscience” (1788), “On Riches” (1788), “On Living Without God” (1790) and “The Danger of Increasing Riches” (1790).¹³ However, Wesley also affirmed the enlightened values and ideas of the English Enlightenment by redefining them according to Scripture for Wesleyan Methodists. For example, Wesley adapted both, the value of happiness to mean true happiness that comes from the love of God and others, and the idea of human perfection to mean the perfection of regenerate, not unregenerate human nature in this life time.¹⁴ Finally, in an originally unnamed sermon that Wesley wrote for the *Arminian Magazine* (1785), Wesley expounded on some Biblical guidelines for how to discern not only the appropriate content for the cure of souls, but also the character and proper authority of spiritual guides.¹⁵

¹² Sermon 70, “The Case for Reason Impartially Considered,” *Works*, 2:588-589.

¹³ Sermon 87, “The Danger of Riches,” *Works*, 3:228-246; Sermon 93, “On Redeeming the Time,” *Works*, 3:323-332; Sermon 95, “On the Education of Children,” *Works*, 3:347-360; Sermon 79, “On Dissipation [or ungodliness],” *Works*, 3:116-125; Sermon 69, “The Imperfection of Human Knowledge,” *Works*, 2:568-586; Sermon 80, “On Friendship with the World,” *Works*, 3:127-140; Sermon 88, “On Dress,” *Works*, 3:248-261; Sermon 100, “On Pleasing All Men,” *Works*, 3:416-426; Sermon 105, “On Conscience,” *Works*, 3:480-490; Sermon 108, “On Riches,” *Works*, 3:519-528; Sermon 130, “On Living Without God,” *Works*, 4:169-176; and Sermon 151, “The Danger of Increasing Riches,” *Works*, 4:178-186.

¹⁴ Sermon 84, “The Important Question,” *Works*, 3:189, 182-198. Sermon 76, “On Perfection,” *Works*, 3: 79-80, 71-87. “On Perfection” was originally unnamed and written first for the *Arminian Magazine* as Sermon XXVI (1785), vol. 8:125-135 [March issue] and vol. 8:179-186 [April issue].

The sermon text, which Wesley interpreted practically for Wesleyan Methodists, was Hebrews 13:17: “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch over your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.”¹⁶ In the final analysis, some of the most important historical theologians of Wesley studies have confirmed what Wesley’s publications, letters and sermons reveal, Wesley used the ideas and values of the English Enlightenment in his *Works* to provide spiritual direction or the cure of souls to Wesleyan Methodists who lived in the enlightened age of the eighteenth century.

¹⁵ Sermon 97, “On Obedience to Pastors,” *Works*, 3:374-383. Like Wesley’s 1781 solution of a middle way between the extremes of the over-use and the under-use of reason in Christian faith, here, Wesley argued for a middle way between the extremes of authority that was given or not given to spiritual direction: “1. . . . It is well known to what an extravagant height the Romanists [Roman Catholics] in general carry this direction. Many of them believe an implicit faith is due to the doctrines delivered by those that rule over them, and that implicit obedience ought to be paid to whatever commands they give: and not much less has been insisted on by several eminent men of the Church of England. Although it is true that the generality of Protestants are apt to run to the other extreme, allowing their pastors no authority at all, but making them both the creatures and the servants of their congregations. [Outler explained, in 371n2, that this was a reference to “the Baptists and Congregationalists. Note Wesley’s own unavowed Anglican presuppositions here (as generally).”] And very many there are of our own Church who agree with them herein; supposing the pastors to be altogether dependent upon the people, who in their judgment have a right to direct as well as to choose their ministers. 2. But is it not possible to find a medium between these two extremes? Is there any necessity for us to run either into one or into the other? If we set human laws out of the question, and simply attend to the oracles of God, we may certainly discover a middle path in this important matter.” *Ibid.*, 374-375.

¹⁶ Here, as was his frequent practice, Wesley did not use the KJV, but substituted his own translation for the Scripture passage he cited. See Wesley’s notes on Hebrews 13:17 and spiritual direction in his non-paginated *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament* (1755), vol. 2.

John Wesley: Central Figure in the English Enlightenment

This study has presented four historians of Enlightenment studies who have helped to establish not only the plausibility, but also the essence of the English Enlightenment. As a social historian, Porter claimed originally that the English Enlightenment thrived within piety and that Samuel Johnson best captured the social attitude of its history of ideas when he labeled England's enlightened age as the "Age of Authors." As a political historian, Pocock insisted that the English Enlightenment, like other regional and national Enlightenments, was unique. Based on the diversity of Gibbon's Enlightenment experiences and the uniqueness of his enlightened history writing, Pocock argued that erudition, not philosophy, best explained how Gibbon and others experienced the English Enlightenment. As a cultural historian, Sheehan emphasized how media drove the Enlightenment in Germany and England. Through the technologies of a rapidly expanding print culture, ideas, profound or not, were informing and shaping England's enlightened age. Finally, as an intellectual historian, Bulman made his case for the Anglican Enlightenment that took place within the English Enlightenment from the late seventeenth century to the middle of the eighteenth century. Bulman viewed the Enlightenment not as a radical emancipation of liberal change, but as an unresolved culmination of conservative continuity. As a result, he replaced philosophy with religion at the center of his definition for the Enlightenment.

Adapting the words from Pocock's description of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, John Wesley was both akin to the English Enlightenment, but distinct from the rest of the Enlightenment in Europe. Following the Anglican Enlightenment, which most historians believe ended around 1750 after Butler and others, such as George Berkeley, dismantled deism as a threat to Anglican orthodoxy, Wesley emerged as a central figure of the English Enlightenment

in the second half of the eighteenth century. Although Wesley demonstrated some continuity with the Anglican Enlightenment, what he experienced and uniquely facilitated was the Wesleyan Enlightenment. Unlike the Anglican Enlightenment, the enlightenment of Wesley and Wesleyan Methodists was compatible with the work of evangelical revival, the pursuit of Christian perfection and the mission of spreading Scriptural holiness. Like Pocock's portrayal of Gibbon, Wesley's erudition "did not lead to the intellect's sovereignty over its environment, but rather to its immersion in it."¹⁷ Unlike the reasonableness of Locke's Christianity, the Wesleyan Enlightenment did not make reason the final authority of evangelical Christian faith. Unique to Wesley and available to Wesleyan Methodists, the Wesleyan Enlightenment, like Porter's original observation of the English Enlightenment, "throve *within* piety" as long as Wesley was at the helm.¹⁸ However, without the rudder of Wesley's spiritual direction, which consistently helped Wesleyan Methodists to hold in healthy tension the heart religion of Scripture and tradition with the reason and experience of the English Enlightenment, the Wesleyan Enlightenment came to an end with the death of John Wesley.

¹⁷ Pocock, *Barbarism and Religion*, vol. 1, 252-253.

¹⁸ Porter, "The Enlightenment in England," 6.

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Appendix A - Chronology:

John Wesley and the English Enlightenment

1588	Thomas Hobbes born at Malmesbury in Wiltshire
1602	Hobbes entered Magdalen Hall, Oxford
1603	Queen Elizabeth died; James VI of Scotland became King James I of England
1608	Hobbes graduated as a Bachelor of Arts; appointed tutor to the son of William Cavendish
1619-1623	Hobbes served as Francis Bacon's amanuensis (exactly when is not clear)
1625	James I died; Charles I succeeded to the throne
1632	John Locke born at Wrington, Somerset, 29 August
1635	Hobbes associated with Mersenne, Gassendi, and other French thinkers in Paris
1636	Hobbes visited Galileo in Florence; returned to England
1640	Hobbes completed <i>The Elements of Law</i> ; fled England, settled in Paris
1642	English civil war began; Hobbes's <i>De cive</i> ("On the Citizen") published at Paris
1645	Defeat of Charles I at Naseby by Oliver Cromwell
1646	English civil war ended; Hobbes appointed reader in mathematics to the Prince of Wales (the future Charles II) in Paris
1647	Locke admitted to Westminster School, London
1648	Treaty of Westphalia ended Europe's Thirty Years' War
1649	Charles I beheaded in London; English monarchy abolished; Commonwealth established (England a republic)
1651	Hobbes's <i>Leviathan</i> published at London
1652	Locke elected a student of Christ Church, Oxford; Hobbes returned to England
1653	Protectorate established; Cromwell became Lord Protector of England
1654	Hobbes's <i>Of Liberty and Necessity</i> published at London
1655	Locke graduated as a Bachelor of Arts
1658	Cromwell died; Locke graduated as a Master of Arts
1660	English monarchy restored with Charles II as King
1660-1662	Locke wrote <i>Two Tracts on Government</i> against toleration (published 1967)
1662	Act of Uniformity to Church of England re-imposed; dissenting worship illegal
1661-1664	Locke lectured in Greek, rhetoric and moral philosophy at Christ Church, Oxford
1665-1666	Locke sent as embassy secretary to the Elector of Brandenburg at Cleves (Kleve)
1666	Great Fire of London; Locke licensed to practice medicine; granted dispensation to retain Studentship without taking holy orders
1668	Locke elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of London
1670	Hobbes wrote <i>Behemoth</i> (published 1679)
1671	Hobbes wrote <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> (<i>Ecclesiastical History</i> , see Appendix F)
1673	Charles II's brother and heir to England's throne, James, Duke of York, converted to Roman Catholicism
1678	Popish Plot; executions of Catholics followed (to 1681)
1679	Hobbes died at Harwick; Locke returned to England after being in France (1675-1679); Habeas Corpus Act
1679-1683	Locke wrote <i>Two Treatises of Government</i>

- 1683-1689 Locke an exile in Holland; lived mainly in Utrecht, Amsterdam and Rotterdam;
 1685 Death of Charles II; accession of James II of England (and VII of Scotland);
 Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes; persecution of Huguenots began;
 Locke wrote *Epistola de Tolerantia* (Letter Concerning Toleration)
- 1687 Isaac Newton, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*
 1688 William of Orange ousted James II as king of England (who fled to France)
 1689 National Convention installed King William and Queen Mary; Nine Years' War
 against Louis XIV opened; Toleration Act: freedom of worship for Protestant
 dissenters; Locke returned to England; declined an ambassadorship; appointed
 Commissioner of Appeals in Excise; Locke, *Letters on Toleration*
- 1690 Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*
 1691 New East India Company formed in London
 1693 Locke, *Thoughts Concerning Education*
 1694 founding of the Bank of England
 1695 Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*
 1696 John Toland, *Christianity not Mysterious*
 1697 Locke, *The Conduct of the Understanding*; Thomas Aikenhead hanged at
 Edinburgh, Britain's last heresy execution
- 1701 Act of Settlement, ensuring Protestant (Hanoverian) succession in England
 1702 Death of William III; accession of Queen Anne; world's first daily newspaper, in
 London
- 1703 John Wesley born 28 June at Epworth [17 June (Julian calendar still in use)]**
 1704 Isaac Newton, *Optics*; Locke, *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*;
 Battle of Blenheim: Duke of Marlborough's victory over France;
 Capture of Gibraltar began Britain's Mediterranean naval dominance;
 Locke died 28 October; buried in High Lave churchyard, Essex
- 1707 Political and legal union between England and Scotland (form Great Britain)
1709 John Wesley, rescued from burning parsonage in Epworth, February 9
 1709 First Copyright Act in Britain
 1713 Peace of Utrecht closed the War of Spanish Succession
- 1714-1720 John Wesley, student at London's Charterhouse School**
 1717 Inoculation against smallpox introduced into England from Turkey by Lady Mary
 Wortley Montagu; First Freemasons' Lodge established in London
- 1719 Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*
- 1721-1724 John Wesley, student at Christ Church, Oxford**
 1721 Regular postal service between London and New England
 1724 Professorships of modern history founded at Oxford and Cambridge
1726 John Wesley elected Fellow (in Greek) at Lincoln College, Oxford, 17 March
 1726 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*
**1727 John Wesley awarded Master of Arts degree, 14 February became curate at
 Epworth and Wroot, under his father**
- 1727 Isaac Newton died
1728 John Wesley ordained Anglican priest on 22 September
**1729 Charles Wesley, John's brother, initiated a small gathering of students at
 Oxford (first "society") in March; John called back to duties at Lincoln
 College in October; became leader of the group ("Oxford Methodists")**

- 1732 Covent Garden Opera House founded in London
- 1733 War of the Polish Succession opened; Alexander Pope, *Essay on Man*
- 1735 John Wesley's father Samuel Wesley Sr. died on 25 April; John sailed for Georgia on 14 October**
- 1737 John Wesley left Georgia on 22 December and returned to England**
- 1738 John Wesley's "heart-warming" experience of assurance 24 May at Aldersgate**
- 1739 John Wesley's first "open-air" preaching in Bristol, beginning of the Methodist revival**
- 1740 John Wesley started Kingswood School for coal-miner's children**
- 1740 Frederick II became king of Prussia; Maria Theresa became Empress of Austria; Frederick seized Silesia, opening War of the Austrian Succession
- 1741 Handel composed *Messiah*
- 1742 John Wesley's mother Susanna Annesley Wesley died 30 July**
- 1744 John Wesley began annual meetings ("Methodist Conferences") with traveling preachers**
- 1748 End of War of Austrian Succession
- 1751 John Wesley married Mary Vazeille in February [exact date unknown]**
- 1755 Earthquake in Lisbon; Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language*
- 1756 Beginning of Seven Years' War
- 1759 British Museum opened in London, at Montague House
- 1760 George III became king of Great Britain
- 1760-1762 John Wesley encountered controversies over Christian perfection**
- 1762 Catherine II became Empress of Russia
- 1763 Peace of Paris ended Seven Years' War
- 1765 Joseph II became co-regent with his mother Maria Theresa
- 1767 Joseph Priestley, *The History and Present State of Electricity*
- 1771 John Wesley issued first set of collected works (completed in 1774)**
- 1771 First edition of *Encyclopaedia Britannica*
- 1776 Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1788) (6 vols.)
- 1780 Empress Maria Theresa died; Joseph II succeeded as sole rule
- 1790 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*
- 1791 John Wesley died on 2 March¹**

¹ The following chronologies were abridged, adapted and combined to form the "Chronology: John Wesley and the English Enlightenment" in Appendix A: Outram, *The Enlightenment*, ix-xiii; Mark Goldie, ed., *John Locke: A Letter Concerning Toleration and Other Writings* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2010), xli-xlvi; Vere Chappell, ed., *Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), xxiv-xxvii; *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, eds., Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2010), xix. All bold text in this chronology is biographical information about John Wesley from *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, Ibid.

Appendix B - Preface to *Survey of the Wisdom of God* (1763)

1. I have long desired to see such a compendium of natural philosophy as was, (1.) Not too diffuse, not expressed in many words, but comprised in so moderate a compass, as not to require any large expense, either of time or money: (2.) Not maimed or imperfect; but containing the heads of whatever (after all our discoveries) is known with any degree of certainty, either with regard to the earth or heavens. And this I wanted to see, (3.) In the plainest dress; simply and nakedly expressed, in the most clear, easy, and intelligible manner, that the nature of the things would allow; particularly, free from all the jargon of mathematics, which is mere heathen Greek to common readers. At the same time, I wished to see this short, full, plain account of the visible creation directed to its right end: Not barely to entertain an idle, barren curiosity; but to display the invisible things of God, his power, wisdom, and goodness.

2. But I cannot find such a treatise as this in any modern, any more than ancient, language; and I am certain there is none such in the English tongue. What comes nearest to it, of anything I have seen, is Mr. Ray's "Wisdom of God in the Creation;" Dr. Derham's "Physico and Astro Theology;" Nieuentyt's "Religious Philosopher;" Mather's "Christian Philosopher," and "Nature Delineated." But none of these, single, answers the design. And who will be at the pains to extract the substance of them all, and add the later discoveries, of which they had little knowledge, and therefore could take but little notice? This is a desideratum still; and one that a lover of mankind would rejoice to see even tolerably supplied.

3. I am throughly [*sic*] sensible, there are many who have far more ability, as well as leisure, for such a work than me. But as none of them undertake it, I have myself made some little attempt in the ensuing volumes. Herein following Dr. Derham's plan, I divide the work into text and notes. The text is, in great measure, translated from the Latin work of John Francis Buddaeus, the late celebrated Professor of Philosophy, in the University of Jena, in Germany. But I have found occasion to retrench, enlarge, or alter every chapter, and almost every section: So that it is now, I believe, not only pure, containing nothing false or uncertain; but as full as any tract can be expected to be, which is comprised in so narrow a compass; and likewise plain, clear, and intelligible, to one of a tolerable understanding. The notes contain the sum of what is most valuable in the above-named writers: To which are added, the choicest discoveries both of our own and of the foreign Societies. These, likewise, I trust, are as plain and clear as the nature of the things spoken will allow; although some of them, I know, will not be understood by an unlearned or inattentive reader.

4. Meantime, I must apprise the reader, that I have sometimes a little digressed, by reciting both uncommon appearances of nature, and uncommon instances of art: And yet this is not properly a digression from the main design I have in view. For surely in these appearances also, the wisdom of God is displayed; even that manifold wisdom, which is able to answer the same ends by so various means. And those surprising instances of art do likewise reflect glory upon Him, whose Spirit in man giveth that wisdom whose inspiration teacheth understanding.

5. It will be easily observed, that I endeavour [*sic*] throughout, not to account for things, but only to describe them. I undertake barely to set down what appears in nature; not the cause of those appearances. The facts lie within the reach of our senses and understanding; the causes are more remote. That things are so, we know with certainty; but why they are so, we know not. In many cases we cannot know; and the more we inquire, the more we are perplexed and entangled. God hath so done his works, that we may admire and adore; but we cannot search them out to perfection.

6. And does not this open to us another prospect; although one we do not care to dwell upon? Does not the same survey of the creation, which shows us the wisdom of God, show the astonishing ignorance and short-sightedness of man? For when we have finished our survey, what do we know? How inconceivably little! Is not every thinking man constrained to cry out, “And is this all? Do all the boasted discoveries of **so enlightened an age** amount to no more than this?” Vain man would be wise; would know all things; but with how little success does he attempt it! How small a part do we know even of the things that encompass us on every side! I mean, as to the very fact; for as to the reasons of almost everything which we see, hear, or feel, after all our researches and disquisitions, they are hid in impenetrable darkness. [*emphasis mine*]

7. I trust, therefore, the following sheets may, in some degree, answer both these important purposes. It may be a means, on the one hand, of humbling the pride of man, by showing that he is surrounded on every side with things which he can no more account for, than for immensity or eternity: And it may serve, on the other, to display the amazing power, wisdom, and goodness of the great Creator; to warm our hearts, and to fill our mouths with wonder, love, and praise!²

JOHN WESLEY

² Wesley, “Preface” to *A Survey of the Wisdom of God*, iii-vi.

Appendix C - Preface to *Arminian Magazine* (1781)

London, 1 January 1781³

5. But still Want of Variety is objected. Yea, and it ever will be objected. For I dare not fill up any Publication of mine with bits and scraps, to humour [*sic*] any one living. It is true, I am not fond of verbose writers, neither of very long treatises. I conceive, the size of a book is not always the measure of the writer's understanding. Nay, I believe if Angels were to write books, we should have very few Folios. But neither am I fond of tracts that begin and end, before they have cleared up any thing. There are inserted as many articles in each of the these Magazines, as can be treated of therein to any purpose. If any one wishes rather to read a hundred shreds, **he may suit himself in abundance of Authors [emphasis mine]**.⁴

8. One more Article may, I apprehend, be inserted, both **for the profit and entertainment of the Reader [emphasis mine]**.⁵ The five volumes entitled, "A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation," are but in few hands: it is not convenient for many to purchase them. But particular passages of these will be carefully selected, and inserted in each Magazine. I believe they will fall in naturally enough between the History and the Letters. And these will all illustrate his Wisdom and Goodness, for whom all things are and were created.

³ "Preface" to *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 4 (1781): iv-v.

⁴ Wesley's final sentence of section five mirrors the comments made by Wesley's contemporary, Samuel Johnson, who criticized the quality of writing in what he described as an "Age of Authors." See earlier discussion on Samuel Johnson in Chapters four and five.

⁵ Wesley was forthcoming that one of the purposes he had for inserting selected passages from his *Survey of the Wisdom of God* into several monthly issues of the *Arminian Magazine* was entertainment.

Appendix D - Preface to *Arminian Magazine* (1784)

London, 1 January 1784⁶

7. It is particularly object, That “The Wisdom of God in the Creation,” from which several Extracts are made, is already in the hands of many people, so that in buying this they buy the same things twice over. In the hands of how many? Out of forty or fifty thousand, vulgarly called Methodists, are there one thousand who have those five little Volumes? I believe not above one hundred! I therefore purposely publish these short Extracts, to give a specimen of the whole: which hereby many may be induced to procure; and the reading of which will well reward their labour.

8. Perhaps it may be said, “But part of these, as well as some other Articles, particularly the Extracts from Mr. Bryant, and the Extracts from and Remarks upon Mr. Locke, are not intelligible to common Readers.” I know it well: but did I ever say this was intended for common Readers only? By no means. I publish it for the sake of the learned as well as the unlearned Readers. But as the latter are the greater number, nine parts in ten of the Work are generally suited to their capacity. What they do not understand, let them leave to others, and endeavour to profit by what they do understand.

9. One Objection remains. “Why is so little of each Treatise given in each Magazine? Would it not be better, to say more upon each head? Would it not be more satisfactory to the Readers?” Truly, I thought it would be far better, and more satisfactory to most Readers. But matter of fact proves that I was mistaken. For from the time the Tracts have been thus divided, and consequently the number of Articles in each Magazine increased, the number of Subscribers has increased in every part of England.

10. I pray the Giver of every good and perfect gift, to give both to me and my Readers, “that by his holy inspiration we **may think the things that are rightful [emphasis mine]**, and by his merciful guidance, perform the same!”

⁶ “Preface” to *Arminian Magazine*, vol. 7 (1784): v-vi.

Appendix E - John Wesley's "Scheme of Studies" (1726)

On 24 September 1726, John Wesley, as a student at Oxford, included the following reading list as an entry in his diary. According to Heitzenrater, "Wesley's early diary reveals him participating in activities and exercises typical of the Oxford curriculum: reading basic texts, writing themes (geneses), discussing philosophical, political, and religious questions. The pattern of this study can be seen in a schedule drawn up in the diary just a year after his ordination as a deacon and a few months before standing for his master's degree; the rationale for such can be seen outlined in a subsequent letter to his mother."⁷

Sunday morning: read Divinity, collect, compose.
Afternoon: read Divinity, collect.

Monday (Greek and Latin Classics)

Morning: read Greek poets, Homer; historians, Xenophon.
Afternoon: read Latin poets, Terence; historians Sallust; Oratory, Tully.

Tuesday (Greek and Latin Classics)

Morning: Terence and Sallust or Tully.
Afternoon: Homer and Xenophon.

Wednesday (Sciences)

Morning: Logic—Aldrich, Wallis, Sanderson.
Afternoon: Ethics—Langbain, More, Eustachius.

Thursday (Languages)

Morning: Hebrew Grammar, Psalter.
Afternoon: Arabic grammar.

Friday (Sciences)

Morning: Metaphysics—LeClerc, Locke, Clark, Jackson.
Afternoon: Physics—Bartholine, Rohoult (per Clark), Robinson's Collection.

Saturday (Oratory and Poetry)

Morning: write sermons and letters or verses
Afternoon: letters or sermons or verses.

⁷ Heitzenrater, *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, 54. Heitzenrater served as the editor for the *Diaries* of John Wesley in the Bicentennial edition of *The Works of John Wesley*, vols. 18-24. In a letter to his mother, Susanna, on January 24, 1727, Wesley wrote: "I am shortly to take my Master's degree. As I shall from that time be less interrupted by business not of my own choosing, I have drawn up for myself a scheme of studies from which I do not intend, for some years at least, to vary." Frank Baker, ed., *The Works of John Wesley: Letters I 1721-1739*, vol. 25 (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1980), 208.

Appendix F - Thomas Hobbes's "My Confession of Faith" (1671)

The following entry was printed on page 190 in the index to the 1722 English translation of Thomas Hobbes, *Historia ecclesiastica* or *A True Ecclesiastical History; from Moses, to the Time of Martin Luther, in Verse*. Hobbes completed the long Latin poem in 1671, and it was first published posthumously in 1688.

"HOBBS, his Confession of Faith. 77."

The entire content and form of the verse of that confession is presented here as it was published on page 77, including the English translator's spellings and capitalizations.⁸

"How was my Soul committed to your Skill?
Use you no Pow'r against the Donor's Will?
Why might not I as well my Force extend,
And cause some weaker, to my Arms to bend?
But should I deem your Doctrines so Divine,
As through all Ages undisturb'd to shine;
Or should I blindly sign to each Decree,
Which of these Shepherds shall my Leader be?
For whilst You thus your Paper Battles wage,
And with a, more than Pagan, Fury rage,
I scarce shall know whose Precepts I must own,
Whilst all your Tricks appear, and Priestcraft's plainly shown;
But this I to the Sacred Volumes owe;
From Christ alone all saving Health must flow,
Whose spotless Footsteps I'm resolv'd to tread,
Should Paul, should Cephas, or Apollos lead;
His Name shall bear an universal Sway,
And all the Nations in due Time obey;
Lend their Attention to His Holy Word,
And in their smoothest Lays, his Heav'nly Praise record."

⁸ Hobbes, *A True Ecclesiastical History*, 77, 109. Special thank you to Randy L. Maddox who brought to my attention on February 25, 2017, the fact that Wesley owned a copy of this edition of Hobbes's *True Ecclesiastical History*. According to Noel Malcolm, "significant for the study of his [Hobbes's] political thought is a long Latin poem about the encroachments of priestcraft down the ages, *Historia ecclesiastica*." Noel Malcolm, "Hobbes, Thomas (1588-1679)," s.v. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed March 20, 2017, Oxford DNB online.

Appendix G - Wesley's Letter to his Niece (1781)

To his Niece Sarah Wesley

Bristol, September 8, 1781

My Dear Sally,

It is certain the Author of our nature designed that we should not destroy but regulate our desire for knowledge. What course you may take in order to this I will now briefly point out.

1. You want to know God, in order to enjoy Him in time and eternity.
2. All you want to know of Him is contained in one book, the Bible. And all you learn is to be referred to this, either directly or remotely.
3. Would it not be well, then, to spend at least an hour a day in reading and meditating on the Bible? reading every morning and evening a portion of the Old and New Testament with the *Explanatory Notes*?
4. Might you not read two or three hours in the morning and one or two in the afternoon? When you are tired of severer studies, you may relax your mind by history or poetry.
5. The first thing you should understand a little of is Grammar. You may read first the Kingswood *English Grammar*, and then Bishop Lowth's *Introduction*.
6. You should acquire (if you have not already) some knowledge of Arithmetic. Dilworth's *Arithmetic* would suffice.
7. For Geography I think you need only read over Randal's or Guthrie's *Geographical Grammar*.
8. Watt's *Logic* is not a very good one; but I believe you cannot find a better.
9. In Natural Philosophy you have all that you need to know in the *Survey of the Wisdom of God in Creation*. But you may add the Glasgow [Edinburgh] abridgement of Mr. Hutchinson's *Works*.
10. With any or all of the foregoing studies you may intermix that of History. You may begin with Rollin's *Ancient History*; and afterwards read in order the *Concise History of the Church*, Burnet's *History of the Reformation*, the *Concise History of England*, Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, Neal's *History of the Puritans*, his *History of New England*, and Robertson's *History of America*.
11. In Metaphysics you may read Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding* and Malebranche's *Search after Truth*.

12. For Poetry you may read Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, select parts of Shakspeare [*sic*], Fairfax's or Hoole's *Godfrey of Bouillon*, *Paradise Lost*, the *Night Thoughts*, and Young's *Moral and Sacred Poems*.

13. You may begin and end with Divinity [theology]; in which I will only add, to the books mentioned before, Bishop Pearson *On the Creed* and the *Christian Library*.

By this course of study you may gain all the knowledge which any reasonable Christian needs. But remember, before all, in all, and above all, your great point is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.—I am, my dear Sally,

Your affectionate Uncle.⁹

⁹ Sarah ["Sally"] Wesley was the daughter of John Wesley's brother, Charles. John Wesley's Letter to his niece Sarah Wesley, (September 8, 1781), *Letters* (Telford), 7:81-83. According to Rack, Sarah was "the fourth child and only surviving daughter of Charles Wesley (1707-1788) and Sarah Wesley, née Gwynne (1726-1822). She was partly brought up by a beloved Methodist nurse and for a time attended a school in Bristol, but was also taught Latin by her father. She was a silent child with the shyness and love of solitude and books which characterized her throughout life. She was under 5 feet tall, and when young was very handsome until, like her mother, she was disfigured by smallpox. According to her musician brother Charles Wesley (1757-1834) she had a good ear for music, sang well, and would have been a good instrumentalist but preferred reading to the rigours of practice. She wrote poetry from an early age but was reluctant to show her verses to her critical father." Henry D. Rack, "Wesley, Sarah (1759-1828)," s.v. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, accessed April 14, 2017, Oxford DNB online.

Appendix H - Minutes: Bristol Conference (1745)

The Bristol (Annual) Conference of August 1-3, 1745

The answers to the following question were recorded on Saturday, August 3, 1745: “Q. 13. What books should we keep for our own use at London, Bristol, and Newcastle?”

I. Divinity [theology], Practical:

(1) The Bible. (2) Our Tracts. (3) Abp. Ussher’s. (4) Boehm’s *Sermons*. (5) Nalson’s. (6) Francke’s *Works*. (7) Pascal’s *Thoughts*. (8) Beveridge’s *Thoughts*.

[Divinity] **Doctrinal:** (1) Pearson on the *Creed*. (2) Fell on the *Epistles*. [(3) Dr. Gell’s *Works*.]

II. Physick:

(1) Drake’s *Anatomy*. [James Drake, M.D. (1667-1707), *Anthropologia Nova; or, A New System of Anatomy*, 2 vols. (London: Smith & Walford, 1707).]

(2) Quincy’s *Dispensatory*. [John Quincy, M.D. (d. 1722), *Pharmacopeia officinalis et extemporanea; or, A complete English dispensatory in four parts, containing: I. A theory of pharmacy and the several processes therein. II. A description of the official simples, with their virtues and preparations, Galenical and chemical. III. The official compositions, according to the last alterations of the College; together with some others of uncommon efficacy, taken from the most celebrated authors. IV. Extemporaneous prescriptions, distributed into classes suitable to their intentions in cure* (London: A. Bell, W. Taylor, & J. Osborn, 1718).]

(3) Allen’s *Synopsis*. [John Allen (1660?-1741), *Dr. Allen’s Synopsis medicinae; or, A Brief and General Collection of the Whole Practice of Physick. Containing the opinions and judgments of the most celebrated authors, concerning diseases, their causes and remedies*, 2 vols. (London: Pemberton & Meadows, 1730), and in 1733 another English translation, this time by the author himself, titled *Synopsis medicinae; or, A Summary View of the whole Practice of Physick*. This work was surely an important source of Wesley’s *Primitive Physick*, along with Quincy’s *Dispensatory* and other works.]

(4) Dr. Cheyne’s *Works*. [George Cheyne (1671-1743), *The Natural Method of Curing the Diseases of the Body and Disorders of the Mind Depending on the Body* (London: Strahan, 1742). His *Essay of Health and Long Life* exercised a very strong personal influence upon JW from the time that he read it in 1724, the year of its appearance, warmly welcoming its advice about simple and abstemious living.]

III. Natural Philosophy

(1) *Nature Delineated*. [Noël Antoine Pluche (1688-1761), *Nature Delineated: being a new translation of those universally admired philosophical conversations, entitled, Spectacle de la nature*, trans. Daniel Bellamy, 4 vols. (London: J. Hodges, 1739). . . . This was one of the two major English translations of the famous French work; the other by Samuel Humphreys and Jean Baptist de Freval, *Spectacle de la nature; or, Nature displayed; being discourse on such particular of natural history as were thought most proper to excite the curiosity and form the minds of youth*, appeared in in four vols. in 1733. . . . Wesley seems to have known and used both translations.]

(2) Miller's *Gardener's Dictionary Abridged*. [Philip Miller (1691-1771), *The Gardener's Dictionary; containing the methods of cultivating and improving the kitchen, fruit, and flower gardens, as also the physic garden, wilderness conservatory, and vineyard; according to the practices of the most experienced gardeners of the present age . . . and [consideration of] the particular influences of air, earth, fire, and water upon vegetation, according to the best natural philosophies*, 2 vols. (London: Rivington, 1731-1739).]

IV. Astronomy

(1) Whiston's Astronom[ical] Principles. [William Whiston (1667-1752), *Astronomical Principles of Religion, natural and revealed . . . Together with a preface, of the temper of mind necessary for the discovery of Divine truth, and the degree of evidence that ought to be expected in Divine matters*, 2 vols. (London: Senex & Taylor, 1717). JW was familiar with a number of Whiston's voluminous works and knew him personally.]

(2) [Left blank for future additions], (3) [Left blank]

V. History

(1) *Universal History*. [Jean Le Clerc (1657-1736), the prolific French writer.]

VI. Poetry

(1) Spenser. [I.e., Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* ("Fairy Queen" also listed in Wesley's letter to his niece on September 8, 1781, in Appendix G); see the Works of Edmund Spenser, 6 vols. (London: Jacob Tonson, 1715).]

(2) Sir John Davi[e]s. [Sir John Davies (1569-1626), whose *Nosce Teipsum* (1599), on the immortality of the soul, was one of Wesley's favourite poems.]

(3) Milton

(4) Our hymns and poems.

VII. Latin Prose

(1) Sallust. [*Bellum Catilinarium, et Jugurthinum*, ed. Joseph Wasse (Oxford: Societatis Stationariorum, 1730). In 1749, Wesley published his own edition of *Caii Sallustii Crispi Bellum Catilinarium et Jugurthinum* ("The Cataline and Jugurthine Wars") for Kingswood School.]

(2) Caesar. Cornelius Nepos. Velleius Paterculus. Littleton's *Dict[ionary]*. [Adam Littleton (1627-1694), *Linguae Latinae liber dictionaries quadripartitus; A Latin Dictionary in Four Parts: I. An English-Latine, II. A Latine-classical, III. A Latine-proper, IV. A Latine-barbarous: wherein the Latine and English are adjusted, with what care might be, both as to stock of words and proprieties of speech* (London: Basset, Wright, & Chiswell, 1678).]

(3) Tully, *Philosophica*, and *De Officiis*. [Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-143 B.C.), *M. Tullii Ciceronis philosophicorum* (Amsterdam: John Blaeu, 1649). . . . JW especially valued and quoted Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, *De Divinatione*, and *De Officiis*.]

(4) Cypriani *Opera*. [*Sancti Caecilii Cypriani Opera*, ed. John Fell, 2 vols. (Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1682).]

(5) Castellio's *Dialogues*. [Sebastian Castellio or Castalio (1515-1563).]

(6) Erasmi *Selecta*. [Desiderius Erasmus (1467-1536), *Colloquiorum Familiarum Opus Aureum* (1524), in many editions. Select dialogues from this work were read in Latin, turned into English, and learned by heart at Kingswood School.]

(7) Austin's *Confessions*. ['Austin' was familiarly used by JW (as by others) for St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), whose *Confessions* was one of his favourite works, frequently quoted both in Latin and in English.], (8) [Left blank]

Latin Verse

- (1) Terence
- (2) Virgil
- (3) [Left blank]
- (4) Selecta Horatii, Juv[enal], Pers[ius], Mart[ial].
- (5) Vida.
- (6) Casimir.
- (7) Buchanan.
- (8) [Left blank], (9) [Left blank]

VIII. Greek Prose

- (1) Greek Test[ament], Hederici *Lexicon*.
- (2) Plato's Select Dialogues.
- (3) Xenophon's *Cyropoedia*.
- (4) Epictetus.
- (5) Antoninus, de se ipso. [The emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (121-180), whose *Meditations (De se ipso)* have proved his best memorial.]
- (6) Ignatius, etc.
- (7) Ephraim Syrus. [Ephraim Syrus (c. 306-373), Syrian biblical exegete, verse writer, and controversialist. . . . JW read his *Serious Exhortation to Repentance, etc.* (London: Bowyer, 1731) in Georgia, and in 1747 stated his admiration for Ephraim's picture of 'a broken and contrite heart' (*Journal & Diaries III*, 20:162 in this edition). Outler has argued that the injection of Eastern Christian ideas of perfection as a process rather than a state influenced Wesley's distinctive view of the doctrine. A. C. Outler, *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 9f.]
- (8) Macarius, Chrysost.de Sacerd[otio].

Greek Verse

- (1) Homer's *Illiad*.
- (2) *Epigrammatum Delectus*.
- (3) Duport's *Job*, etc.
- (4) [Left blank]

IX. Hebrew

- (1) The Bible. Buxtorf.¹⁰

¹⁰ In addition to the answers listed in the minutes, all bracketed information above was extracted from the footnotes that Henry D. Rack compiled for this catalog of books in Henry D. Rack, ed., *The Works of Wesley: The Methodist Societies: The Minutes of Conference*, Bicentennial ed., vol. 10 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2011), 161-168, 161n330-168n364.